

# WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**Issue Date:** 28 May 2015

**STATUS: INFORMATION**

**CATEGORY: GOVERNANCE**

**Title: Sharing Patient information between healthcare professionals – a joint statement from the Royal College of Ophthalmologists and College of Optometrists**

**Date of Expiry / Review**

n/a

**For Action by:**

*Health Boards*

**Action required by:**

*Immediate*

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**Enclosure(s):** n/a

## **Sharing Patient information between healthcare professionals – a joint statement from the Royal College of ophthalmologists and College of Optometrists**

On 20 March 2015 the Royal College of Ophthalmologists and the College of Optometrists issued a joint statement encouraging ophthalmologists to share clinical information with the referring optometrist, please see the joint statement below.

Health boards should ensure hospital policies and procedures encourage this communication so that it becomes standard practice for planned and unplanned ophthalmology care in Wales.

### Joint statement:

People using health and social care services are entitled to expect that their personal information will remain confidential. However, people also expect professionals to share information with other members of the care team. Good sharing of information [1], when sharing is appropriate, is as important as maintaining confidentiality. Optometrists, as regulated professionals, are part of the healthcare team so it is usually in the patients' best interest for ophthalmologists to share clinical information with the referring optometrist. This will improve the care of the patient, and that of future patients, by providing useful feedback about the diagnosis and management. It will also reduce duplication of tests, and possible unnecessary re-referrals. Unless the hospital policy specifically prohibits sending copies of letters to optometrists, ophthalmologists should send copies of GP letters to the referring optometrist after confirming consent by the patient. The consent must be recorded in the notes.

Optometrists can help to ensure that they receive feedback by always including their name and contact details clearly on the referral letter.

[1] Dame Fiona Caldicott, The Information Governance Review, March 2013, page 21 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-information-governance-review>

<https://www.rcophth.ac.uk/2015/03/sharing-patient-information-between-healthcare-professionals-a-joint-statement-from-the-royal-college-of-ophthalmologists-and-college-of-optometrists/>