

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

Championing excellence in the optical sector

The College is shaping
the future of eye care
across the UK by ensuring
that optometrists
are at the heart of it

The year
in numbers



Defining and
inspiring excellence
in optometry



Enabling optometrists
to maximise their skills
and develop
their careers



Representing and
amplifying the
expert voices of
optometrists



Advancing knowledge
and celebrating
achievement in
optometry



A robust and
responsible
organisation

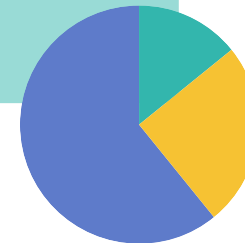


Council members
and trustees



THE COLLEGE OF
OPTOMETRISTS

Financials



President's foreword

Throughout the year, the College has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to advancing eye health policy, advocating for the profession, and working towards enhancing patient care across the UK, amid a year of political change and health service pressures.

Our members are increasingly working in multidisciplinary teams, and to ensure optometrists remain at the forefront of eye care provision, collaboration with other eye care organisations has been at the heart of our activity, increasing our reach, influence and voice to represent the profession.



Highlights from our collaborations include co-chairing a national working group on clinical imaging standards in eye care alongside the Royal College of Ophthalmologists. This initiative, supported by NHS England and optical manufacturers, aims to establish UK-wide standards that will drive interoperability of digital systems, enhancing image sharing across all platforms. This will ensure more efficient patient referrals, and reduce delays in diagnosis and treatment. Additionally, we partnered with the RNIB to develop a Low Vision Framework that will enhance inclusive, patient-centred care for patients across the UK, and a new Eye Care Support Pathway that will result in improved care experiences for patients and their families.

The College also led a UK sector-wide multi-professional eye care workforce supply and demand data modelling project, culminating in an interactive dashboard, modelling the current and future workforce and the prevalence of eye conditions over the next 15 years. This will help commissioners better meet eye health needs, identify priorities for future workforce education, training and development, and support the development of new models of care.

Working directly with governments means that our voice is heard at the highest level. Earlier in the year, under the previous government, we responded to a Department of Health and Social Care request, endorsing a Standard Clinical Specification for community minor and urgent eye care in England, developed with LOCSU and the Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning. Ahead of the general election, we published our first-ever Manifesto for Change, calling for reforms to tackle the eye care crisis; and under the new government, the conversation continued with the new Secretary of State for Health.

As the professional body for optometrists, it is essential that we work for all our members across eye care services throughout the UK. We were delighted to accept the invitation to join the Welsh Optometric Committee (WOC), a statutory advisory body to the Welsh Government; we contributed to the Optometry NI strategic planning day; and we supported the Nationals Services Scotland (NSS) team in updating prescribing guidance for Scottish optometrists.

Many services and support however are only enabled by external budgets. In 2024, funding was withdrawn for optometrists working in Scotland to have access to Docet, free CPD for General Optical Council (GOC) registered optometrists, developed and delivered by the College. Our petitions to reverse this decision were unsuccessful, but we continue to offer our high quality College CPD to all of our Scottish members, and are resolved to maintain the channels of communication for future developments.

It has been a busy and eventful year. I am proud of all of our members who continue to strive for ever better patient care, and we, at the College, are committed to working for you and on your behalf to advance the profession and improve patient outcomes.



Dr Gillian Rudduck
MCOptom
President of The College of Optometrists

Chief Executive's foreword

As we head towards the last year of our current strategic plan, we have continued to work hard to place optometrists at the heart of patient-centred eye care. Key to achieving this vision, is ensuring that optometrists have the support they need to achieve their full potential throughout their career.

In addition to qualifying around 1,000 trainees on the Scheme for Registration, we have continued to develop our Clinical Learning in Practice (CLiP) programme, to deliver the majority of the GOC's new requirements for patient-facing experience, integrated into 12 of the new master's degrees. Our custom-built CLiP portal was launched this year to ensure that all involved can collaborate online to support and assess student progress.



Great supervision is a key part of optometric education, and this year we developed and delivered enhanced supervisor training and resources, as well as the introduction of the Optometric Practice Educator (OptPE) affix to recognise members who have committed to providing excellent support for future optometrists.

The popularity of College-accredited Higher Qualifications continues to grow, and we awarded more than 1,000 this year, with Medical Retina surpassing Glaucoma in popularity for the first time. These qualifications are key to enhancing the knowledge and skills of practitioners tackling some of the UK's most critical eye health conditions.

In practice, our Clinical Management Guidelines continue to support evidence-based clinical decision making and 80% of our members tell us that they refer to our Guidance for Professional Practice at least once a week.

Members also really value our vibrant CPD programme, which featured our Optometry Tomorrow conference, and saw over 35,000 course completions across our CPD platforms.

Shaping the future based on research is a core part of our work and this year, with our partners, we launched the NIHR eLearning for Clinicians modules which are specifically developed for optometrists, enabling them to integrate clinical research into their practice and contribute to the profession's growing role in scientific discovery.

Bringing our expertise to significant public issues relating to eyesight is an important part of not only our public benefit but also promoting the value of the profession. We are the primary organisation national media turns to for information and response on any eye care stories.

