



NHS KENT AND MEDWAY

Acute Primary Care Ophthalmology Service

Fast, expert NHS care for recent eye problems - closer to home

What is APCOS?

APCOS is a free NHS service for patients registered with a West Kent GP. It gives people with recently occurring eye conditions fast, expert treatment without a hospital trip.

You can be referred by your GP or optician, or you can refer yourself. The service is delivered by local specialist independent prescribing optometrists — supported by ophthalmologists and GPs — who have the skills to assess and treat many eye problems locally.

Free

An NHS service for patients registered with a West Kent GP.

Easy to access

Referral by your GP or optician — or refer yourself by phone.

Seen quickly

Appointments usually offered within 36 hours, Mon–Fri 9am–5pm.

Getting an appointment is easy

STEP 1

Get referred or self-refer

Your GP or optician can refer you — or call an approved practice yourself.

STEP 2

We arrange your visit

If you are referred, an approved practice contacts you to book a time.

STEP 3

Be seen by a specialist

A therapeutic optometrist or ophthalmologist assesses and treats you.

When is APCOS the right service?

APCOS is designed for **recently occurring** symptoms relating to your eyes or vision, such as:

- ✓ Sudden, recent reduction in vision in one or both eyes
- ✓ Red eye(s) or red eyelids
- ✓ Pain and / or discomfort in the eyes
- ✓ Recent onset or sudden increase in flashes and / or floaters in one or both eyes
- ✓ Mild trauma — for example a scratch to the outer surface of the eye or eyelid
- ✓ A suspected foreign body in the eye
- ✓ Recent onset of double vision
- ✓ Significant recent discharge from, or watering of, the eye

GO STRAIGHT TO A&E

When NOT to use APCOS

If you have any of the following, go directly to your nearest hospital emergency department (A&E):

- ✗ Sudden loss of vision in one or both eyes
- ✗ Considerable pain
- ✗ Significant trauma, such as a penetrating injury
- ✗ Chemical injury or burn
- ✗ Problems arising from recent eye surgery

Already being monitored? Conditions monitored by the hospital eye service or your GP — such as cataracts, glaucoma or dry eye — are not covered by APCOS. Please remember you may not be able to drive immediately after your eye examination.

What happens at your appointment?

The optometrist or specialist GP will discuss your eye history, any symptoms you are experiencing and any related medical history. You will then receive an eye assessment relevant to your symptoms.

As a result of your consultation you may be:

- Given appropriate treatment by the optometrist — this may include a follow-up appointment
- Referred to your GP for treatment if your eye condition is related to your general health
- Referred directly to the hospital eye service if your eye condition is more serious

Following your appointment, the optometrist will notify your GP about the outcome of your consultation, so your medical records stay up to date.

What to bring with you

- A list of all your current medications
- Your up-to-date glasses

Please note this service does not replace your routine eye examination, eye test or prescription for glasses. A sight test is not performed as part of APCOS and you will not be issued with a prescription for glasses. If the optometrist feels a sight test is important, they will discuss it and advise a separate appointment. If you normally pay for an eye test, you will still be asked to do so.

Approved providers

If you have been referred to APCOS by your GP or optician, one of the approved practices below will contact you to arrange an appointment with a suitably qualified practitioner. **If you are self-referring, please contact your closest approved practice directly by phone.**

Appointments are usually offered within 36 hours of referral, Monday to Friday 9am–5pm. Evening and weekend appointments may occasionally be available. You will be seen by a specialist therapeutic optometrist (with a special interest in ophthalmology) or an ophthalmologist.

Eye 2 Eye Opticians

Unit 8, Mid Kent Shopping Centre
Castle Road, Allington
Maidstone, Kent, ME16 0PU
Tel **01622 672563**

Headcorn Eye Centre

25 High Street, **Headcorn**
Kent, TN27 9NH
Tel **01622 890044**

Kent Eye Care

Independent Specialist Optometrists & Opticians
786 London Road, Larkfield
Aylesford, Kent, ME20 6BE
Tel **01732 873378**

Osborne Harle Optometrists

1–3 Martin Hardie Way
Tonbridge, Kent, TN10 4AE
Tel **01732 368678**

Pantiles Eye Centre

The Potteries, Linden Park Road
Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 5FQ
Tel **01892 726688**

Day Lewis Opticians

Southborough
100 London Road, **Southborough**
Kent, TN4 0PW
Tel **01892 529626**

Day Lewis Opticians

Riverhead, Sevenoaks
1 London Road, **Riverhead**
Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 2BH
Tel **01732 451039**

Day Lewis Opticians

Edenbridge
56 High Street, **Edenbridge**
Kent, TN8 5AJ
Tel **01732 862366**

NHS Kent and Medway

Find out more: www.kentandmedway.icb.nhs.uk - WWW.EYECARETODAY.CO.UK

Service information leaflet — reviewed