



## Contact Lens Clinic

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**This leaflet explains what the contact lens department does. If you have any further question or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.**

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### Who is eligible to get contact lenses?

Contact lenses are provided at Prince Charles Eye Unit and Royal Berkshire Hospital only when there is a medical need. Usually, this is when vision cannot be improved with glasses but can be improved with contact lenses. We must receive a referral from your ophthalmologist (eye doctor) at any of our sites.

We can prescribe and fit contact lenses for a range of medical eye conditions, such as keratoconus, corneal distortion, or scarred/white corneas. We also treat patients with very high prescriptions (e.g. over +10D or -15D), or to relieve pain or for cosmetic reason if your eye has scar damage (e.g. from infection or trauma). We cannot fit contact lenses if normal vision can be obtained with glasses. You will need to go to your own optician for this.

### Am I eligible?

Your referral from the ophthalmologist will be reviewed by the optometrist (clinical professionals who specialise in the care of eyes) to ensure there is a clinical need for contact lenses. They will assess your eligibility and if you are eligible, an appointment will be sent to you.

### What happens in clinic?

The lens type will be selected according to your clinical need. The lenses are often specially made, so you will usually need a separate appointment to collect your lenses and get instructions on how to look after them.

### Paying for your contact lenses

Statutory NHS patients charges or exemptions arrangements apply and these charges are updated annually on 1 April each year. The current prices are available from the Contact Lens Clinic.

Ordering time depends on the complexity of the lens and the individual manufacturer, but they typically take between 2 and 8 weeks. The same charges apply for replacement lenses or if a lens breaks outside the three-months manufacturer's warranty period (this does not affect your statutory rights).

**Please note that lenses will not be ordered until payment or proof of exemption has been seen.**

Exemptions include:

- Patients who have proof of a qualifying benefit (e.g. universal credit).
- Children under 16, or 16 to 19 years and in full-time education.

Patients who are not eligible for exemption can apply to the NHS Business Services Authority for a contribution to the cost of their lenses using an HC1 form, which can be obtained directly by telephoning 0300 3301 343 or download from <https://apps.nhsbsa.uk/LISWebAppStaticData/orderLISForm.do>

### **Important**

Patients who are exempt from standard charges, but repeatedly break or lose lenses will be charged for replacements. To avoid the problems of contact lens loss, we advise that you keep a spare but only if you have been advised by a contact lens clinician that your prescription is stable. Please note that you will need to pay for spares, even if you have exemption.

Payments can be made at the Cashier's Office on level 2 main entrance at the Royal Berkshire Hospital or by calling 0118 322 7054. American Express cards are not accepted.

### **How do I contact the contact lens orders department?**

To order your contact lenses, please contact either:

- Prince Charles Eye Unit, Orthoptics Department on 0118 322 7169, option 1 then option 2, Mon-Fri from 8.30am-4.30pm, or;
- Royal Berkshire Hospital, Orthoptics Department on 0118 322 7169, option 1 then option 2, Mon-Fri from 8.30am-5pm. The clinic is closed for lunch between 12.00 and 1pm.

Lenses can be posted upon request if patients have already paid and the patient has been seen in the contact lens clinic within the previous 12 months. Please note that contact lenses are not sent via recorded delivery and the department cannot take liability for lost/damaged post.

Your GP can prescribe eye medication, but cannot prescribe contact lens solution. Patients are able to purchase additional contact lens solutions from their

pharmacy, supermarkets, online, etc.

## Attending appointments

Please wear your lenses to your appointments if you can tolerate them, as we would like to assess the effect of the lenses on your eyes.

Please let us know in advance if you cannot keep an appointment so that an alternative date can be arranged. Appointments can be booked or rescheduled by calling: PCEU or RBH on 0118 322 7169, option 1 then option 2.

Patients will be discharged if they fail to attend their appointments and haven't contacted us, or if they have not been seen by the contact lens optician for more than 12 months because they haven't booked an appointment.

- If you are not a current patient, you will not be able to obtain contact lenses or contact lens solution from the hospital. You cannot be seen in the clinic unless you are referred by your doctor.
- If you are discharged from the hospital and continue to wear contact lenses, it is essential that you are under the care of a contact lens practitioner. You can book appointments at most opticians; however, they may want to do a glasses and eye health check first.
- We can supply a copy of your contact lenses prescription once your fitting is complete. This is usually after you have been reviewed in the clinic and have been wearing the lenses for a minimum of three months after issue.
- **Important: Please note that you will not be seen in the contact lens clinic without an appointment.**

## What to do in an emergency

If your eye suddenly becomes red, painful or your vision suddenly becomes worse, go to:

- Eye Casualty PCEU: Mon-Fri 8.30am-5pm. Sat 9am-12:30pm.
- Eye Casualty RBH: Mon-Fri 8.30am-5pm. Sat-Sun and Bank Holidays 9am-12.30pm.
- 24-hour Emergency Department (A&E).
- Your own doctor/GP.

It is important to let the staff know if you are wearing an extended wear lens (e.g. regular overnight wear for medical reasons) or bandage (therapeutic) contact lens. Please note that Emergency Departments (A&E) do not provide contact lenses, cases or contact lens solutions.

## Further information

- NHS 111 – offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.
- [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) – online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.

## Contact us

Contact Lens Clinic (Orthoptics) PCEU, Windsor	0118 322 7169 (option 1 then option 2) Mon-Fri 8.30am-4.30pm
Contact Lens Clinic (Orthoptics) RBH, Reading	0118 322 7169 (option 1 then option 2) Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.00pm

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask before your appointment if you need this information in another language or format.**

RBFT Orthoptics Department, December 2024  
Next review due: December 2026