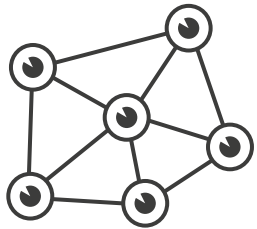
Our spokespeople have been busy representing the College and the profession across broadcast, radio, national and local print, generating 550 items of media coverage and reaching an audience of 20 million. Outcomes from our media work deliver clear patient information on issues such as children's eye health and the impact of measles, to actions such as the Department for Transport-commissioned independent study to address the growing concern of headlight glare.

These are just some examples of the activity that we have delivered to put optometrists at the forefront of better eye health and vision for all. Please do read on to find out what else we have achieved, work which has been informed and supported by our members and partners in the sector; and we look forward to building on all of this in the year ahead.



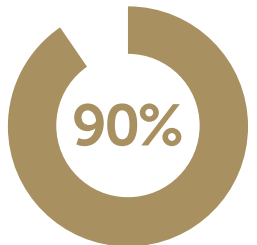
Ian Humphreys
Chief Executive of The College of Optometrists

The year in numbers

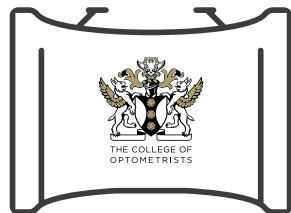


1,000

Optometrists and dispensing opticians met at employer professional development events



Of students met either in-person or online, in all four nations, through our student roadshows



300

Connections made on our stand at 100% Optical



1,557

OSCE's sat



1,038

Higher Qualifications awarded



15,492

Docet CPD course completions



20,195

College CPD course completions



27

CMGs updated, and 2 new topics added



550

Enquiries responded to by our Clinical Advisers



8

Parliamentarian and ministerial meetings attended

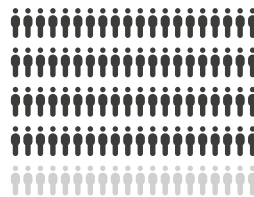


17

Significant industry consultations responded to

8,386

Pre-reg stage 1 and stage 2 visits



80%

Of College members refer to our Guidance for Professional Practice at least once a week



2 million

Visits on the College website



113%

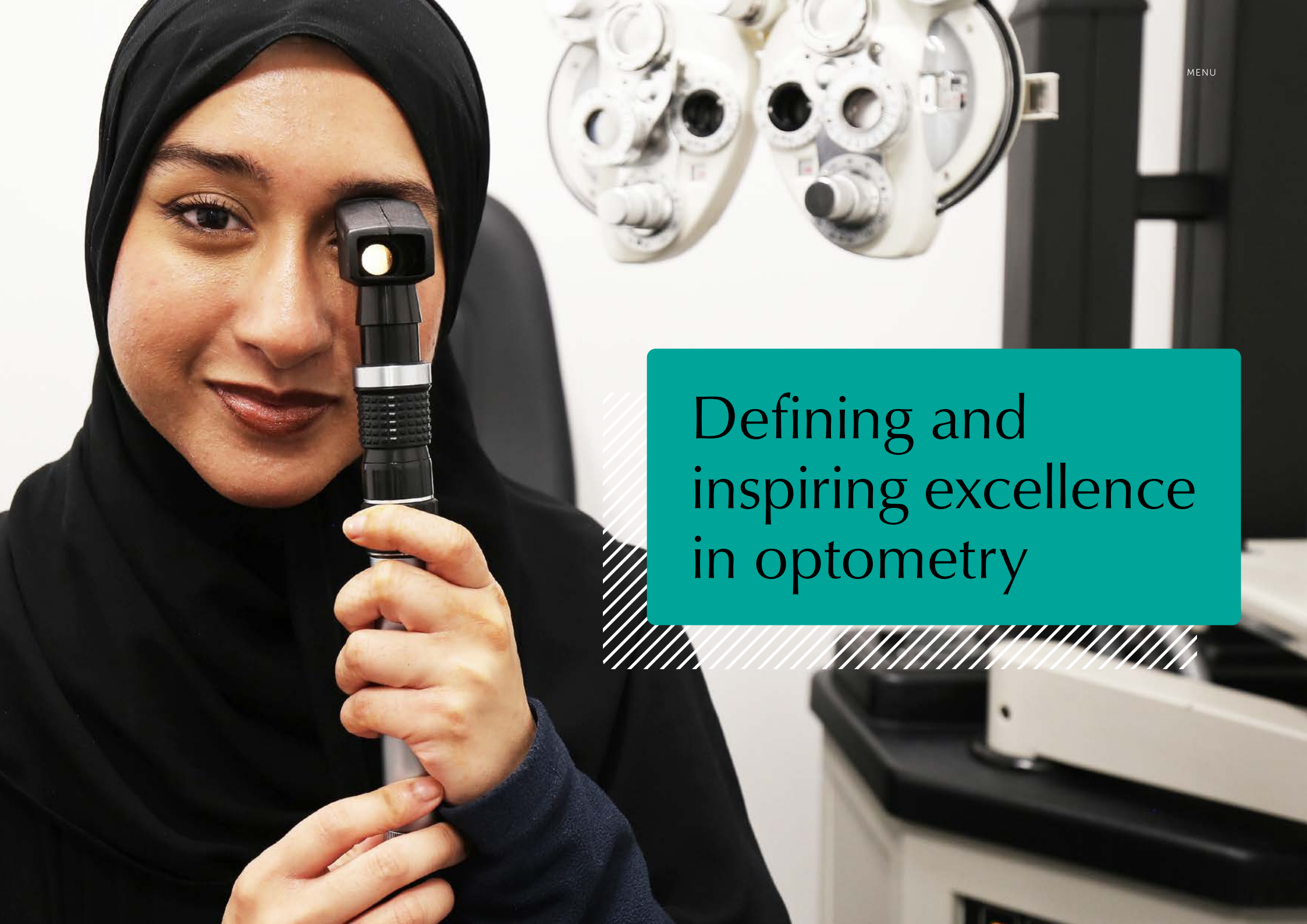
Growth in engagement for our LinkedIn community



