

DOMICILIARY EYECARE COMMITTEE – KEY MESSAGES FOR CARE HOME MANAGERS

Maintaining eyesight and healthy, problem and pain-free eyes are key parts of well-being and daily functioning. Eye problems and eye disease increase with age, sometimes with no symptoms or with symptoms which are masked by other conditions. Some eye conditions and medications also cause painful, dry or sticky eyes which irritate or sting. This is why regular eye care from a qualified optometrist and dispensing opticians is so important and recommended by the NHS

Domiciliary eyecare providers are specialist optometrists and dispensing opticians who provide care to patients who cannot visit an optical practice unaided, by visiting patients by appointment in their own homes and in care homes. They provide NHS sight tests using portable equipment, and can prescribe, supply, fit and repair spectacles and other appliances, which both improve quality of life and reduce the risk of falls and accidents. They can also refer a patient for further investigation or treatment if they detect signs of an eye disease or condition such as glaucoma, macular degeneration, cataracts or diabetic eye disease, and give advice on how to manage more minor eye problems.

We realise that care home managers may have questions or concerns about giving domiciliary eyecare providers access to their care home during the pandemic. NHS England has worked with the Domiciliary Eyecare Committee, the care home national organisations, the CQC and Directors of Public Health to agree this summary of the measures that eyecare providers are taking to manage the risks of access to care homes, and the approach that care home managers should adopt in admitting them.

Domiciliary eyecare providers:

- are healthcare professionals registered and regulated by the General Optical Council
- work for NHS contractors who provide sight tests and other services in care homes on behalf of NHS England, and are covered by the same [Government guidance](#) on COVID precautions for care home visitors as other visiting NHS professionals who attend multiple sites to provide care, such as district nurses and GPs
- will only visit a care home by appointment and using their own transport
- will seek and follow advice from the care home about the practical arrangements for the appointment, including the physical location of the appointment and which entrance and exit to use
- will be able to demonstrate at the start of each visit that they are fully vaccinated (unless medically exempt) and have received a negative COVID test result within the last 72 hours
- will comply throughout the appointment with up-to-date Infection Prevention and Control advice issued by Public Health England, the College of Optometrists and the Association of British Dispensing Opticians, including on the use of personal protective equipment

Care home managers:

- can be confident that allowing domiciliary eyecare providers access to their premises and residents is in line with current Government and CQC guidance
- do not need to ask domiciliary eyecare providers who can demonstrate a negative COVID test result within the previous 72 hours to take an additional test before entering the care home
- are asked to give domiciliary eyecare providers as much notice as possible if the introduction of local measures by a Director of Public Health means that they may be asked to take further steps before entering a care home.

Optical Sector Domiciliary Eyecare Committee
20 August 2021