



The Royal College of Ophthalmologists' response to NHS Digital's Commissioning Data Set Version 6.3 consultation

March 21

Introduction

The RCOphth is the professional body for ophthalmologists and trainees in the UK. We work to ensure quality of patient care through the maintenance of high standards in ophthalmology and the wider eye service. We work closely with health policy and clinical leaders across the sector to help shape eye services for the benefit of patients.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation. The RCOphth has long called for data collection around delays in outpatient follow up appointments so that we have accurate information to plan and deliver safe and effective patient care.

The single biggest safety risk in ophthalmology is delays to follow up care, which has been resulting in avoidable patient harm in terms of sight loss for at least 10 years. We particularly welcome the addition of the Latest Clinically Appropriate Date to direct failsafe processes to protect high risk patients from harm and believe this should become mandatory reporting for all providers of NHS eye care.

Below we have responded to the key questions around the commissioning data set changes proposed which are of greatest relevance to ophthalmology.

Response to questions

Q10 Are you supportive of the below changes and the planned future replacement of FIRST ATTENDANCE CODE?

Yes, the RCOphth is particularly supportive of the development of a recording process for the type of first consultation. We believe that with the rapid changes in practice, particularly in terms of non face to face consultations in the light of Covid -19, and in anticipation of future technological changes, this key change in recording and understanding practice is vital.

Q11 Are you supportive of the below changes to record personalised follow-up and remote monitoring?

Yes, the RCOphth is highly supportive of this change which will allow the safe development of alternative and more efficient patient care pathways. We believe that it forms an integral part of the transformation work that is key to improving patient services and outcomes.

Q12 Are you supportive of the addition of LATEST CLINICALLY APPROPRIATE DATE?

We strongly welcome this proposal. The RCOphth has for a long time been raising patient risk issues around delays in outpatient follow up appointments, and set out the need for data collection on delays¹. There is now a wealth of evidence that this is a significant problem in our specialty. We are therefore heartened and delighted at the prospect of the introduction of a latest clinically appropriate date measure. We consider it critical in planning and organising services and a major step forward in improving patient safety.

For more information please contact policy@rcophth.ac.uk

¹ <https://www.rcophth.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Measuring-follow-up-timeliness-and-risk-for-performance-reporting-improvement-actions-and-targeting-failsafe-procedures-in-England.pdf>