550

Media items reaching an audience of

20 million



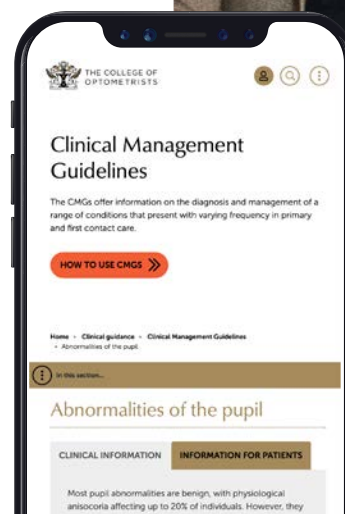
Defining and
inspiring excellence
in optometry

Providing clinical and professional guidance to support our members and the optometry profession more widely

Our **Clinical Advisers** have a wealth of experience and knowledge. As well as being practising optometrists in a variety of settings, they provide clinical advice to our members, write and review clinical guidance and are regulars on UK media to advise the public on eye health.

In the last 12 months, our Clinical Advisers have responded to 550 enquiries, giving members on the spot advice on a range of topics from clinical understanding to workplace issues.

A total of 27 **Clinical Management Guidelines** (CMGs) were updated and republished, and two new topics were introduced. The CMGs are the go-to for prescribing and treatment decisions, with instant access available from the website or app. At least 75% of College members refer to the CMGs on a weekly or monthly basis.



▲ College's Clinical Advisers: Dr Paramdeep Bilkhu MCOptom, Denise Voon MCOptom, Daniel Hardiman-McCartney MBE FCOptom

◀ The College's Clinical Management Guidelines on the Member App



A stalwart of every optometry practice is the **Guidance for Professional Practice**. This year we published the revised 4th edition, with four new sections covering: remote consultations and the delivery of virtual care; assessing and managing children with myopia; collaborative care pathways; and visual field and retinal structural terms. The new edition was launched at a webinar with over 1,000 members in attendance. 80% of College members refer to this Guidance at least once a week.

Reacting to immediate public health conditions, we published new guidance and advice for practitioners on:


- Completing risk assessments and managing local whooping cough and measles outbreaks in primary care optometry settings
- Mpox preparedness.

Our Clinical Advisers collaborated and hosted the **GOC** on the Eyepod podcast looking at the fitness to practice process, dispelling myths and providing listeners with reassurance and understanding of what to do should a patient make a complaint.



▲ The 4th edition of the Guidance for Professional Practice was published, providing essential support for optometrists in making clinical and professional decisions

◀ EyePod podcast episode: "I've received a GOC complaint; will I get struck off?"

A close-up photograph of an optometrist, a Black man with a beard wearing a white lab coat, adjusting a phoropter for a female patient with long dark hair. The patient is looking through the eyepieces of the device. The background is slightly blurred, showing a floral pattern. A blue text box with white diagonal lines on its left side is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Enabling optometrists
to maximise their
skills and develop
their careers

Empowering Optometry Professionals: A Year of Growth and Delivery

This year, we've expanded our vibrant **Continuing Professional Development** (CPD) programme, ensuring members have access to a wealth of resources designed to inspire and support their professional journeys.

Our CPD is delivered across a suite of **courses, webinars, podcasts, peer review sessions** and **events**, with 98% of attendees rating it either excellent or good. Alongside this, our guidance on meeting the GOC CPD requirements continues to support increased confidence in maintaining professional compliance.

Through the delivery of the **Docet** learning programme, funded by England, Wales and Northern Ireland health departments, we ensured that optometrists across the sector maintained and developed their expertise with cutting-edge resources.

Funding to allow access to Docet for our Scottish colleagues was unfortunately withdrawn mid-year by the Scottish Government. We acted quickly to communicate with affected optometrists, negotiating a time period to allow them to complete courses and download certificates, and signposted to additional CPD resources including the full suite offered by the College.



▲ College members receiving Higher Qualifications at the Diploma Ceremony

▲ Collaboration event with Johnson & Johnson Vision Event held in Leicester hosted by our East Midlands Council members Kyla Black MCOptom and Hassnain Safdar MCOptom



Partnerships and bringing the community together remains a strong focus. **Optometry Tomorrow 2024** conference in Telford in April welcomed **BCLA** as a key partner, bringing contact lens professionals alongside optometrists in two days of learning and insight.

We welcomed almost 900 people to Optometry Tomorrow 2024, our largest in-person conference since 2020. We delivered a packed programme over two days comprising of lectures, discussion workshops, hands-on skills workshops and peer reviews. Connecting and reconnecting with peers in the sector is always a key reason for attending, as well as visiting the 40 exhibitors introducing new technology, products and ways of working.

Welcoming and celebrating the newest members of the profession at the Diploma Ceremony is always a highlight in the College calendar. 2024's ceremony was the biggest yet, with another dual ceremony for nearly 1,500 diplomates, friends and family. At the ceremony we also celebrate distinguished members who have been awarded Fellowships, Research Excellence Awards, and Higher Qualifications.



