

OS Activity Report: July 2018

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IMPORTANT: Revised regulations coming soon

Optometry Scotland representatives formed part of the Short Life Working Group that has reviewed the current GOS regulations.

OS has also made further representation to the new draft GOS Regulations to ensure that the new regulations are fit for purpose and reflect the contemporary optometry model and the developing community eyecare landscape.

Samantha Watson, Chair of Optometry Scotland, said: "We welcome the recognition in these amendments that community optometry is the first port of call for all eye related problems. These amendments signal the end of the 'tick box' nature of provision and will enable the service to develop further allowing practitioners to perform those tests and procedures indicated necessary by the patient's presenting signs and symptoms.

"There is still much work to be done in effectively delivering and improving General Ophthalmic Services in Scotland, and we look forward to collaborating with the Scottish Government further."

The proposed amendments are the result of close consultation between Optometry Scotland and the Scottish Government following The Community Eyecare Services Review report published in April 2017

Subject to the approval of the Scottish Parliament, the majority of the changes come into force from 1 October 2018.



Full regulations can be found on our website www.optometryscotland.org.uk

OS will continue to work with the Scottish Government in an ongoing review of eyecare services with particular reference to the recent 'Community Eyecare Services Review' (CESR) considering the key recommendations of the CESR and how these can be implemented. OS will also engage with the Scottish Government in an ongoing appraisal of GOS and Optometry with the implicit intention of improving funding and resource allocation for community optometrists.

This will involve a regular 3-4 month meeting schedule starting later this summer. The goal is to establish realistic fees for the next 3 years and beyond with annual uplifts.

We would welcome feedback from members and would like to encourage new members to support and join Optometry Scotland in order to secure the future of the profession.

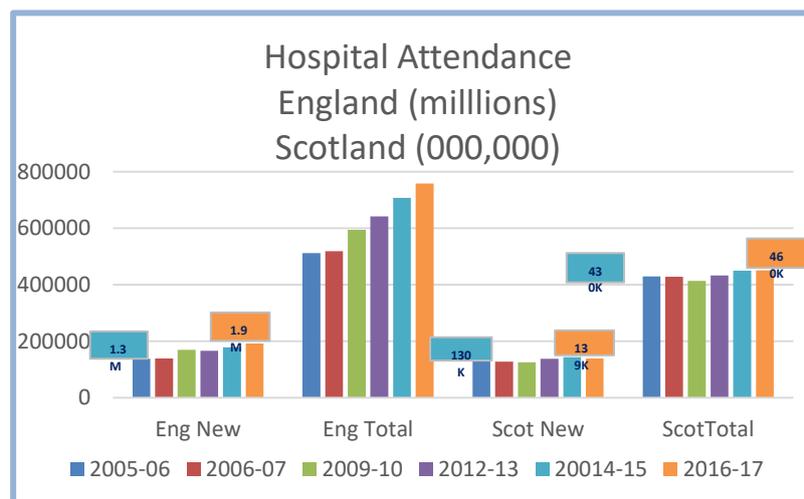
Lobbying

Representatives from Optometry Scotland attended the SNP conference in Aberdeen and met with Health and Sports committee member Ivan McKee.

We also met with other members of the Health and Sports committee at the Scottish Parliament, including the Convenor, Lewis Macdonald, to discuss our **GOS Works** paper and where optometry will fit into the Scottish Government Preventative Agenda that is currently being prepared by the Scottish Government during the parliamentary recess. (Please get in touch if you would like a copy of the paper or the executive summary)

The graph beside is an excerpt from the **GOS Works** paper, demonstrating how the profession in Scotland has been successful in maintaining patients in the community.

We will arrange to meet with the new Health & Sports Minister in due course to bring her, and her committee, up to date with optometry in Scotland and OS. We will also be meeting with other MSPs when parliament resumes in September, including the Deputy Convenor.



RNIB

OS met with James Adams, Director of RNIB to discuss collaborative working with RNIB and Diabetes Scotland over National Eye Health week.

