Preparing our profession for the future

This year marks the end of my term as President. It has been a great privilege to serve the profession and contribute to the invaluable work of the College. I would like to thank you, our members, for your continued support. Your membership means that we can continue to improve patient care, uphold professional standards and provide a wider evidence base for optometry.
The pace of change in the eye healthcare sector is increasing every year, and our profession must continue to adapt if we are to make the most of the new opportunities. During my term as President, I have seen how much work goes on at the College to advance and prepare our profession for these challenging times. This work is possible because of the valuable time our members contribute to the College throughout the year, whether it be attending College events, participating in our surveys and consultations or joining the conversation on social media.

The Council and the Board are already looking ahead as we start work on our new strategy for 2020-23. We know that advances in technology, developments in clinical practice and changing patient needs will all have a profound impact on UK optometrists in the near future. Our strategy will continue to ensure that the profession is prepared to address the challenges - and maximise the opportunities - that lie ahead.

As you will be aware, the GOC is continuing its education strategic review, which could see significant changes made to the route to qualification for optometrists. The College will continue to play a vital role in ensuring that education and professional standards are at the forefront of the review, and that all registrants continue to have the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for safe and effective practice. We are also working closely with key partners across the sector to set out the priorities for delivering eye healthcare over the next ten years, including addressing workforce challenges, developing new ways of working and harnessing new technologies and interventions to improve patient outcomes in every workplace and setting.

Every UK nation follows a different healthcare path but, across the UK, eye health services are experiencing similar demands and pressures. I believe that optometrists are well positioned and ready to play a bigger role in transforming frontline healthcare delivery. This is why the College continues to influence the eye health agenda to make sure that optometrists’ skills are recognised, used appropriately in designing eye care services, and trusted by patients and the public.

The College, your professional body, will continue to make sure your voice is heard and at the heart of the future eye healthcare developments.
Leading clinical excellence

Our members are a community of over 16,000 optometrists who are committed to safeguarding the nation’s eye health, and their own professional development.
As optometry evolves, the College is working hard to ensure that our members have the support they need to deliver high quality patient care every day, and the expertise to prepare them for new challenges.

This annual report covers the second year of our 2017-2020 strategic plan. Guided by our purpose of professional excellence in eye health, we have continued to invest in new services and materials that support and guide our members, whatever setting they work in.

Our new member app provides instant access to the College’s core clinical guidance and now has over 2,000 monthly users, equipping members for the demands of modern practice. By the end of the year, over 3,000 members had completed our online courses and more than 4,000 had attended our webinars and online peer discussions. We also launched a podcast series this year, bringing listeners the latest in eye health research and patient experiences.

The College’s higher qualifications and independent prescribing examination continue to grow in popularity, with over 700 optometrists achieving a qualification this year.

The College’s higher qualifications and independent prescribing examination continue to grow in popularity, with over 700 optometrists achieving a qualification this year. These qualifications formally recognise expertise and prepare optometrists for new opportunities across all settings. Our quarterly member journal, Acuity, was rated ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ by 87% of our members and continues to provide career inspiration and keep members up-to-date with the latest clinical issues and developments.

Following the myopia management roundtable, hosted by the College, we published our consensus statement and guidance for optometrists on this topic. Since then we have developed resources to help guide our members on this evolving topic, including a patient leaflet, a webinar, and an Optometry in Practice special issue, as well as online learning resources and a podcast. We will continue to lead the discussion as the evidence base builds.

These achievements are only a snapshot of what we have delivered over the past year, thanks to our community of members who continue to engage, learn, and grow with us. As we look forward to the College’s 40th anniversary in 2020, I hope that we can continue to build a community that empowers optometrists to deliver clinical excellence every day.

Ian Humphreys
Chief Executive
Supporting our members

Members can rely on us to provide unrivalled clinical support and expertise, whenever and wherever they need it.

Our Clinical Management Guidelines provide advice on diagnosing and managing a range of conditions and are now available on our clinically-focused member app, alongside the Guidance for Professional Practice, Optometrists’ Formulary and ethical scenarios. Our in-house clinical advisers provide one-to-one guidance to members on a range of issues, as well as authoring our monthly clinical e-newsletter, the College’s most read member email, and our ever-popular patient leaflets.