- ▲ Optometry Tomorrow conference keynote lecture delivered by Professor Pearse Keane 'Transforming Eyecare with Artificial Intelligence'
- ▲ Over 900 eye care professionals at the Optometry Tomorrow conference 2024



▲ The CLiP video series with Dr Rebekah Stevens MCOptom, Lead Assessor at the College

Fostering Collaboration with Clinical Learning in Practice (CLiP)

The College has been bringing universities and employers together to develop a consistent framework for extended placements. The College's **CLiP** programme builds on our 20 years' experience of delivering the Scheme for Registration and will deliver the majority of the GOC's new requirements for patient-facing experience, integrated into 12 of the new master's degrees.

CLiP development milestones from 23/24 include:

- Our custom-built CLiP portal was launched this year to ensure that all involved can collaborate online to support and assess student progress. It includes curriculum and practice management, an online logbook as well as a placement application system, so applications for the first CLiP placements can go live in February 2025
- The comprehensive CLiP Employer Handbook and dedicated web pages created to ensure seamless onboarding for our supervisor and employer stakeholders
- Planning CLiP assessments, working extensively with our university and assessor experts, so students can meet the GOC outcomes at the same standard, with consistent support, wherever they undertake their placement
- Delivering seminars, videos and written guidance to ensure that all students are ready to apply for their CLiP placements
- Building strong connections with future supervisors and placement hosts by promoting our plans at 100% Optical and Employer and College CPD events.

The **Scheme for Registration** continues to run alongside the new route to qualification, and we continue to break new ground with initiatives such as:

- Rubrics to increase clarity, consistency and equality around in-person visits
- The Autumn OSCE in Liverpool, increasing accessibility for trainees across the UK
- A revamped feedback collection process, significantly enhancing trainee and assessor engagement.

These advancements underline our commitment to building a resilient workforce while facilitating the shift toward a lifelong learning culture.

Supporting and recognising supervisors

Great Supervision sits at the heart of success on the Scheme for Registration and CLiP.

Our ultimate goal is to inspire every registrant to contribute to the education of future optometrists.

This year, support for trainees and supervisors has been enriched with innovative resources such as:

- Drop-in sessions and personalised 1:1 support
- Revised supervisor training, applicable across the Optical sector, supported by industry partners like the Irving Aitchison Memorial Fund and FODO Educational Charity
- Popular podcasts addressing challenges like supporting anxious trainees
- The introduction of the Optometric Practice Educator (OptPE) affix, to recognise members who invest in developing as a supervisor
- The launch of the Associate Membership Package, enabling support and recognition for other healthcare professions, especially those working in and for eye care.

The popularity of College-accredited **Higher Qualifications**, and Independent Prescribing, continues to grow, with the award of more than 1,000 Professional Certificates, Higher Certificates and Diplomas this year – with Medical Retina surpassing Glaucoma in popularity for the first time. These qualifications are key to enhancing the knowledge and skills of practitioners tackling some of the UK's most critical healthcare challenges.



▲ College members celebrating their achievements at the Diploma Ceremony

The **Library and Information Service** remains unparalleled in the UK eye health sector, and empowers members to deliver evidence-based care. It offers:

- Access to an extensive range of academic journals and e-books
- Opportunities to explore a world-class collection of books and journals on-site.

3,433 views and downloads were delivered across the library's top 15 specialist e-resources in ophthalmology and eye health. These resources set a benchmark unmatched by any other UK eye health professional organisation.

World-leading journals

Our journal, **Ophthalmic & Physiological Optics** (OPO), continues to set the global standard, maintaining its position as the highest-ranked optometry journal in the world. Through its cutting-edge scientific content, OPO is shaping the future of optometry and driving innovation across the profession.

Acuity, our College journal, delivered both in print and online, brings together insight, best practice, member and patient stories and College news. The journal keeps our members up to date and informed on key, topical issues that affect them in practice and support ever enhancing patient care. Acuity's digital engagement rose from the previous year, with almost 30,000 active sessions.



▲ The College's Library & Information Services

▲ College journals: Acuity & Ophthalmic and Physiological Optics (OPO)



Sector Partnership for Optical Knowledge and Education

▲ SPOKE: Sector Partnership for Optical Knowledge and Education


Supporting the GOC's Vision for Education and Training Requirements (ETR)

Our work on the GOC's ETR continues to expand. We co-lead, with ABDO and OSC, the GOC-funded knowledge hub **Sector Partnership for Optical Knowledge and Education (SPOKE)**.

Materials are produced in collaboration with education providers, employers and other organisations from across the sector. This year, we successfully delivered:

- Four projects: Indicative guidance for contact lens opticians; Indicative guidance for additional supply (AS), supplementary prescribing (SP), and independent prescribing (IP); Enhancing the scope of practice in optical professionals; and Inclusive education for specialist registration, developing learners with diverse experience and skills
- SPOKE Topic of the Month (launched October 2023), providing expert guidance on supporting learners in areas that are newly emphasised in the GOC's Education and Training Requirements.

The hugely popular, annual two-day networking meeting held at University of Warwick was also cited as a key mechanism for stakeholder engagement with the ETR in the Public Standards Authority's annual report on the GOC's performance.

A woman with long, dark, wavy hair and a friendly smile is looking towards the camera. She is wearing a dark green button-down shirt. In the background, a large, professional optical instrument, likely a phoropter or a similar device used in eye exams, is visible. The setting appears to be a modern optician's office with a clean, white background.

