

UK Vision Strategy

The Role of Optometrists

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UK Vision Strategy

Presentation outline:

- What is the UK Vision Strategy all about?
- What's happening now?
- Delivering the Strategy and the optometrist
- From the Strategy to reality



What is the UK Vision Strategy?

- The UK Vision Strategy is about major transformation in the UK's eye health, eye care and sight loss services.
- It is possibly the most important step to improve eye health and sight loss services across the UK for 50 years
- Achievement of the outcomes and aims of the Strategy needs everyone to work in partnership from right across the sector



What is the UK Vision Strategy?

- The UK Vision Strategy is the response of the UK to the World Health Organisation's Vision 2020 resolution to:
 - eliminate avoidable sight loss by the year 2020.
 - improve services for people with sight loss.
- The UK Government has pledged its support for this resolution.



Why the need for action in the UK?

- Poor understanding of the impact of lifestyles and health conditions on sight.
- Too many people are living with sight loss that could be avoided.
- Inequality in the provision of, and access to, eye health and sight loss services.
- Lack of “joined up” service delivery.
- Barriers to inclusion and participation for people with sight loss.



What action is required?

We need to work together to:

- to raise awareness of the importance of good eye health care to everyone
- to make sure that no-one loses their sight when this can be prevented
- to make sure that people with sight loss can access the right services
- to ensure that we focus on the person



What makes the UK Vision Strategy different to other initiatives?

- The Strategy is based on the views of the sector with well over 650 people giving their input
- The Strategy has been commended by the Secretary of State for Health and has the support of all four UK governments
- It's key is partnership working and the work is headed up by leaders from right across the eye health and sight loss sector.
- It's about real people working together to find real and long-lasting solutions!



What makes the UK Vision Strategy different to other initiatives?

- The Strategy:
 - is a powerful and united voice for change
 - is a positive driving force
 - is a strategy for all people of all ages – inclusive, not exclusive
 - has agreed priority actions to achieve the initial five year aims
- By working together we can start to make changes in a way that none of us can achieve on our own



UK Vision Strategy: Key Outcomes

The UK Vision Strategy focuses on three key outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** Improving the eye health of the people of the UK.
- **Outcome 2:** Eliminating avoidable sight loss and delivering excellent support for people with visual impairment.
- **Outcome 3:** Inclusion, participation and independence for people with sight loss.



Outcome 1: The Case for Change

- Sight loss is even more feared than cancer, AIDs, stroke, heart disease .
- Around 50% of sight loss in the UK is avoidable.
- Both smoking and obesity can double the probability of sight loss.
- The early stages of many eye diseases show no symptoms.
- Research has shown a four-fold return in investment in early eye care intervention.

Outcome 2: The Case for Change

- Current integration of primary and secondary eye care services is inconsistent.
- There is great disparity across the UK in the delivery of eye care services
- Prevalence levels of AMD, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy are rising .
- The risk of sight loss is higher within certain groups of society.
- Emotional support for sight loss is almost non-existent.

Outcome 2: The Case for Change (#2)

- Many blind and partially sighted people do not receive the equipment they need to help them with mobility, communication and other everyday tasks.
- There is a decrease in the number of qualified staff supporting blind and partially sighted people.

Outcome 3: The Case for Change

- Three out of four blind or partially sighted older people live in poverty.
- Only 34% of blind and partially sighted people are in employment.
- Less than 5% of books are available in accessible formats.
- Many public buildings remain inaccessible to blind or partially sighted people.

What is happening now?

- All four UK countries are developing national plans
- A network of champions are being established to support the work
- Roadshows and a conference in 2009
- Support pack about to be published
- Newsletters and websites to share learning
- Local groups are being set up to take the Strategy forward – a role for optoms!



Delivering the UK Vision Strategy and optometrists



- Largest group of eye health professionals
- An indepth knowledge of eye health, sight and sight loss
- The high street optician/optometrist is the commonest point of access to eye care

Delivering the UK Vision Strategy and optometrists



- Optometrists are ideally placed to promote eye health messages
- Optometrists can be a source of information and a link to other services

Delivering the UK Vision Strategy and optometrists



- Optometry training gives the ability to think clearly and logically and to communicate ideas and concepts
- Optometry training gives the ability to analyse issues and identify solutions



Delivering the UK Vision Strategy and optometrists



- Optometrists have the ability to lead partnership working to initiate enhanced services
- Optometrists have the knowledge and support to lead local cross sector groups



Delivering the UK Vision Strategy and optometrists

Leading on the UK Vision Strategy will:

- raise the profile of optometry in the community by becoming a key player in local partnerships
- raise awareness of what optometry can offer
- build trust with other professionals
- increase footfall through the optometry practices



Delivering the UK Vision Strategy and optometrists

Through implementation of the UK Vision Strategy there will be :

- a better understanding and support from voices outside the sector about the value of enhanced services
- increased support for adoption of enhanced service contracts
- greater awareness of the need for realistic remuneration



From Strategy to Reality

- All local plans should relate to the aims of the UK Vision Strategy. This will require:
 - regular user involvement and feedback
 - working across health, social care and the voluntary sector
 - close liaison with other sectors with an interest in eye health and sight loss issues (eg: diabetes, stroke, needs of older people etc)
- Partnership working will improve understanding and co-operation on issues of common concern.



From Strategy to Reality

Success will be:

- Prioritisation of eye health and sight loss by the Governments across the UK
- Changes in attitude to eye health, leading to improved eye health
- Changes that have positive impact on the lives of people with sight loss and people using eye health services
- Reduction of barriers to people with sight loss



From Strategy to Reality

Some ways to engage

- Check the UK Vision Strategy and other websites for information and events
- Register to receive the newsletter
- Identify others involved in eye care and local societies for sight loss; what else is happening in your area?
- Start a partnership group
- Engage with the PCT and Social Care
- Use the LOC Support Unit/UKVS team



From Strategy to Reality

We've heard it before, but:

- This time we can succeed – all Governments are buying-in
- Government policy is in line with the UK Vision Strategy
- The power of the whole sector working together is formidable!



UK Vision Strategy

Why do I care:

- Because I want no-one to lose their sight when this could have been prevented
- Because I want the right services to be available at the right time and in the right place
- Because I want people with sight loss to have the same rights and responsibilities as the rest of society



Conclusion

- The UK Vision Strategy offers one of the most exciting opportunities ever to transform eye health, eye care and sight loss services across the UK.
- Success will ultimately depend on how effectively local resources can be mobilised to achieve the outcomes of the Strategy.
- You can help make a difference! For more information, please contact ukvisionstrategy@rnib.org.uk



UK Vision Strategy

Setting the direction for eye health and
sight loss services

Thank you!