The expectation will be more joined up working on areas of mutual interest.

Connectivity

All replacement remote access VPN tokens have now been distributed. This is an interim solution ahead of a new connection service which will be rolled out later in the year.

This new connection will have the functionality to open the door to the greater NHS network.

OS will need to work hard to raise the profile of optometry being part of the wider Primary Care network going forward and to be included in the development and have access to the generation of the Universal Patient Record Card.

PSD/OS Roadshows

PSD and OS will be organising a series of roadshows to highlight the changes in the regulations, mandatory training and e-payments.

The Roadshows will be free of charge to all members, and will take place in various locations across the country. We hope to see you there.

We will be in touch soon with further details.

Health Awards

Nominations are now open so why not nominate your colleague, or even encourage a patient to nominate you?



Nominations can be made on on the [Scottish Health Awards](#) website.

You can also find the entry form for the Optometrist category here:

<http://www.scottishhealthawards.com/nominate-2018-form-a-optometrist.html>

Quality and supply of future Optometry and Dispensing graduates

PDC representatives have met with Skillseekers regarding the possibility of a GLA (Graduate Level Apprenticeship) degree course for Dispensing Optics. As you may be aware the DO course at GCU has been suspended and is awaiting redevelopment. After initial promise, progress has slowed down considerably. OS is concerned and believes that we must get the DO course back up and running as soon as possible in order that we don't have a future shortage of DOs.

We are also being asked to support the development of a GLA optometric assistant course. There is to be a meeting with ABDO in its London offices to discuss in July.

Discussions were held with GCU regarding promoting optometry as a career and both GCU and UHI are keen that work starts on this. We all have a part to play and there is a request that all practitioners take responsibility for this by talking to young patients and indeed visit schools to do career talks. GCU will develop a pack that optometrists can use to assist them with school visits. This is a call to arms for everyone. GCU are concerned that fewer students are applying to do the course.

Anita Simmers, Head of Department of Life Science at GCU points out:

1. Scotland's demographics show the population of school leavers to be on a steady decline likely to hit an all-time low in 2020. There will be a gradual increase in school leavers from about 2025, but that won't address current recruitment issues.
2. There has been no rise in applicant numbers for optometry over the last 3 years (whereas demand for AHP's and Nursing continues to rise).
3. Conversely, target numbers for Optometry have increased at GCU by 25% and from 2019 there will be a new provider in Scotland hoping to recruit 60 students

Community eyecare app

The 'COMMUNITY EYECARE APP' has now launched and OS looks forward to providing further input as it develops to reflect activity across Scotland.

Ophthalmology review

The West of Scotland Ophthalmology review is ongoing and we are very much involved.

Ophthalmology can clearly see the need for optometry to be involved in shared care. There is strong feeling that GOS should be allowed to be used for shared care. Hospital eye departments are at breaking point and the need for optometry to help out has never been greater.

An improved IT system is being worked on which should allow two way communication between ourselves and ophthalmology. This will allow for 'advice only' referrals. There is also the intention to update the referral templates in order to improve the data set on referrals.

GCU Research Project Update

Current research progress has allowed us to analyse changes in age-normalised prevalence for common eye conditions in Scotland. These findings were presented at the European Optometry Conference earlier this year. Ongoing work is being done to explore the issue of disparity in accessing eye care across various socioeconomic groups. In addition, we are due to undertake an audit of the Acute Referral Clinic (ARC) at Gartnavel Hospital, with particular focus on the number and accuracy of referrals being made by community optometrists.

OS NEWS IN PICTURES...

Optometry Scotland's vice-chair Dave Quigley was proud to present two prizes on behalf of OS at the recent GCU prizegiving ceremony. They were awarded to Katrina Louise Smith (Best Final Year Ophthalmic Dispensing Student) and David Innes (Best Final Year Optometry Student).



For further information on Optometry Scotland's activities or to get involved please contact us on:

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