Representing
and amplifying
the expert voices
of optometrists

Policy and Influencing: Championing Progress and Shaping the Future of Eye Care

Throughout the year, the College has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to advancing eye health policy, advocating for the profession, and enhancing patient care across the UK, amid a year of political change and health service pressures.

We work proactively and reactively to influence policy decisions, collaborating with other eye care organisations and speaking on behalf of the profession to advocate for enhanced eye care that improves patient outcomes.

Delivering results through collaboration

We proudly co-chair a national working group on imaging standards in eye care alongside the **Royal College of Ophthalmologists** (RCOphth). This initiative, supported by NHS England and optical manufacturers, aims to establish UK-wide standards for cross-compatible imaging systems, enhancing diagnostic capabilities across all platforms.



▲ All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Eye Health and Visual Impairment, at the Houses of Parliament



▲ Denise Voon MCOptom with ITV News discussing the impact of headlight glare

▼ Launch of the RNIB's Low Vision Framework and Good Practice guidelines



The College also joined senior leaders at the **All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG)** on Eye Health and Visual Impairment to unveil the UK-wide Eye Care Support Pathway; an RNIB initiative, developed with support from the College and other organisations across optometry. This framework provides comprehensive support for patients with sight loss, ensuring timely access to information, advice, and emotional care throughout their journey.

The College provided critical input for **Marsha de Cordova** MP's letter to the Chancellor, advocating for investments in clinical placements for higher qualifications, digital infrastructure and connectivity, consistent commissioning of eye care services, and national population data collection on blindness and visual impairment.

We also collaborated with the RCOphth to update the **Joint Vision for Eye Care**, providing guidance on integrating services to ensure patients are prioritised based on clinical need and receive seamless care across multidisciplinary settings.

Additionally, we partnered with the RNIB to launch the **Low Vision Framework**, a comprehensive guide co-created with patients and specialists, to enhance inclusive, patient-centred care for those with low vision.

Advocacy by the College, supported by a joint campaign with the RAC, culminated in the Department of Transport commissioning an **independent study into headlight glare**, a growing safety concern. Through collaboration with Baroness Hayter, we presented evidence highlighting the risks posed by LED headlights, sparking significant media attention and public discourse.

The College led a UK sector-wide multi-professional eye care workforce supply and demand data modelling project. This culminated in an interactive dashboard called the **UK Eye Care Data Hub**, modelling the current and future workforce and the prevalence of eye conditions over the next 15 years, enabling LOCs, employers and optometrists to map and plan appropriate resourcing to meet need.

This year was a year of political change, with a general election called and a new Westminster government formed.

Earlier in the year, under the previous government, we responded to a Department of Health and Social Care request, endorsing a Standard Clinical Specification for community minor and urgent eye care in England, which we helped develop with LOCSU and the Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning. This specification leverages optometrists' skills, including prescribing, to improve local access to eye care.

We also provided support to inform the then Shadow Health Secretary Wes Streeting MP's policy announcement on the enhanced use of community optometrists. This initiative, aimed at expanding community-based eye care services, aligns closely with our vision of more enhanced primary eye care services to improve patient outcomes.

Ahead of the general election, the College published its first-ever Manifesto for Change, calling for reforms to tackle the eye care crisis. Key proposals included positioning optometrists as the first point of contact for eye concerns, expanding community-based services, and enhancing NHS England digital connectivity to support diagnosis and treatment.

Under the new Westminster government, the conversation continued with an open letter to Wes Streeting MP, the new Secretary of State for Health. The College emphasised the need to establish optometrists as the first point of contact for eye care issues. We welcomed the government's commitment to empower healthcare professionals with direct referral pathways, reinforcing our vision of a more efficient and integrated healthcare system.

Taking action to end the eye care crisis

Cutting waiting times and preventing sight loss in England

(Over 611,000 reasons to act now)

We call on the next government and all health policymakers to ensure patients receive the eye care they need at the right time and the right place, no matter where they live.

Over 611,000 people are on NHS waiting lists to begin treatment for ophthalmology in England, making ophthalmology one of the largest contributors to the NHS backlog - and this number is only set to grow with an ageing population.

Delays to treatment can have devastating consequences for individuals, families, communities, and the nation. Patients on long waiting lists are losing their sight unnecessarily.

Optometrists are eye health professionals with the necessary clinical skills to provide more NHS services than they are currently commissioned to do. They are ready to deliver safe and timely eye care to all patients closer to home. Those working in primary care (on the high street) can help reduce the reliance on local GPs, cut NHS waiting times and enable more people to live independently.



▲ The College of Optometrists' manifesto to end the eye care crisis: Cutting waiting times and preventing sight loss in England



▲ Optometry Five Nations Meeting hosted by Optometry Northern Ireland in Belfast with The College of Optometrists, The Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO), The Association of Optometrists (AOP), Federation of Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians (FODO), Local Optical Committee Support Unit (LOCSU), Optometry Ireland, Optometry Scotland and Optometry Wales

Working across all four nations

The College welcomed the invitation to join the Welsh Optometric Committee (WOC), a statutory advisory body to the Welsh Government. This enables us to share our insights and contribute to shaping optometric health policy and professional development in Wales.

We also contributed to the future of healthcare in Wales by responding to the Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) Strategic Workforce Plan for Primary Care. Our insights aim to ensure that the vital role of optometrists is recognised and effectively integrated into workforce strategies.

