

Ophthalmology Outpatients

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net.

What the service offers

As one of North Devon District Hospital's largest departments, we help with over 15,000-20,000 eye episodes every year via our emergency, outpatient, surgery and inpatient services.

We have a team of 70 highly-skilled staff, made up of ophthalmologists, optometrists, orthoptists, nurse specialists and medical imaging colleagues, all supported by a dedicated clerical team.

We provide a comprehensive service for adults and children ranging from routine appointments to emergencies, and facilitated by state-of-the-art diagnostic, laser and surgical equipment. We are proud of our post-graduate teaching centre and are committed to delivering a high-quality service to patients in the North Devon area.

We offer the following services:

- Emergency eye services
- Cataract surgery (day case department)
- Adult strabismus (squint) / ocular motility service
- Cornea services
- General eye problems
- Glaucoma services
- Medical retina (including macular degeneration and diabetic eye disease)
- Oculoplastics
- Paediatric ophthalmology
- Facial dystonia
- Ocular prosthetics

Patients requiring surgical intervention for vitreo-retinal problems, such as retinal detachment, are referred to the West of England Eye Unit (royaldevon.nhs.uk/services/ophthalmology/west-of-england-eye-unit-weeu/).

Follow-up appointments may be at North Devon District Hospital or one of our community hospitals.

We are extending our ophthalmology services with the creation of the new eye centre based at South Molton. This centre will focus on the following services:

- Glaucoma services
- Medical retina (including macular degeneration and diabetic eye disease)

Opening hours: Monday – Friday, 8am – 5:45pm

Where service is provided

Located on Level 2 of the North Devon District Hospital main building, the ophthalmology outpatient department consists of two large areas; the main outpatient clinic and the Exmoor Unit, which are linked by a short corridor.

Collectively they house 2 reception desks, 2 main patient waiting areas, 11 consulting rooms, an orthoptic suite (comprising 2 examination rooms), pre-operative assessment suite, 2 laser suites, 3 optometry rooms, photography and imaging rooms, a treatment room and a minor operations theatre.

The Vanguard Eye Theatre is at the rear of the hospital, behind the Ladywell Unit. Some operations are carried out in the Exmoor Unit or Day Surgery Unit – your appointment letter will specify.

Additional outpatient clinics take place in the community hospitals in Bideford, Holsworthy, South Molton, Stratton and Torrington.

How to be referred

You may be referred to us by your community optometrist (optician) via your GP, or directly through your healthcare professional.

We run a number of clinics at our main sites and community hospitals. This includes follow-up clinics after your treatment or to monitor your condition.

Depending on your condition, you may need specialist treatment or surgery to help manage your condition. We provide an excellent service across our locations, aiming to provide as much care as possible close to your home via our community sites. All operations and some specialist investigations and treatments are available only at designated locations.

What will happen at first appointment

You will undergo a thorough assessment, which includes your medical history, examination of your eyes and special tests. Treatment, if necessary, is often started at this first visit.

We use a wide variety of tests and investigations to examine your eyes and help us diagnose conditions.

This will involve taking detailed measurements and may also mean examining the tiny structures of your eyes through a microscope.

Tests, such as pupil reactions, visual fields (a measure of your peripheral or “side” vision), eye pressure tests and blood tests may be required for conditions such as eye movement problems. We also offer vision tests, OCT scans for the retina, and for some conditions; further tests such as Fluorescein Angiogram may be required to confirm your diagnosis. These examinations may require eye drops to dilate your pupil (make the black part in the centre of your eye bigger), so that we can get a better view of the back of the eye. These drops can take 10-20 minutes to work, and will blur your vision and make you more sensitive to light for a few hours. **You must not drive if you have drops in your eyes and should arrange for someone to drive you to and from your appointment.**

It is also important if you are attending for a pre-operative cataract appointment that you **do not wear your hard contact lenses for a month and soft lenses for a week before your appointment** due to the tests we need to perform on your eyes.

Treatment will vary, depending on your diagnosis and some conditions require ongoing treatment or monitoring.

Further information

For emergency ophthalmology advice (not appointment enquiries), please telephone 01271 314181. An answerphone will take your message. This is checked daily by the clinical nurse specialist, who will return your call.

Useful contacts

Certification of Visual Impairment – 01271 311588 / 01271 376677

Hospital switchboard – 01271 322577

Emergency department – 01271 314181

Optometry – 01271 311714

Orthoptics – 01271 322469

Outpatient clinic reception

- 01271 322466
- Exmoor Unit – 01271 322770

Pharmacy – 01271 322395

Pre-operative assessment clinic – 01271 311594

Eye clinic liaison officer (ECLO) – 01271 311588

Theatre – 01271 311844

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website www.careopinion.org.uk.

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