



Craig Whittaker MP

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Eye Clinic Delays (RNIB Campaign)

Thank you for contacting me about eye clinics.

All follow-up appointments should take place when clinically appropriate. It is for doctors to make decisions on when they see patients, in line with their clinical priority, and patients should not experience undue delay at any stage of their referral, diagnosis or treatment. The appropriate interval for follow up appointments will vary between different services or specialties, and between individual patients, depending on the severity of their condition

To ensure that patients are seen at the appropriate time, NHS England has issued guidance which makes clear that when patients on planned lists are clinically ready for their care to commence and reach the date for their planned appointment, they should either receive that appointment or be transferred to an active waiting list.

It is the responsibility of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to commission hospital eye services and to holding their providers to account in terms of contract performance. I have every confidence in CCGs to properly assess the health and care needs of their local populations, and I believe they will commission the right services for the locality.

CCGs are also able to commission eye care services from community optometrists where they judge them to be needed in their area. These additional services may reduce pressure on hospital eye departments, reduce waiting times and improve patients' access to care in the community. I know that NHS England is working with the Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning to support the development of a range of guidelines for Commissioners on evidence-based clinical pathways for eye health.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker'.

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