In Northern Ireland, we contributed to the Optometry NI strategic planning day, offering our expertise to support the transformation of eye care services and the development of a robust strategic plan. The College wrote twice to Mr Peter May, Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health NI, raising concerns that vital eye care services are no longer readily accessible to people in Northern Ireland once they transfer to receiving Universal Credit benefits. We made the case that the application process to transfer people from certain benefits onto Universal Credit was long, confusing and required digital access, presenting an additional barrier to accessing eye care. The Department of Health agreed to work with stakeholders to improve the situation.

We are supporting the National Services Scotland (NSS) team in updating prescribing guidance for Scottish optometrists. This work will ensure practitioners have access to both the College's CMGs and Scottish-specific prescribing guidance.

We have had a busy year sharing important news, keeping members up to date with advancements and changes, and promoting members and the work that they do up and down the country. Considered the 'go-to' organisation for comments and interviews by national and local media, our clinical advisers were interviewed and widely quoted on important topics, such as headlight glare, when to take your child to the optometrist, contact lenses, and debunking optometry myths on the BBC 1 programme Con or Cure.

All aspects of our communication and marketing channels grew in both followers and engagement: over 2 million individual sessions on our College website over the last year; engagement on LinkedIn rose by 113%; almost 70,000 listens to our podcasts; and the launch of the new College app with the addition of a communities area, delivered a growth of 18% in member logins.


With over 320,000 active users, Look After Your Eyes, our public website, disseminates crucial information to help everyone maintain better eye health. Topical health information includes how to spot the difference between common and serious eye infections, the effect of measles on the eye, and how to support children to protect their eyes in the sun.



For information about your child's vision and to find your local optometrist, visit [LookAfterYourEyes.org](https://www.LookAfterYourEyes.org)

▲ College Clinical Adviser, Denise Voon MCOptom, joined Mason (7) and his mum, Kayleigh, on the BBC News Breakfast sofa with presenters Naga Munchetty and Charlie Stayt to discuss Children's Eye Health

◀ Children's Eye Health Campaign

A portrait of a young woman with a warm smile, wearing a black hijab. She is positioned in the foreground, slightly to the right. In the background, an optometric phoropter is visible, suggesting a clinical setting. A semi-transparent orange box with a diagonal striped border is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text.

Advancing
knowledge and
celebrating
achievement in
optometry

The future of optometry is shaped by evidence-based research built on centuries of learning and insight

In 2024, we made significant strides in **Knowledge** and **Research**, driving forward initiatives that deliver vital insights and resources for the profession.

As the lead partner in the **UK National Eye-health and Hearing Study** (UKNEHS) pilot, our Research Team, alongside partners at ARU and other UK universities, rolled out the pilot stage of this groundbreaking project.

Funded by a consortium of charity partners, UKNEHS promises to generate critical data on the eye and hearing health of the UK population, shaping future care and policy.



▲ Members of the UK National Eye-health and Hearing Study (UKNEHS) partnership in action



The research we undertake has clear deliverables either to support the development of the profession, enhance patient care, or both. Securing successful partners to collaborate with on the research and actions has been key to the successful outcomes.

These include:

- Working with Ulster University, we launched the NIHR eLearning for Clinicians modules at our conference Optometry Tomorrow (OT) 2024. These are the first CPD resources on the NIHR platform specifically developed for optometrists, enabling them to integrate clinical research into their practice and contribute to the profession's growing role in scientific discovery
- An updated survey was conducted with the University of Bradford, on contact lens practice with children and young people, building on insights from 2015
- Research on the relationship between deprivation and access to primary eye health services, addressing crucial disparities, was carried out with Manchester Royal Eye Hospital

- And we worked with Anglia Ruskin University to analyse the confusion experienced by patients on vision impairment pathways, highlighting areas for improvement in care delivery.

Recognising Excellence in Research

Our commitment to celebrating innovation was evident in our Research Excellence Awards, which recognised optometrists making exceptional contributions to the advancement of science. Award-winning topics included:

- The impact of COVID-19 on eye health services, particularly the use of telerehabilitation and virtual clinical education by Dr Ahalya Subramanian FCOptom
- The effects of topical azithromycin on symptoms and self-management of meibomian gland dysfunction by Ian Jarvis MCOptom.

These accolades highlight the transformative research being conducted across the profession, inspiring future advancements.



▲ Guest in the College's British Optical Museum during the London Festival and Heritage Open Days event

Bringing History and Knowledge to Life our Museum Curator, Dr Neil Handley, continued to promote the rich heritage of optometry through appearances on UK and international radio programmes and podcasts. Despite ongoing work to redevelop the expanded physical displays we hosted a highly successful Open House event in September, where hundreds of visitors toured the College and explored the museum, gaining unique insights into the past, present, and future of optometry.



TO GREAT HALL

A robust and responsible organisation

Maintaining a strong organisation to deliver value and support to optometrists, the profession and patients

As the **professional body for optometrists** and the membership organisation for the optometry sector, we pride ourselves on creating a culture where all can thrive and uphold our values as part of this, throughout everything we do.

- We act with integrity and transparency
- We demonstrate respect and professionalism
- We champion diversity and inclusion
- We listen and learn
- We achieve high quality.

Expertise leads our organisation with a committed **Board of Trustees** and **Council** who, alongside other members, represent College members at events and to the media. Alongside College staff, these teams, along with other members, represent the profession on over 60 national boards, groups, and committees, providing a trusted voice for optometry.



