

Ophthalmology department

# The glaucoma diagnostics and monitoring service

## Information for patients, relatives and carers

### Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to give you information about the glaucoma diagnostics and monitoring service and answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team but aims to help you understand more about what is discussed. If you have any questions about the information below, please contact us.

For patients with glaucoma, high eye pressure or suspected glaucoma, often a period of follow-up of several years is needed. The consultant in charge of your care has reviewed your clinical tests and records and has booked you into the diagnostic and monitoring service. If you're new to the service, this is an opportunity to have specialist glaucoma tests to assess how your eyes are doing. The service allows us to look after you safely and minimise the changes in your appointments.

### Why we have developed this service

Many conditions such as glaucoma and diabetic eye problems can be monitored on the basis of tests alone. Rapidly improving technology means that we can pick up changes earlier and act on them if needed. We want to improve our patient experience and make it more efficient for everyone.

We also want to reduce the time our patients spend waiting for appointments, particularly because of the need for physical distancing. By setting up this service, we can spend more time with patients in the face-to-face clinics when they most need it.

### What to expect from your appointment

The service is delivered by trained ophthalmic staff who will carry out the required tests. All patients will have their vision checked. We may need to dilate your pupils which can affect your vision for a few hours so you should not drive to the hospital.

Other tests may include:

- checking the pressure in the eyes (tonometry). Your optician may have used an air puff test (non-contact), but we will check the pressure either electronically or mechanically after the eye is numbed (contact tonometry).

- ~~optical coherence tomography (OCT) scans of the optic nerve – this helps us pick up if glaucoma has caused any thinning of the nerves that supply the eye~~
- OCT of the retina – this may show swelling or fluid in the part of the eye used for central vision (macula).
- photos after your eyes are dilated – this is useful for diagnosis but also for comparison in the future to see if there are changes over time.
- visual fields test – we test each eye in turn. By clicking when you see a light, we can get an idea of your (peripheral or side) field of vision. This is sometimes affected in glaucoma
- corneal thickness – this can affect the pressure readings in the eye and can vary from person to person.

## How long is your appointment?

We aim to finish all the tests in one hour. Please arrive on time as we may not be able to see you if you are late.

## What happens next?

A senior specialist doctor will review your results and write a letter to you to let you know the outcome. This can be:

- discharge back to your GP and optician to look after you
- another appointment in the diagnostic and monitoring service
- an invitation to a face-to-face clinic if there is any suggestion of change
- a phone call from a clinician

## Who reviews your tests?

You will not see a doctor on the day of your appointment, but all of the tests will be carefully reviewed by a glaucoma specialist using the electronic record system within four weeks. You will receive a letter letting you know the outcome.

## What if you have concerns about your condition?

If you have any problems, please speak to the staff at your appointment they will let the consultant in charge know of any concerns you might have.

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## Who you can contact for more information

- Failsafe Officer – 020 3312 3209
- Outpatients at Western Eye Hospital – 020 3312 3236
- Outpatients at Charing Cross Hospital – 020 3311 1109/ 1233/ 0137

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street  
London W2 1NY

Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team: [imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

## Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: [www.imperial.nhs.uk](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk)

Ophthalmology department  
Published: December 2023  
Review date: December 2026  
Reference no: 1811  
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