

The Eyes Have It is a partnership of Macular Society, Fight for Sight / Vision Foundation, RNIB, Association of Optometrists, The Royal College of Ophthalmologists and Roche Products Ltd. Roche has funded the activities of the partnership.

#EyePledge



Foundations for Change



A commitment to the future of eye health

#TheEyesHaveIt

Addressing patients' needs

Eye care services in the UK are under significant pressure, with long waiting lists, [1] staff shortages [2] and inefficient systems [3] putting people at risk of experiencing avoidable sight loss, [4] with profound ramifications for individual wellbeing as well as for wider society.

Last year, The Eyes Have It – a partnership of Macular Society, Fight for Sight / Vision Foundation, RNIB, Association of Optometrists, The Royal College of Ophthalmologists and Roche – worked with clinicians, patient groups, sector leaders and others to identify the key issues facing the eye care sector in England. From this, we developed our report, **Laying the foundations for the future of eye health in England**, [5] detailing recommendations that we believe should underpin a national plan for eye care.



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Our recommendations are grouped across seven key themes:

1

Prevention, diagnosis and early intervention in an integrated system



2

Equity of access, support and patient empowerment throughout the patient pathway



3

Eye care workforce



4

Data, connectivity and real-world evidence



5

Using new technologies and treatment models



6

Investment into research for future treatments



7

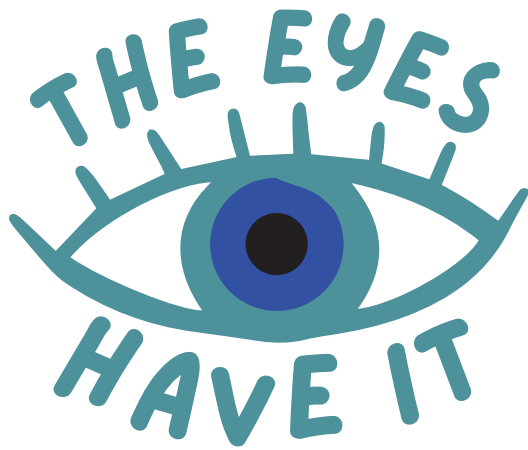
Availability of treatments



We are calling on parliamentarians and prospective parliamentary candidates to back the introduction of a national plan for eye care, which addresses the challenges facing the sector and ensures everyone can access the eye care they need, where and when they need it.

Email welwyn.eyehhealth-awareness@roche.com to pledge your support for a national plan. To learn more visit eyeshaveit.co.uk.

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Our priorities for a national plan for eye care



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1

Prevention, diagnosis and early intervention in an integrated system



Reducing the prevalence of eye conditions by just 1% per year is projected to save the UK economy up to £9.5bn by 2050. [6]

Early intervention is the best way to ensure more people keep their sight and ease pressure on eye care services. This requires a joined-up approach to planning and better patient education, to ensure sight threatening conditions are identified and treated promptly.



We recommend:

- Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) undertake an eye health needs assessment of the population to feed into public health plans and inform local commissioning and pathway development.
- Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) develop a high-quality consistent eye care pathway that recognises the value of community optometry practices as diagnostic hubs and treatment centres, particularly for common conditions such as glaucoma, reducing pressure on hospital eye services where possible.