There were 850 attendees at Optometry Tomorrow 2019, our flagship clinical conference. As well as lectures on a range of clinical topics, there were 20 hands-on clinical workshops over the two-day event. Over 1,400 members attended our CET events around the UK and heard from experts on topics including OCT and referrals.

21 Clinical Management Guidelines reviewed and updated

An average 800 responses a week to our clinical quiz on Instagram

14,027 CET points awarded at College events

2,000 monthly users of our clinical member app

1,100 queries responded to by our clinical advisers

850 attendees at Optometry Tomorrow 2019

Over 1.2 million patient leaflets delivered to practices
"I see the College as a great resource that helps me practise to the very best of my abilities every day.

I like that I have easy access to clinical guidelines and ethical scenarios that are relatable to me as a primary care optometrist. They ensure that I am constantly adapting my skills and keeping up-to-date. The reassurance of having the Clinical Management Guidelines online and the clinical advisers when you need them is great.

The patient leaflets are amazing. I am always using them in my sight tests – I make sure I never run out.

Being part of the College means belonging to a community that you know supports and encourages you to be the best optometrist you can be."
Developing our members

As our community of members find themselves working with new technology and managing an increasing number of patient conditions, they can rely on us to support their career progression and equip them with the clinical knowledge to deliver excellent care.

Over 65% of members now use our online CPD and CET provision, including webinars, recorded lectures and courses on topics such as AMD, BV, glaucoma, OCT, and much more. Our quarterly journal, Acuity, continues to keep members up-to-date with the latest from the profession, as well as offering opportunities to earn CET points, and our newly launched podcast series highlights research and patient case studies applicable to everyday practice.

The Scheme for Registration handbook was made available online for the first time, helping to ensure that the Scheme continues to prepare trainees for the demands of modern practice. The number of optometrists taking the College’s higher qualifications and independent prescribing (IP) examination also rose significantly, with 743 achieving a qualification this year.

Over 9,000 online courses were completed on DOCET this year and new courses on topics, including referrals and machine learning, were also published. The new course, Examining Patients with Learning Disabilities, won a silver Pharmaceutical Marketing Society award.

716 pre-registration trainees completed the Scheme for Registration

4,282 members attended webinars or online peer discussions

743 optometrists achieved higher qualifications or IP examinations

3,449 courses completed on the College’s online learning area

Over 2,000 listens to the College’s podcast series

9,506 online courses completed on DOCET
Member focus

Benjamin Chandra MCOptom
Primary care optometrist, Doncaster

“There College helps optometrists and optometry as a whole to strive for clinical excellence. It provides invaluable opportunities for me to learn and connect with others in the optometry community, such as the Optometry Tomorrow conference, which I attended in 2019.

The higher qualifications are particularly valuable in providing new opportunities. Starting the professional certificate in glaucoma has been fascinating, I am positive it will open doors in the future. The College’s CET materials will also keep my skills up-to-date in this fast-changing profession.”
Representing the profession and building the evidence base

We are committed to championing the voices of optometrists across the UK in all settings and career stages, providing an evidence-based and authoritative perspective in debates that shape the sector, and supporting research into optometry, optics and vision science and related subjects for the public benefit.

Our recent Role of the Optometrist campaign, launched during National Eye Health Week 2019, included an animation and a poster that aimed to describe and promote the profession to the public. We updated our public information website – lookafteryoureyes.org – to make it easier for patients to search for local members and enabled members to update their listing in our public directory with details, including languages spoken and dementia friendly status. College-generated news and comment on the importance of eye health and the role of the optometrist generated 337 items of media coverage. This included national newspaper and magazine articles and mentions, as well as radio, online and TV reports.

In March, we published our optometry gender pay gap analysis and continued to play a significant role in building the evidence base for eye healthcare.

This year we granted £178,758 in research funding for postgraduate scholarships, research fellowships, undergraduate research scholarships, travel bursaries and our Small Grants Scheme.

