



**Cataract Referrals to West Suffolk Foundation Trust and East Suffolk North
Essex Foundation Trust
Notification from Trust and CCGs**

ACTION REQUIRED

Across the country, the demand for eye services is greater than current capacity. Along with other hospitals nationally, West Suffolk Foundation Trust (WSFT) and East Suffolk North Essex Foundation Trust (ESNEFT) are experiencing significant problems in ensuring that patients do not experience a prolonged waiting time. The department is prioritising people with irreversible sight loss disease, which is creating an issue in meeting the demand for cataract procedures with increasing waiting times of up to **9 months**. As at 1 October 2018, it is 4 months to assessment and a further 4 months to the procedure. We know these delays are creating anxiety for people waiting for their procedure and often resulting in people contacting you with their concerns. We are working together as a system to return to a position where 92% of patients are treated within 18 weeks. We know there is no short-term solution to the problem as demand is likely to continue to increase and as such, we are urgently looking into various options to create a more sustainable picture

Please could you advise patients of the long waiting time for assessment and procedure at both WSFT and ESNEFT when offering choice of where to have the procedure.

Key issues

- Currently the number of referrals the Ophthalmology departments are receiving exceeds their capacity to meet that demand despite additional clinics
- The Ophthalmology department is prioritising irreversible sight loss, which means low risk cataract patients are waiting much longer.
- The standard cataract waiting time is now **9 months** from referral to treatment,
- There are about 600 people waiting for assessment and the procedure and this number is continuing to grow.

Action needed

Please could you advise people who meet the criteria for a cataract procedure of the waiting times across our main providers for an initial assessment appointment, and the possibility to be seen much sooner by Anglia Community Eye Service (ACES) at Thetford Healthy Living Centre to help the patient make an informed choice:

West Suffolk Foundation Trust	23 weeks
Anglia Eye Care Services	<18 weeks
Cambridge University Hospital Foundation Trust	20 weeks
ESNEFT. (Ipswich Hospital Trust/ Colchester Hospital University Foundation Trust)	20 weeks
ACES at Thetford Healthy Living Centre	6 weeks

Summary - Action Required

- Please could you advise people of the long waiting time for cataract surgery at West Suffolk Hospital and offer informed choice of all local providers.

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