2

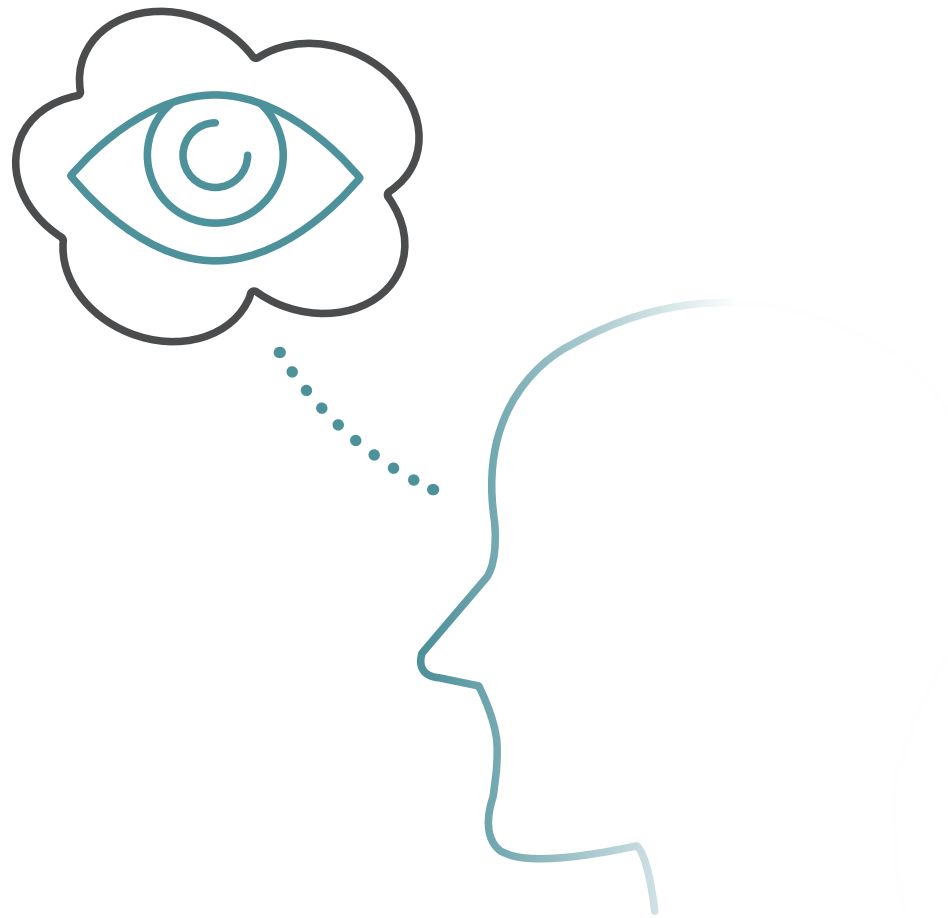
Equity of access, support and patient empowerment throughout the patient pathway



Only 21% of people experiencing sight loss were referred to emotional support services at the time of diagnosis. [7]

Sight loss can have a profound impact on people's lives. [8]
To achieve the best outcomes, patients should be supported and empowered at all stages of their care pathway.





We recommend:

- ICBs implement an eye care support pathway and commission Eye Care Liaison Officers (ECLOs) to provide consistent patient information, communications and support at all stages of the patient pathway.
- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) update guidance to consistently recognise the need for psychological care to be provided as part of wider eye care.

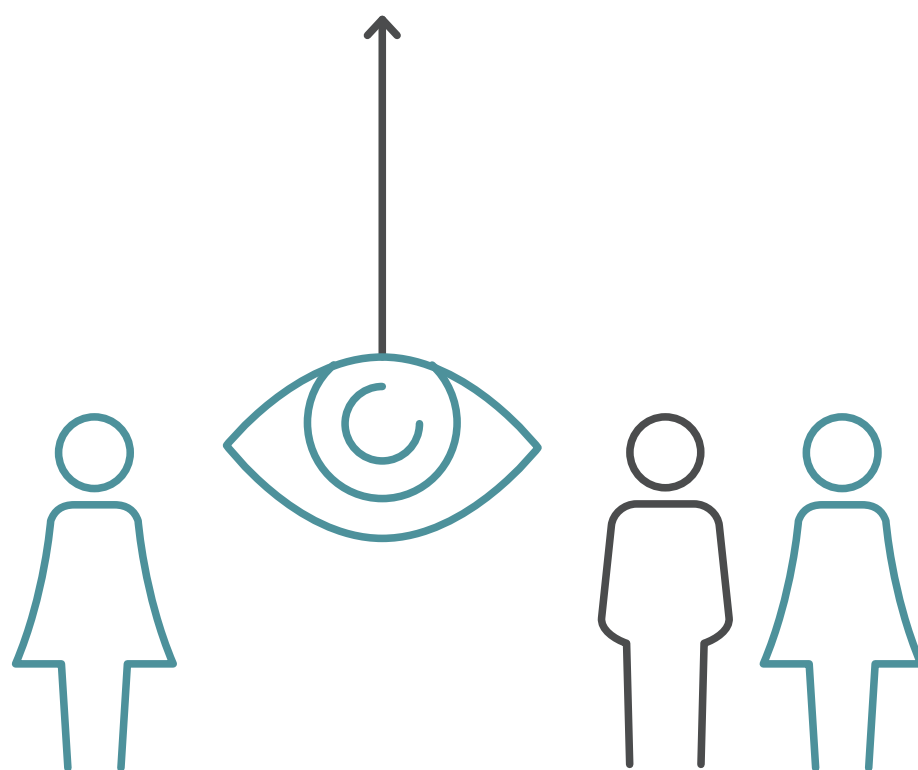
3

Eye care workforce



76% of NHS hospital eye units report not having enough consultants to meet current patient need. [2]

Demographic changes mean that demand for eye care services is projected to increase significantly in the coming decades. Investing in the eye care workforce is essential to keep pace with changing population needs and future-proof eye care.

