



## Summary of RCOphth 2024 clinical leads survey

Between January-February 2024, The Royal College of Ophthalmologists conducted a survey of ophthalmology clinical leads based in NHS ophthalmology departments based across the UK.

The survey asked questions relating to:

- the ability of departments to deliver a service that meets the needs of patients in their area
- the extent to which services delivered by department are well-integrated with other parts of the eye care pathway
- the impact of independent sector providers on ophthalmology services.

There were 83 completed responses to the survey, a response rate of 64%. For any questions relating to this data, please contact [policy@rcophth.ac.uk](mailto:policy@rcophth.ac.uk)

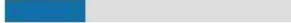
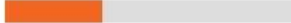







### Question 1:

**Do you think your ophthalmology department is able to deliver a service that meets the needs of patients in your area?**

Answer Choices	Responses		
Yes - the service we are able to deliver does generally meet the needs of patients in our area		25.30%	21
No - the service we are able to deliver does not generally meet the needs of patients in our area		15.66%	13
Partially - the service we are able to deliver meets the needs of patients in our area in some respects, but does not in other respects		59.04%	49
Answered: 83 Skipped: 0		Response Total:	83





## Question 2:

What are the most important factors that would help your ophthalmology department deliver a service that better meets the needs of patients in your area? Please tick up to three options.

Answer Choices	Responses		
Access to diagnostic hub		27.71%	23
Appropriate digital infrastructure, such as electronic patient records, electronic eyecare referral systems or image transfer systems		33.73%	28
Better able to recruit/appoint new staff		71.08%	59
Better retention of existing staff		38.55%	32
Effective support from trust/health board management		31.33%	26
Good relationship and agreed referral pathways with optometry		34.94%	29
Increase of independent sector provision of NHS ophthalmology services		7.23%	6
Reduction of independent sector provision of NHS ophthalmology services		34.94%	29
Sufficient clinic space		71.08%	59
Sufficient theatre space		53.01%	44
None - our service already fully meets the needs of patients in our area		0.00%	0
Other (please specify): <a href="#">Show</a>		13.25%	11
Answered: 83 Skipped: 0		Response Total: 83	

## Question 3:

For which staff groups would improved retention help your ophthalmology department deliver a service that better meets the needs of patients in your area? Please tick all that apply.

Answer Choices	Responses		
Consultant ophthalmologists		71.88%	23
SAS or locally employed doctors		59.38%	19
Ophthalmologists in training		12.50%	4
Other members of the multidisciplinary eye care team, such as ophthalmic nurses or technicians.		75.00%	24
Answered: 32 Skipped: 51		Response Total: 32	
















#### Question 4:

In which sub-specialties are you most concerned that your ophthalmology department is not currently able to deliver a service that meets the needs of patients in your area? Please tick up to three options.

Answer Choices	Responses		
Cataract		36.14%	30
Community ophthalmology		12.05%	10
Cornea & Ocular Surface		16.87%	14
General ophthalmology		19.28%	16
Glaucoma		63.86%	53
Medical Retina		54.22%	45
Neuro-ophthalmology		22.89%	19
Ocular oncology		1.20%	1
Ocular-motility and strabismus		12.05%	10
Oculoplastics and Orbit		14.46%	12
Paediatric ophthalmology		33.73%	28
Surgical Retina		12.05%	10
Urgent Eye Care		26.51%	22
Uveitis		10.84%	9
None - not concerned about any sub-specialty		1.20%	1
Answered: 83 Skipped: 0			Response Total: 83






### Question 5:

Thinking ahead three years to 2027, in which sub-specialties are you most concerned that your ophthalmology department will not be able to deliver a service that meets the needs of patients in your area? Please tick up to three options.

Answer Choices	Responses		
Cataract		25.30%	21
Community ophthalmology		7.23%	6
Cornea & Ocular Surface		10.84%	9
General ophthalmology		14.46%	12
Glaucoma		53.01%	44
Medical Retina		50.60%	42
Neuro-ophthalmology		20.48%	17
Ocular oncology		3.61%	3
Ocular-motility and strabismus		14.46%	12
Oculoplastics and Orbit		6.02%	5
Paediatric ophthalmology		31.33%	26
Surgical Retina		10.84%	9
Urgent Eye Care		24.10%	20
Uveitis		7.23%	6
None - not concerned about any sub-specialty		4.82%	4
Answered: 83 Skipped: 0		Response Total:	83














### Question 6:

Compared to 12 months ago, have you become more or less concerned about the impact of outpatient backlogs in your ophthalmology department on patient care?

