



The ROYAL COLLEGE of
OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

2017 Manifesto

Make Vision and Eye Health a National Priority

Making vision and eye health a national priority will reduce the burden that sight loss has on the health and social care system.

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists is calling on the next government to invest in sustainable eye healthcare for all.

Recent research by RCOphth found patients suffering permanent and severe visual loss due to health service initiated delays, showing that up to **22 patients per month** losing vision by such delays.

Develop a workforce to deliver high quality and timely care for patients

Train more ophthalmologists

- 30% of consultant posts advertised in 2015 were unfilled due to lack of trained applicants, and most eye units have a shortfall of at least one consultant
 - Ophthalmology is a successful specialty in attracting and retaining doctors but there are insufficient training posts in the UK to meet clinical demand

Upskill and expand the multidisciplinary eye care team

- Ophthalmologists are supported by a team of non-medical healthcare professionals (HCPs) to deliver eye care in hospital clinics and the community. But there is no nationally recognised scheme to upskill and expand the workforce
 - To safely expand and sustain this workforce, there must be standardised training with recognised continuing professional development for non-medical ophthalmic healthcare professional

Fund and support improvements to make eye services sustainable

Demand for hospital eye outpatient services **increased by 40%** during the last decade and levels of chronic eye disease continue to rise with the ageing population and new successful treatments.

Further investment in resources is required to deliver the innovative new models of care that ophthalmologists have developed to meet the growing clinical need. This will ensure:

- Equal access to effective, clinically recommended treatments
- All appointments are within clinically safe timeframes - with emphasis on review patients who are at increased risk of vision loss
- Seamless patient journeys through primary and secondary care

Poor vision affects health, economic well-being and productivity of individuals, families and society as a whole



More than **2 million** people have reduced vision in the UK and it is estimated that this figure will double by 2050

£28
BILLION

The direct and indirect costs of blindness in the UK are **£28 billion** per annum



People with vision impairment are **twice as likely** to have falls



Sight loss is associated with increased levels of **depression** and **anxiety**



Loss of vision is recognised to mean **earlier dependency on care homes** and care support