

Strategic plan 2025-30



THE COLLEGE OF
OPTOMETRISTS





Vision & purpose

Our vision

To eliminate preventable sight loss.

Our purpose

To champion optometrists as essential eye care professionals and inspire and enable them to improve eye health and vision for all.

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CEO's foreword

As we define and look forward to our strategic objectives for the next five years, it is important to reflect on how we delivered against our last strategy and the external environment that we were operating in.

Between 2020 and 2025, our four strategic pillars concentrated on defining and inspiring excellence in optometry, enabling optometrists to maximise their skills, representing and amplifying the expert voices of optometrists, and embedding insight and evidence at the heart of the profession. Of course, all this took place within the Covid pandemic, meaning that we also had to pivot our efforts, rethink, and support our members to enable safe and consistent care for patients and themselves.

Everything we do is grounded in research and insight. Over the past five years we have made significant advances, including the new Clinical Learning in Practice (CLiP) portal to enable placements for the new Masters' degrees, and the UK Eye Care Data Hub to share information on the prevalence of eye conditions, and location of eye care professionals. We also embraced the use of technology and brought together significant stakeholders from across optometry for an AI Summit.

I am very proud of what we, alongside our members, and in collaboration with partners from across the sector, education and the government, have achieved and we look forward to building on it for the future.

Ian Humphreys
Chief Executive of The College of Optometrists



President's foreword

The world, and our profession, moves at pace, with ever-changing technological, societal, and personal needs.

Over the next five years, we will build on our successes, innovations and partnerships. We will focus our efforts on ensuring that optometrists are the first port of call for eye care across the UK, and through collaboration, that optometry is recognised in all healthcare pathways.

We will continue to inspire and equip our members by delivering and growing our high-quality services, crucially evidence-based, and in a variety of formats to meet member needs.

Building on research and knowledge, alongside all experts within eye care, we will foster a culture of multi-disciplinary learning and working, so that patients get what they need, when and where they need it.

And we will expand our outreach, promote the expertise of our professionals across the healthcare landscape, at the highest level of government, and communicate the benefit of maintaining good eye health to the public.

Of course, our ability to do all of this is down to you, our members, our partners and our allies. I am confident this ambitious strategy will help us work towards achieving our overarching goal of eliminating preventable sight loss.