We responded to 13 consultations, including the UK National Screening Committee’s review of childhood vision screening and the GOC’s Education Strategic Review. The College will continue to play a vital role in ensuring that education and professional standards are at the forefront of the review. We also represented the profession at the Royal College of Ophthalmologist’s Annual Congress and at the UK Ophthalmology Alliance.

We continue our work to provide evidence-based guidance to England’s health commissioners through our joint secretariat of the Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning (CCEHC) with the Royal College of Ophthalmologists. Following the College’s myopia management roundtable in 2017-18, we also published our consensus statement and guidance for optometrists on this significant and evolving topic.
£178,758 of grants approved to support research

13 consultations responded to

337 press items including print, radio, online and TV coverage

618,869 page views on lookafteryoureyes.org

Top five pages
1. Parts of the eye
2. Flashes and floaters
3. Presbyopia
4. Squint
5. Screen use
Social media highlights

The most popular posts of 2018-19

**Instagram**
@collegeofoptometrists
Followers: 7,107

**Facebook**
@CollegeofOptometrists
Followers: 4,737

**LinkedIn**
College of Optometrists
Followers: 9,663

**Twitter**
@CollegeOptomUK
Followers: 8,869
“The work of the College helps to expand our role in the primary healthcare system so that our profession not only survives, but thrives in the future. The College has supported me tremendously during my career. I was a College student representative for Ulster University and attended the Optometry Tomorrow conference whilst studying. Since qualifying, I have attended numerous CET events, and the College provided a travel bursary to help me attend and present my PhD research at the largest international vision and eye conference (ARVO 2019).

Being a College member means benefiting from resources, but it also means supporting important research and public campaigns which boost perceptions of our profession and encourage the public to look after their eyes.”
## Highlights timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>October</strong></td>
<td>Optometry Tomorrow Bitesize attracts its highest attendance yet</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>November</strong></td>
<td>More than 300 newly-qualified optometrists are welcomed to the profession at our diploma ceremony</td>
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<td><strong>December</strong></td>
<td>The College launches the member app</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>February</strong></td>
<td>Optometry Tomorrow 2019 welcomes 850 attendees</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The College publishes its myopia management consensus statement and guidance for optometrists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>March</strong></td>
<td>The College publishes optometry gender pay gap analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May</strong></td>
<td>Acuity has a cover feature on myopia management</td>
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<td><strong>June</strong></td>
<td>The College publishes its analysis of pre-registration trainee performance on the Scheme for Registration</td>
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<td><strong>July</strong></td>
<td>The College releases the first in its podcast series</td>
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<td><strong>September</strong></td>
<td>The Role of the Optometrist campaign launches in National Eye Health Week</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The College publishes its Optometry in Practice myopia management special issue</td>
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The College does good work in maintaining standards and supporting the profession. I am a member because I want to be a part of that club. I ensure that all my optometrists are members of the College as part of their employment because I see how tools such as the leaflets and the guidance benefit them in their daily practice. They also have access to the College’s clinical advisers for any tricky queries – the ultimate in optometric phone a friend!

I see great value in College membership. If an optometrist values offering the very best in up-to-date patient care, they should be a member too."
The College Board and Council

East Midlands
- Kyla Black MCOptom
- Geraint Griffiths MCOptom

London
- Shane Abbas Bhimani MCOptom DipTp(IP) Higher Cert Glac
- Dr Irene Ctori MCOptom
- Russell Dawkins MCOptom
- Dr Joy Myint FCOptom Prof Cert LV
- Nitika Sondhi MCOptom

Eastern
- Prof Peter Allen FCOptom
- Deepali Modha MCOptom
- Dr Parth Shah MCOptom

North East
- Dr George Anthony Gibson MCOptom DipTp(IP) Prof Cert Glau Med Ret
- Andrew McGregor MCOptom
- Matt Roney MCOptom Prof Cert Glau
- Dr Gillian Ruddick MCOptom DipTp(IP) Prof Cert Glau
- Ian White MCOptom

