



THE COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRISTS

15 November 2017

Guidance for the development, production and review of information to support UK population screening programmes

The College is the professional body for optometry. It qualifies the profession and delivers the guidance and training to ensure optometrists provide the best possible care. We promote excellence through the College's affixes, by building the evidence base for optometry, and raising awareness of the profession with the public, commissioners, and health care professionals.

Many thanks for giving us the opportunity to comment on your guidance for the development, production and review of information to support UK population screening programmes.

The College of Optometrists agrees with your proposed screening information development process as it rightly addresses the current inconsistencies in the method of developing public information and the need to develop high quality information for the patient.

In particular, we would like to stress the importance of the following three main principles as listed in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2. These should be the minimum core requirements for any screening information development process.

1. Information should be based on the best available scientific evidence

Information should be based on balanced and accurate evidence.

The information development process should be guided by research evidence in conjunction with clinical expertise and patient values. Accurate, evidence-based information should cover the condition being screened for, the testing process, benefits and harms of the screening and potential outcomes.

2. Stakeholders should be involved in the process of developing the information

We believe that stakeholders should be fully involved in the process of developing, evaluating and reviewing the information.

The information development process should take into account their clinical expertise, together with the scientific evidence available. Primary eye care professions have a direct contact with patients and may be the first and only point of contact for these patients who may need to be screened. Therefore the information should also consider the specific needs of the professionals for a greater dissemination of the information.

3. For public information, versions should be available to meet the needs of those with sensory loss or learning disability

The College of Optometrists has always supported the aim of increasing accessibility and made adjustments to ensure that health and care information are accessible to patients in an appropriate and fully comprehensible format, thus promoting health equality.

The College supports NHS England's Accessible Information Standard, which aims to make health and social care information more accessible to patients and service users. All organisations that provide NHS care and / or publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow this Standard. It sets out a specific, consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communication support needs of patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

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