Dr Gillian Rudduck MCOptom
President of The College of Optometrists

Strategic outcomes 2025-30

Eliminate preventable sight loss

Optometrists are the first port of call for eye care across the UK

1

Optometrists are inspired, enabled and equipped to deliver high-quality services

2

Optometry is recognised in all healthcare pathways, trusted and valued by all

3

Patients get the eye care they need, when they need it, where they need it

4

The public are aware of the benefit of maintaining good eye health



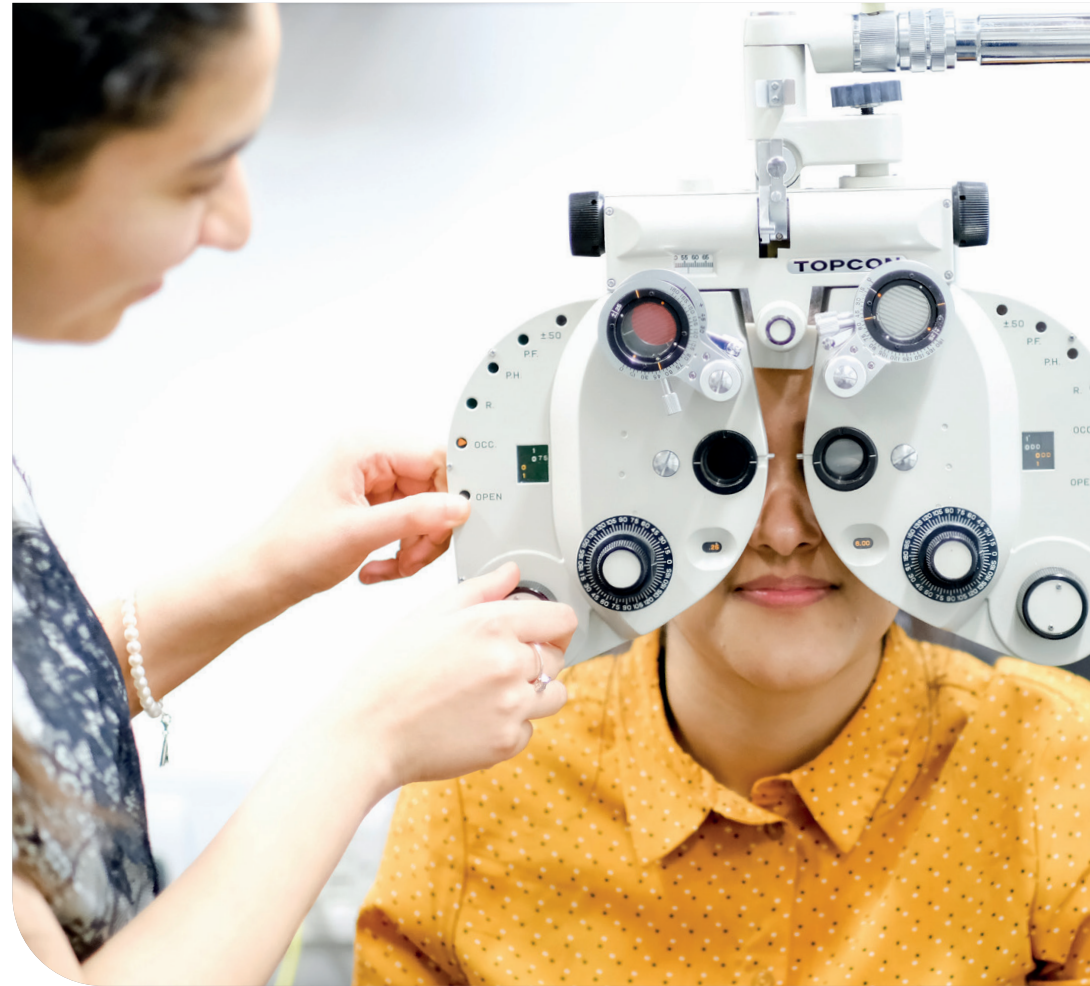
THE COLLEGE OF
OPTOMETRISTS

Our members | Our values | Our people | Our resources

Optometrists are inspired, enabled and equipped to deliver high-quality services

We will continue to deliver and advocate for the highest standard of education and learning; focusing not just on today, but what optometrists will need to enable the evolution and delivery of future eye care.

Continued →



Our guidance and qualifications will drive the evolution of high-quality service delivery. We will:

- Ensure our learning and guidance stays ahead of changes in care, technology and services
- Develop new higher qualifications to meet patient and pathway needs
- Maintain and develop our leading authority on evidence-based optometric practice
- Lead on the development of guidance related to artificial intelligence (AI), DICOM imaging standards and tech
- Champion consistent application of high standards in guidance and education

Our clinical and professional workplace learning offer will inspire and support our members to operate at the highest level. We will:

- Lead and deliver initiatives to assure consistent, high-quality educational outcomes as the profession adapts to new GOC requirements
- Maximise the impact and accessibility of our qualifications, courses, events and publications to deliver on the diverse, individual learning priorities of all our members
- Achieve and build on Ofqual recognition of the College
- Lead developments in clinical placement learning, and campaign for increased and more diverse funding for optometric clinical education across all four nations
- Drive increased engagement with optometric professional development beyond the clinical domains, to include leadership, research and education

“Being a College member allows me to support the next generation of optometrists as a supervisor, and work towards further qualifications to improve my daily practice”

Membership Survey 2025

Optometry is recognised in all healthcare pathways, trusted and valued by all

We will ensure optometrists' expertise and capabilities are better understood among all healthcare professionals to enable the most beneficial and sustainable patient journey.

Continued →



We will increase the awareness of, and trust in, the role of optometrists among other Health Care Professionals by:

- Working with other professional bodies to increase their understanding of optometrists' roles, skills and scope of practice among their members
- Improving and enhancing interprofessional relationships and multidisciplinary working and learning, communications and referrals
- Increasing optometrists' engagement with activities that promote trust and recognition of optometry, including qualifications and CPD, leadership and governance, and audit and research

We will influence to ensure governments and decision-makers implement the continued shift of care from hospitals to primary eye care by:

- Championing the key role of optometry in eye health
- Influencing and supporting the direction of travel for a shift of patient care from hospitals to optometrists' practices
- Collaborating with other stakeholders to influence for an increase in funding for primary eye care services
- Ensuring the College remains relevant to and influential in all four UK nations

