

To:

Regional & ICS Eye Care Leads

Louisa Wickham

National Clinical Director for Eye Care

Email address: Please Respond to
Andrew.Byrne@nhs.net or
alternatively
james.palmer3@nhs.net

Date 30 January 2023

Dear Colleague,

I'm seeking examples of local eye care innovation, transformation, and best practice that telemedicine could enhance. Please get in touch if you'd be interested in working with the national team to explore implementing a service like this.

As you may remember, I wrote to you in July last year before becoming National Clinical Director for Eye Care. In my letter, I outlined my priorities for transforming eye care with technology and my commitment to supporting local collaboration.

Since my appointment, I have had the pleasure of speaking with many of you about your local and regional plans and reflecting on the national priorities you helped to define. In partnership with NHS Digital, we have launched a single point of access (SPoA)/ telemedicine pilot in North Central London. We have also seen direct referrals from optometrists to ophthalmology services included in the national planning guidance for the first time.

The model being piloted promotes better integration between primary and secondary care, initially providing a SPoA but developing to provide greater integrated support around:

- referral management and triage
- advice and guidance
- identification of patients requiring intervention or change of regime
- patient-initiated follow-ups
- remote consultations and monitoring
- diagnostics and data capture

Recognising the challenges that could make implementing a telemedicine service difficult locally, we hope to be able to support a further number of telemedicine pilots in the near future, potentially in each of the seven regions. The level of support we



can offer is yet to be confirmed; however, by seeking expressions of interest now, I hope to initiate faster action when budgets are agreed upon.

Although much of the work within the Transformation Directorate is concentrated on digital connectivity, it is essential to remember that technology can only take us so far. We must collaborate to ensure our digital services are designed to underpin how we want to work, not dictate our processes. Technology is not the solution but the enabler to more efficient practices that release the capacity for us to provide care in the right place at the right time for patients.

If a telemedicine initiative is something you would like to see rolled out in your systems, please get in touch. In the first instance, contact [Andrew Byrne](#) or [James Palmer](#), who can arrange for us to meet and discuss.

Kind regards,

Yours faithfully

Louisa Wickham

CC. Associated Eye Care Stakeholders