▲ Staff at College headquarters, 42 Craven Street, working to ensure smooth and efficient operations

Our employees

We work with our staff engagement committee within the College to safeguard our College staff team's wellbeing. We actively promote and put in place support and development to ensure staff's wellbeing and health at work. We also host regular 'lunch and learns' with recent topics including breaking the stigma of health conditions, sharing employee heritage and customs, and celebrating national health and religious awareness days in the UK, for increased understanding and growth.

We recognise our staff team are the cornerstone of the College and we are committed to providing a welcoming, focused, inclusive, inspirational and rewarding environment for all our colleagues and which recognises and celebrates differences.

Living our values when working within and outside the College is of paramount importance to us and key to maintaining a culture that is thriving and a place that is accessible and easy to work in and engage with. This year, we introduced within the College a new appraisal process which engrains our values, asking staff and managers to agree goals and rate performance based upon application of our values, as well as performance levels. Our pay scheme has also been revised to recognise exceptional performance whilst applying our values, with an equal importance being applied to the how and the what.

Intelligent use of data

This year we have focused our efforts on the intelligent use of data, bringing together our datasets and information to more accurately manage our members' interests and expectations and to identify where there are gaps in our offer.

Considerable work has been done to enable staff to access and evaluate membership and management data to support decision making. This will be continually built on so that we can better understand our members and their needs and develop activities and services that support them throughout their career.

A sustainable office

Sustainability is a key consideration in running our office and supporting a hybrid working pattern. In the office, our electricity is provided by a 100% renewable provider; and we have reduced our paper usage by removing individual printers and replacing with one combined printer/scanner per floor.



▲ College staff welcome members and non-members alike at our stand at 100% Optical in March

Membership for everyone

Membership numbers continue to show a consistent upward trend, with an increase of 9% from the previous year.

In addition, we are delighted to welcome the newest members of the profession, with 92% of all OSCE passers joining the College.

We measure membership satisfaction and value through our yearly member survey. The survey gives us detailed feedback on what benefits our members use and value, how they view the College and their membership, and how likely they are to be an advocate and promote the College to their peers.

Over 80% were highly satisfied or satisfied with the College '*As the UK's professional body for optometry, Providing relevant, high quality guidance, and Providing high quality CPD*'. Over 70% strongly agreed/agreed that College membership has a positive impact on their career, and that The College acts with its members' best interests at heart. This year saw a significant leap in our Net Promoter Score (NPS) indicating, more than ever, the value of membership and the sentiment of advocacy towards the College.

And finally, we launched our Associate Membership category in late 2023, opening our doors to healthcare professionals, and especially optometry professionals such as ophthalmologists, dispensing opticians, contact lens opticians, optometric nurses and other practitioners in the profession.



THE COLLEGE OF
OPTOMETRISTS

Council members and trustees

Trustees

President

Dr Gillian Rudduck
MCOptom Prof Cert Glau
DipTp(IP) Higher Cert Glau

Vice President

Professor Irene Ctori
PhD FCOptom PGDip
PFHEA

Immediate Past President
and Chair of Board

Professor Leon Davies
PhD FCOptom Prof Cert
Med Ret FAAO SFHEA

Treasurer

Dr Aleksandra Mankowska
MCOptom FHEA

Kyla Black
MCOptom

Kathryn Trimmer
MCOptom DipTp(IP)

Matt Roney
MCOptom DipTp(IP) Higher
Cert Glau

Professor Kathryn Saunders
PhD FCOptom

Hassnain Safdar
MCOptom

Professor Joy Myint
PhD FCOptom Prof Cert LV

Mark Redhead
MA MBA FRSA

Andrew Kitchen
BSc (Hons) ACMA MBA

Council

North West



Matt Roney
MCOptom DipTp(IP) Higher
Cert Glau



Ian White
MCOptom DipTp(IP) Prof
Cert Glau Prof Cert Med
Ret



Dr Gillian Rudduck
MCOptom Prof Cert Glau
DipTp(IP) Higher Cert Glau

Scotland



Dr Laura E Sweeney
MCOptom DipTp(IP)



Kathryn Trimmer
MCOptom DipTp(IP)



Dr Janis Orr
MCOptom DipTp(IP)
Higher Cert Glau
PGCertHE FHEA

East Midlands



Kyla Black
MCOptom



Hassnain Safdar
MCOptom

North East



Madeleine Mould
MCOptom DipTp(IP) Prof
Cert Glauc



Chris Froment
MBA MCOptom FBDO
MBCLA

Wales



Angela Whitaker
MCOptom DipTp(IP)
DipOC DipTp(AS) DipTp(SP)
DipGlauc Prof Cert Med Ret



Nkosi Yearwood
MCOptom

South East



Lucy Blown
MCOptom Prof Cert Glauc



Michael Horler
FCOptom DipTp(IP) Higher
Cert Med Ret Vert Oc
Pharm Therapeutics



Kiren Hayre
MCOptom, Prof Cert Glauc,
Prof Cert Med Ret, PgCert
(Clinical Optometry)



Umar Vania
MCOptom

Northern Ireland



Dr Katie Curran
MCOptom DipTp(IP)