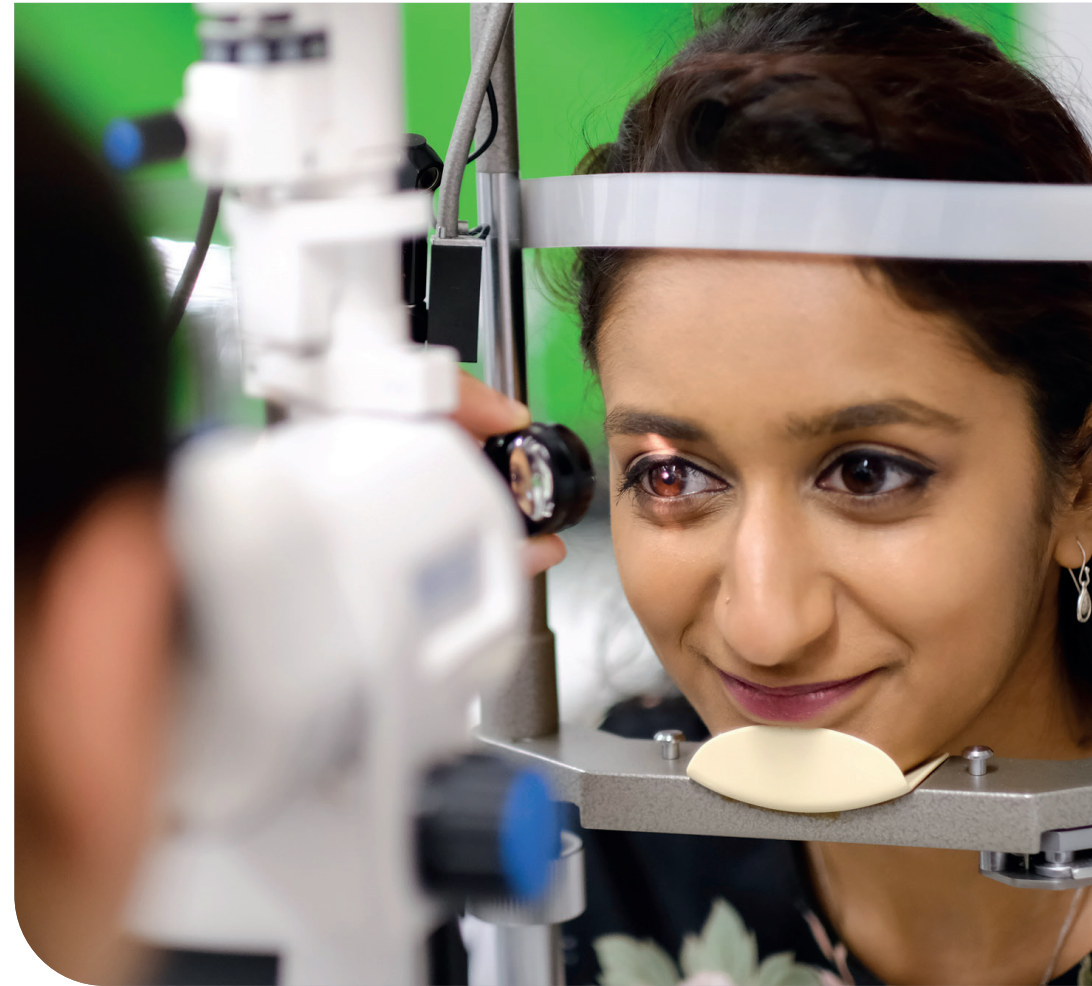
“The College serves as a strong guide and body for all optometrists”

Membership Survey 2025

Patients get the eye care they need, when they need it, where they need it

We will work to ensure that accessing effective eye care is not dependent on postcodes, but available equally across the UK.

Continued →



We will reduce barriers to advancing primary eye care across the UK by:

- Achieve recognition of optometrists as first point of care for eye conditions, through building the evidence base and leading influencing across the UK
- Championing national coverage of enhanced primary eye care services
- Campaigning for national funding for the universal provision of primary sight testing and enhanced optometric services
- Working with partners to influence the agreement and roll out of effective shared care technologies such as electronic patient records/referrals and imaging standards (DICOM)

We will improve the evidence base, for the impact of optometry on patients, the economy, and society by:

- Updating the UK Eye Care Data Hub to model workforce and patient demand
- Evaluating and showcasing the effectiveness of different eye care service models
- Identifying gaps in research and working with others to prioritise and make the case for investment
- Secure external funding for optometric research, including fundraising for College-led and managed research
- Building capacity for research within the profession

“I believe the College is an essential pillar of our profession, and we would be weaker without it”

Membership Survey 2025

The public are aware of the benefit of maintaining good eye health

Through public education and information, we will promote the importance of good eye health.

Continued →



We will increase public awareness and information around of eye health by:

- Continuing to provide well-evidenced, accessible patient information, through professional and public channels
- Working in partnership to deliver effective public awareness campaigns on key issues, perceptions and barriers
- Maintaining and building on our reputation as the trusted source for information on eye health, increasing reach and impact
- Working with national health services and local authorities to ensure relevant information is delivered to the public when and where they need it

We will increase public understanding of the role of optometrists and the profession more widely by:

- Working with partners to ensure optometry becomes a higher status, more desirable occupation
- Developing learning toolkits for primary and secondary schools
- Promoting patient stories that champion the role of optometrists

“I have always found the College to be a great source of information, ensuring I deliver the best care to all my patients”

Membership Survey 2025

Our foundations

Our strategy and work can only be delivered by inspiring, supporting and developing:

Our members

- Be the home of, and the voice for, optometrists and the profession
- Improve our understanding of our members and potential members, to meet the full diversity of needs
- Develop a career-spanning member offer
- Encourage and support higher learning and advancement
- Inform and support different optometric career pathways

Our values

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

Our people

- Develop a learning culture, management capabilities and infrastructure and use staff members' full range of skills
- Ingrain equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) into all College activities
- Develop transitional change and innovation capabilities within the workforce
- Ensure talent and resource needs are forecast, recruited and retained

Our resources

- Prioritise efficient and effective ways of working
- Develop and further integrate our digital platforms to enable more automation and added value
- Ensure robust governance
- Diversify our income streams
- Maintain and manage our estate, finances and resources to maximise productivity

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