North West
- Lorcan Butler MCOptom Prof Cert Paed Eye Care
- Dr Lisa O’Donoghue MCOptom (until September 2019)
- Dr Laura E Sweeney MCOptom DipTp(IP)
- Kathryn Trimmer MCOptom DipTp(IP)
- Johnathan Waugh MCOptom DipTp(IP) Prof Cert Paed Eye Care

Northern Ireland
- Dr George Anthony Gibson MCOptom DipTp(IP) Prof Cert Glau Med Ret
- Andrew McGregor MCOptom
- Matt Roney MCOptom Prof Cert Glau
- Dr Gillian Ruddick MCOptom DipTp(IP) Prof Cert Glau
- Ian White MCOptom

Scotland
- Lorcan Butler MCOptom Prof Cert Paed Eye Care
- Dr Lisa O’Donoghue MCOptom (until September 2019)
- Dr Laura E Sweeney MCOptom DipTp(IP)
- Kathryn Trimmer MCOptom DipTp(IP)
- Johnathan Waugh MCOptom DipTp(IP) Prof Cert Paed Eye Care
South East

Colin Davidson FCOptom DipTp(IP), Vice President

Eddie Pigott MCOptom

Sheetal Patel MCOptom DipTp(IP)

Lucy Blown MCOptom Prof Cert Glauc

South West

Stephanie Campbell MCOptom

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

Jodie Wearne MCOptom

Wales

Angharad Hobby MCOptom

Dr Mary-Ann Sherratt MCOptom DipGlauc DipTp(IP), Immediate Past President

West Midlands

Shamina Asf MCOptom

Prab Boparai MCOptom Prof Cert Glauc

Prof Leon Davies FCOptom FAAO SFHEA

Yorkshire and Humber

Prof Edward Mallen MCOptom, President

Dr Aleksandra Mankowska MCOptom, Treasurer

Barbara Watson FCOptom DipTp(IP) DCLP Higher Cert Glauc

Lay Panel Members of Council

Andrea Clerk MBA, CIPD (from August 2019)

Tony Cowburn BSc(Hons) (until August 2019)

Katie Engel LLB (from August 2019)

Mark Redhead MA, MBA, FRSA (from August 2019)

Amarpal Takk LLB (until August 2019)

John Thompson BA(Hons) FCOptom (until March 2019)

Trustees

Colin Davidson FCOptom DipTp(IP)

Prof Leon Davies FCOptom FAAO SFHEA

Prof Edward Mallen MCOptom

Dr Aleksandra Mankowska MCOptom

Dr Joy Myint FCOptom Prof Cert LV

Sheetal Patel MCOptom DipTp(IP)

Dr Gillian Ruddick MCOptom DipTp(IP) Prof Cert Glauc

Dr Mary-Ann Sherratt MCOptom DipGlauc DipTp(IP), Chair

Dr Parth Shah MCOptom

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

John Thompson BA(Hons) FCOptom (until March 2019)

Co-opted Trustees

Andrew Kitchen BSc(Hons), ACMA, MBA

Dr Rob Hogan MCOptom

Optometry Schools Council Nominee

Will Holmes MPhil PGCertMedEd MCOptom MAcadMed FHEA

Early Career Representative

Rashida Makda

For more details or to contact members of our Board and Council go to college-optometrists.org/governance
**Income**

- Education - 58.5%
- Membership – 37.8%
- Research – 1.4%
- Investment income – 2.3%

**TOTAL INCOME £7,323,156**

**Expenditure**

- Education – 63%
- Membership - 28.1%
- Research – 8.5%
- Investment fees – 0.4%

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE £7,294,827**
Balance sheet

Fixed assets
Tangible fixed assets £2,450,308
Investments £5,071,639
£7,521,947

Current assets
Debtors £873,292
Cash at bank and in hand £2,599,255
£3,472,547

Liabilities
Creditors due within one year £2,719,966
Net current assets £752,581

Net assets £8,274,528

Funds
Restricted funds
Research fund £582,903
DOCET and PrOVIDe £432,068
Unrestricted funds
Designated funds £2,990,301
General funds £4,269,256

Total charity funds £8,274,528

The full statement of accounts is available at college-optometrists.org/annualreports