**Professor Kathryn
Saunders**
PhD FCOptom

Eastern



David Hill
MCOptom DipTp(IP) FBDO
Prof Cert Paed Eye Care



Professor Keziah Latham
PhD FCOptom Prof Cert LV



Seema Rauniar
MCOptom

South West



William Gillan
MCOptom DipTp(IP) Higher
Cert Glauc



Lewes Hambrey
MCOptom Prof Cert Glauc
Prof Cert Med Ret



Kiki Soteri
MCOptom DipTp(IP) FHEA Prof
Cert Glauc Prof Cert Med Ret

West Midlands



Irfan Razvi

MCOptom, Prof Cert Glauco,
PG Cert (Clinical Optom)



Hamza Mussa

MCOptom Prof Cert
Med Ret



Professor Leon Davies

PhD FCOptom Prof Cert
Med Ret FAAO SFHEA

Yorkshire and Humber



Stephen Clark

MCOptom Prof Cert
Glauco Prof Cert LV Prof
Cert Med Ret



Dr Aleksandra Mankowska

MCOptom FHEA



Barbara Watson

FCOptom DCLP DipTp(IP)
Higher Cert Glauco

London



Yuan Gao

BOptom MCOptom
MBCLA



Professor Irene Ctori

PhD FCOptom PGDip
PFHEA



David Jameson

MCOptom



Meera Shah

MCOptom



Jay Varia

MCOptom DipTp(IP) Prof
Cert Glauco

Early Careers representatives

Mariam Amin

MCOptom

Katheryn Rees

FBDO

Zak Saleem

Lay Advisory Panel representatives

Andrea Clerk

MBA CIPD FILM

Rekha Randhawa

LLB(Hons) MA

Katie Engel

LLB

Mark Redhead

MA MBA FRSA

Optometry Schools Council nominee

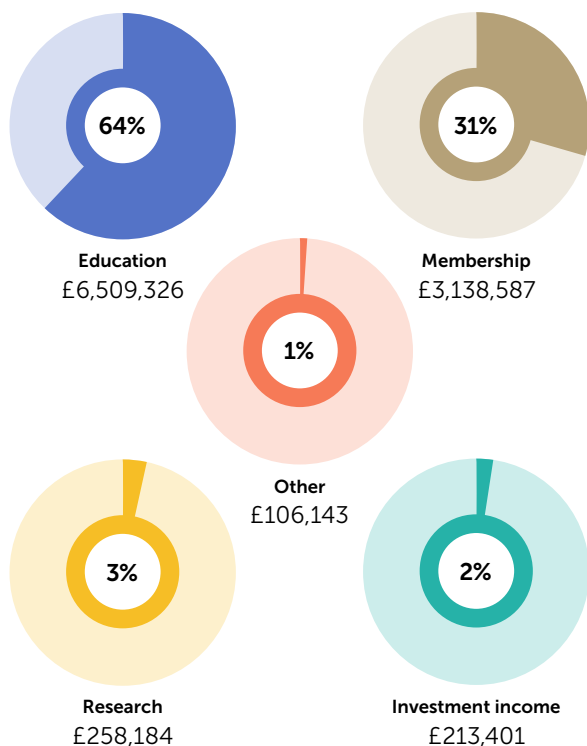
Professor Joy Myint

PhD FCOptom Prof Cert LV

Financials 2023-24

MENU

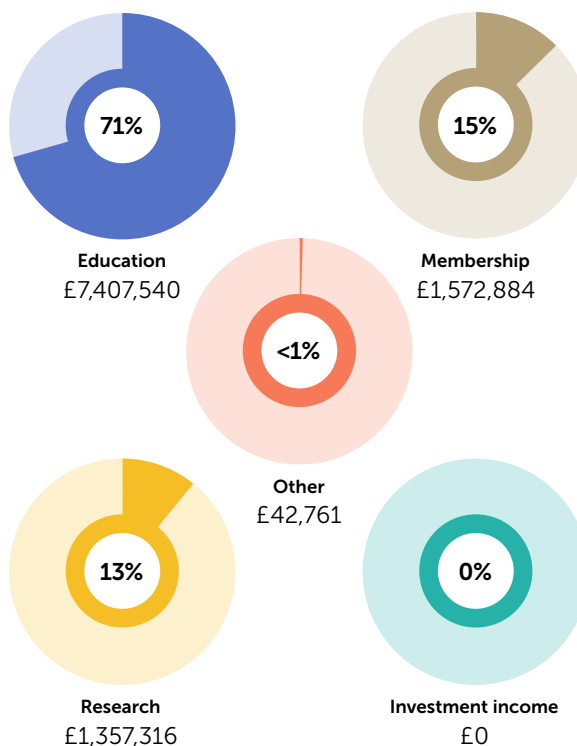
Income



Total Income £ 10,225,641

Surplus on Investments 673,308

Expenditure



Total Expenditure £ 10,380,501

Balance sheet

Fixed assets	
Tangible	1,897,141
Intangible	3,276,413
Total fixed assets	5,173,554
Investments	5,072,449
Total	£ 10,246,003
Current assets	
Debtors	2,178,704
Cash at bank and in hand	1,032,103
Total	£ 3,210,807
Liabilities	
Creditors due within one year	(5,865,448)
Net current liabilities	(2,654,641)
Total net assets	£ 7,591,362
Restricted funds	
Docet	169,871
Other	12,448
Total	£ 182,319
Unrestricted funds	
Designated funds	5,406,309
General funds	2,002,734
Total	£ 7,409,043
Total charity funds	£ 7,591,362

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College and profession
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