

## Position statement on the prescribing for mild dry or sore tired eyes

Following the NHS England guidance 'Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs' (March 2018) the following changes to prescribing have been agreed across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge.

**From 16 March 2021  
Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical  
Commissioning Groups (BHR CCGS) no longer supports the  
prescribing of treatment for mild dry or sore tired eyes**

### Decision

The decision to stop treatment for mild dry or sore tired eyes applies to ALL patients across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge unless the patient fall into one of the exceptions listed below.

If symptoms are not improving or responding to treatment, then patients should be encouraged to seek further advice from a pharmacy, NHS app, NHS website or NHS 111. For care home patients: access to treatment should be considered via a care home policy.

### Exceptions

BHR CCGs have agreed exceptions to this recommendation, where they accept that prescribing should continue in primary care for:

- Chronic or severely dry/sore eyes
- Symptoms have not resolved despite self-treatment for a few weeks
- The clinician considers that the patient's ability to self-manage is compromised as a consequence of significant vulnerability to the extent that their health and/or wellbeing could be adversely affected, if reliant on self-care. Consideration should also be given to safeguarding issues

### This decision was made because:

- Dry eye syndrome, or dry eye disease, is a common condition that occurs when the eyes don't make enough tears, or the tears evaporate too quickly
- Most cases of sore tired eyes resolve themselves
- Patients should be encouraged to manage both dry eyes and sore eyes such as good eyelid hygiene and avoidance of environmental factors alongside treatment
- Mild to moderate cases of dry eye syndrome or sore tired eyes can usually be treated using lubricant eye treatments that consist of a range of drops, gels and ointments that can be easily be purchased over the counter
- BHR CCGs have a duty to spend taxpayer's money wisely, to make sure they get the best value possible – especially when NHS funding is being severely squeezed and more patients are being seen with more complex health issues than ever before

## References

1. NHS website: dry eye- last reviewed: 17 December 2018. Page accessed 23 April 2021 <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dry-eyes/>
2. NHS England and NHS Clinical Commissioners. Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs, March 2018. Publishing approval reference 07851 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-guidance-for-CCGs/>