



Department of Health: 'Valuing People Now: From Progress to Transformation'

This is a joint response from the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO), Association of Optometrists (AOP), the College of Optometrists and the Federation of Ophthalmic & Dispensing Opticians (FODO).

Together ABDO, AOP, the College and FODO represent the 10,500 optometrists and over 5,000 dispensing opticians and optical businesses who provide high quality and accessible eye care services throughout the UK. Optometrists and opticians represent a diverse ethnic mix.

We have confined our responses to those questions that we feel are relevant to our members, the eye care providers working mainly in the community.

The Big Priorities

Do you agree that we should identify a small number of priorities and give them more attention?

Yes No

Do you think that the priorities we have identified are the right ones?

Personalisation (choice and control) Yes No

What people do with their days (including work) Yes No

Better health Yes No

More Choice about housing Yes No

Making *Valuing People* Happen Yes No

Any other topics you think should also be one of the Big Priorities?

Please tell us what you think about the different sections on *Valuing People Now*

We would like you to tell us whether you think they have identified the right issues and actions, whether you disagree with anything, or whether we have missed out important things. Please mark the boxes, then put any comments at the end.

Section	About Right	Missing Something	Has Things I Disagree With
Personalisation			
What people do during the day			
Better Health		Yes eye health and vision correction	
Improving People's Housing Situations			
Advocacy and rights			
Partnership with Families			
Including Everyone			
People as Local Citizens			
Transition			
Improving the Workforce			
National and Local leadership			
Better commissioning			
Checking How We Are Doing			

Do you agree that people should be offered regular comprehensive health checks?

Yes

No

Comments:

Those with learning disabilities have the right to the same access to health care including eye care, as others. Just as with many other patients who have multiple health problems, their eye health is often overlooked and not considered by those caring for them.

Regular sight tests are important in improving sight and maintaining eye health which in turn can improve patients' wellbeing and quality of life. Patients with a learning disability may not realise or be able to communicate that they have a problem with their vision. This adds to the likelihood that a problem with their vision will not be identified or treated. Some people with a learning disability are at a greater risk of eye disease such as cataract. There are a range of tests which an optometrist can carry out to check the vision and eye health of a person with learning disabilities, even if they are unable to read or have difficulty communicating.

Carrying out a sight test on a patient with learning disability will take longer than on other patients, as they may take longer to settle and may be slower to respond to questions. Optometrists are currently only paid £19.32 for an NHS sight test which on average takes around half an hour to carry out. For patients with learning disabilities the time taken to carry out a sight test will be much longer and optometrists should be properly remunerated to care for these patients.

People with learning disabilities are living longer and so will be at risk of developing an age-related eye condition, such as glaucoma. The sooner any such condition is detected and treated the better the outcome and the less likely it is that the person will develop sight loss. Regular sight testing will include checking for diseases such as glaucoma as a matter of course.

Equally those who are unable to leave home unaided, deserve the same access to eye care services. The NHS domiciliary eye care service provides a vital service to those who are unable to access an optical practice in the community with optometrists and dispensing opticians visiting patients in their own home or residential home. People with learning disabilities may find it less daunting to have a sight test in their own home or familiar surroundings than in an unfamiliar environment such as a high street consulting room. This can lead to the optometrist getting a better response when the patient is examined at home.