



The ROYAL COLLEGE of
OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

Ophthalmology

Make Vision and Eye Health a National Priority

Making vision and eye health a national priority will deliver significant public health gains and reduce the financial and resource burden on the wider community and social care systems

The focus of a population approach to eye and vision health will create conditions where people can achieve their full vision potential

- Effective approved screening programmes (pre-school vision screening in children and diabetic retinal programmes in the UK)
- Equal access for all patients to effective and timely treatment of eye disease based on clinical recommendations
- Gather data on review patients to ensure they are not lost to follow up
- Remove arbitrary tariffs that reward new patients and disadvantage follow up patients

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

- The risk of mortality and morbidity from other chronic conditions (both physical and mental) increases significantly with loss of sight



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

Ophthalmology is a highly efficient specialty with large volumes of surgery performed in hospital eye services

- Over 700,000 operations per year in England (6% of total surgery)
- Over 7 million out-patient appointments (nearly 10% of all out-patients)
- More than 1 million procedures eg diabetic retinal laser, intra-ocular drug injections
- Future projections of population demographics indicate significant increases in demand for ophthalmic services

Ophthalmologists have been responsive to change in working practices that could benefit many other areas of healthcare by sharing these models of care

- Ophthalmologists are a small, responsive workforce of less than 1,500 ophthalmologists in the UK that have absorbed significant increases in demand by developing innovative models of care
- Use of virtual and mobile clinics
- Improved flow of patients through the hospital system for better patient experience using multidisciplinary working
- Better pathways across primary and secondary care
 - Reduce false positive referrals through better guidance and criteria
 - Promote shared care
 - Improve discharge policies

Developing the ophthalmic workforce to meet demand

- A recent workforce survey by RCOphth indicates that 30% of consultant posts advertised in 2015 were not filled due to lack of appropriately trained applicants or no applicants at all
- Most eye units show a shortfall of at least one consultant
- There are insufficient ophthalmology training posts available in the UK to meet the clinical demand
- Ophthalmology is a successful specialty in attracting and retaining doctors

Multidisciplinary expanded roles require a national programme of training and standardisation of competencies to provide a balanced system of care

- Ophthalmologists work with a team of non-medical healthcare professionals (HCPs) made up of qualified optometrists, orthoptists, ophthalmic nurses and ophthalmic clinical scientists
- The ophthalmologist-led multidisciplinary team delivers patient care in hospital eye clinics and the community
- Standardised training for the expanded roles of HCPs with recognised continuing professional development is required to ensure sustainability of this workforce

About The Royal College of Ophthalmologists

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth) is the only professional body for eye doctors, who are medically qualified and have undergone or are undergoing specialist training in the prevention, treatment and management of eye disease, including surgery. RCOphth champion excellence in the practice of ophthalmology on behalf of our members to optimise care for patients.

www.rcophth.ac.uk