Answer Choices	Responses		
Much more concerned		31.33%	26
Somewhat more concerned		38.55%	32
About the same		19.28%	16
Somewhat less concerned		6.02%	5
Much less concerned		4.82%	4
Answered: 83 Skipped: 0			Response Total: 83


### Question 7:

Which sub-specialties have the most concerning outpatient backlogs in your department? Please tick up to three options.

Answer Choices	Responses		
Cataract		31.33%	26
Community Ophthalmology		2.41%	2
Cornea & Ocular Surface Cornea & Ocular Surface		10.84%	9
Glaucoma		81.93%	68
Medical Retina		66.27%	55
Neuro-ophthalmology		14.46%	12
Ocular oncology		0.00%	0
Ocular-motility and strabismus		3.61%	3
Oculoplastics and Orbit		20.48%	17
Paediatric Ophthalmology		21.69%	18
Surgical Retina		7.23%	6
Urgent Eye Care		4.82%	4
Uveitis		4.82%	4
None - no subspecialties have concerning outpatient backlogs		3.61%	3
Answered: 83 Skipped: 0			Response Total: 83







### Question 8:

Are independent sector providers (private companies undertaking NHS-funded ophthalmology services) having an impact on the delivery of services by your department?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	 69.88% 58
No	 20.48% 17
Unsure	 9.64% 8
Answered: 83 Skipped: 0 <span style="float: right;">Response Total: 83</span>	

### Question 9:

What impact have independent sector providers (private companies delivering NHS services) of ophthalmology services had on patient care and services in your department?

Answer Choices	Responses
Very positive	 0.00% 0
Somewhat positive	 5.17% 3
Mixed	 27.59% 16
Unsure	 0.00% 0
Somewhat negative	 34.48% 20
Very negative	 32.76% 19
Answered: 58 Skipped: 25 <span style="float: right;">Response Total: 58</span>	



### Question 10:

Considering the following factors, what do you think has been the impact of independent sector providers on your ophthalmology department?

Answer Choices	Positive	Negative	Mixed/unsure	No impact	Response Total
Ability to deliver comprehensive services	7.58% 5	48.48% 32	24.24% 16	19.70% 13	66
Available workforce	4.55% 3	50.00% 33	22.73% 15	22.73% 15	66
Cataract waiting lists	28.79% 19	39.39% 26	25.76% 17	6.06% 4	66
Funding of my ophthalmology department	1.52% 1	57.58% 38	27.27% 18	13.64% 9	66
Overall waiting lists	18.18% 12	25.76% 17	40.91% 27	15.15% 10	66
Training opportunities	3.03% 2	72.73% 48	7.58% 5	16.67% 11	66
Clinical research	0.00% 0	31.82% 21	10.61% 7	57.58% 38	66

Answered: 66 Skipped: 17

### Question 11:

To what extent do you think services delivered by your ophthalmology department are well-integrated with primary and community optometry services?

Answer Choices	Responses
Very well integrated	 16.87% 14
Somewhat integrated	 56.63% 47
Not well integrated	 26.51% 22

Answered: 83 Skipped: 0

Response Total: 83

Question 12:

How do the following enablers of integrated care function in your ophthalmology department?

Answer Choices	Functions well	Does not function well	Not applicable/not in place in my ophthalmology department	Response Total
Interoperable electronic eye care referral systems	28.92% 24	33.73% 28	37.35% 31	83
Interoperable imaging standards	14.46% 12	38.55% 32	46.99% 39	83
Locally agreed referral pathways	57.83% 48	34.94% 29	7.23% 6	83
Relationship with primary and community optometry services	61.45% 51	33.73% 28	4.82% 4	83
Shared electronic patient record systems	8.43% 7	31.33% 26	60.24% 50	83
Support from local trust/health board management, such as investment in IT systems	27.71% 23	44.58% 37	27.71% 23	83
Answered: 83 Skipped: 0				