

## **Optometry**

### **Optometrists**

Previously known as opticians, optometrists are trained to examine the eyes to detect defects in vision, signs of injury, ocular diseases or abnormality and problems with general health, such as high blood pressure or diabetes. They make a health assessment, offer clinical advice, prescribe spectacles or contact lenses and refer patients for further treatment, when necessary.

Optometrists study at university for at least three years and participate in a period of assessed clinical training in practice, before becoming registered. Once qualified, they continue to update their skills set annually through compulsory education and training. They also have the opportunity to take further qualifications allowing them to participate in shared care schemes with hospital eye departments, become independent prescribers or develop speciality interests in areas such as glaucoma and medical retina conditions. All optometrists practising in the UK must be registered with the [General Optical Council](#), the profession's regulatory body.

### **Independent Prescribing Optometrist**

Qualified optometrists with at least two years' experience can undertake a distance learning qualification to allow them to practise as independent prescribers and to meet the standards set by the General Optical Council for entry on to the appropriate specialist therapeutic prescribing register.

### **Dispensing Opticians**

A dispensing optician advises on, fits and supplies the most appropriate spectacles after taking account of each patient's visual, lifestyle and vocational needs. All registered dispensing opticians have undergone a minimum of three years academic and practical training to qualify and like optometrists must undertake additional compulsory training and development to maintain their registration. Only dispensing opticians registered with the General Optical Council (GOC) can practise in the UK and use the protected title dispensing optician.

Dispensing opticians also play an important role in advising and dispensing low vision aids to the sight impaired, dispensing to children and individuals who are defined in law as having complex lenses. They are also able to fit and provide aftercare for contact lenses after undergoing further specialist training.

### **Ophthalmic medical practitioner (OMP)**

OMPs are ophthalmologists who undertake sight tests. Like optometrists, they examine eyes, test sight, diagnose abnormalities and prescribe suitable corrective lenses. OMPs are registered with and regulated by the General Medical Council (GMC). The responsibilities of OMPs in conducting sight tests are the same as those of optometrists.

### **Ophthalmology**

Ophthalmology is the branch of medicine dealing with the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of diseases of the eye and visual system.

### **Ophthalmologist**

Ophthalmologists are medically trained doctors with specialist skills in the diagnosis, treatment, management and prevention of diseases of the eye and visual system. Ophthalmologists usually

work within hospital eye departments diagnosing and managing conditions such as glaucoma and age related macular degeneration. They also perform surgery on and around the eye following eye, lid and facial trauma or disease and perform corrective procedures in cases of squint.

### **Orthoptist**

Orthoptics is the study of sight and coordination in the eyes. Orthoptists are allied health professionals whose work relates to eye movement problems and the ability of the eyes to work together as a pair resulting in diplopia or strabismus. Orthoptists work alongside ophthalmologists in the management of children with squints and in association with optometrists for the supply of prismatic prescription spectacles to control diplopia.

### **Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs)**

Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) in Wales, work closely with medical and nursing staff in the eye clinic, and the sensory team in social services. They provide those recently diagnosed with an eye condition with the practical and emotional support which they need to understand their diagnosis, deal with their sight loss and maintain their independence by signposting and referring them to appropriate services for support.

### **Qualified Teacher of Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (QTVI)**

QTVIs are specialist staff with a qualification in vision impairment who carry out a central role in the education of sight impaired children and young people. QTVIs work directly with children in the acquisition of visual concepts and the development of literacy through Braille or large print and are involved in the planning and implementation of reducing adult support.

### **Habilitation Specialists**

Habilitation specialists, sometimes referred to as mobility officers support children and young people up to the age of 25 years who have a visual impairment and are in either mainstream or specialist education.

They teach how to move around as safely, efficiently and independently as possible and to promote confidence, provide advice on improving physical access to their environment help children and young people to take charge of their own personal care - by teaching them washing, dressing, organising belongings to ensure they are taking a full part in family life.

### **Rehabilitation Officers for Visually Impaired people (ROVI's)**

ROVIs are trained and qualified to work with people who have significant sight impairment to help develop strategies to maintain independent living. ROVIs can help people learn new skills to support their independence e.g. using a mobility aid such as a white cane, using communication tools such as Braille and specialised computer software, using magnification, correct lighting and colour contrast aids. A ROVI will see anyone who has a serious sight problem that is not corrected by glasses. Rehabilitation Officers for each area can be found via [Sight Cymru](#)