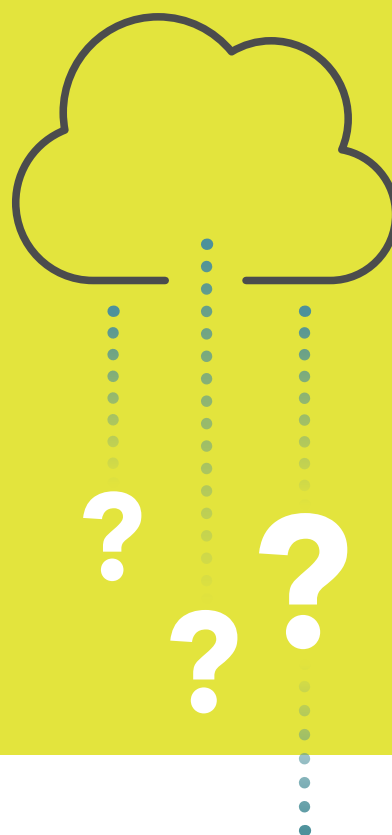


We recommend:

- The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England (NHSE) increase the number of ophthalmology specialty training places by 285, phased over seven years to tackle shortages, in line with existing commitments in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan and fully resource trainers to deliver this expanded programme.
- DHSC and NHSE iteratively plan and implement additional expansions to the wider eye care workforce to meet future demand or deliver new models of care.
- Commissioners enable and upskill the wider eye care workforce to deliver more clinical care outside hospital.

4

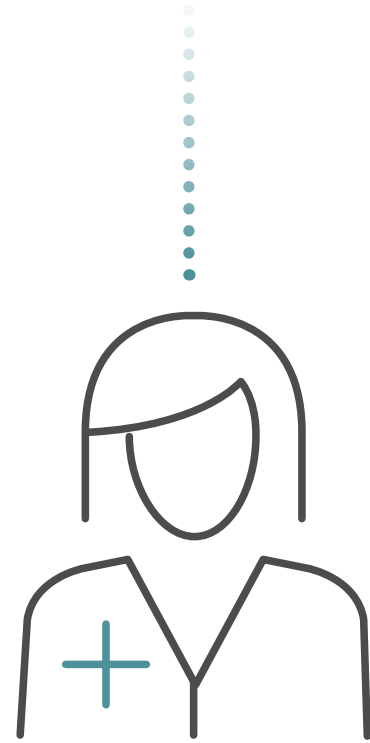
Data, connectivity and real-world evidence



73% of UK optometrists cannot access shared hospital patient records where they work. [9]



Currently, it is difficult for high street optometrists and hospital eye health providers to collect and share patient data or communicate with each other, [3] creating inefficiencies and unnecessary referrals and harming individual patient care. In addition, a lack of granular data on patient needs or system capacity undermines large-scale planning.



We recommend:

- NHSE works with commissioners, clinicians and industry to increase connectivity within and between primary and secondary eye care providers through the deployment of a single, consistent mechanism for image sharing, universal access to NHS mail and consistent digital electronic referral systems improving patient care and reducing inefficiencies such as repeated scans.
- NHSE and DHSC collect, publish and analyse more comprehensive and granular data, including on waiting times for follow-up care, to support service and workforce planning and development, as well as patient access to services.

5

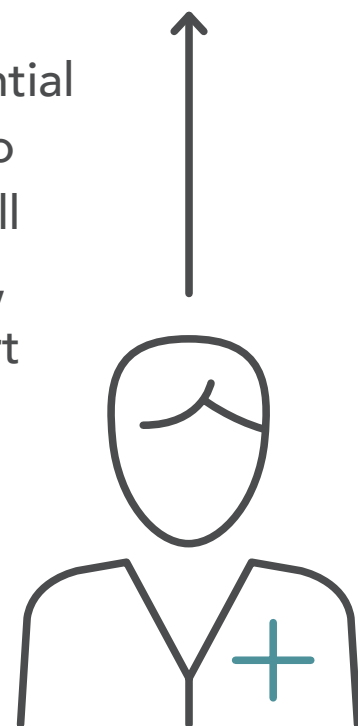
Using new technologies and treatment models

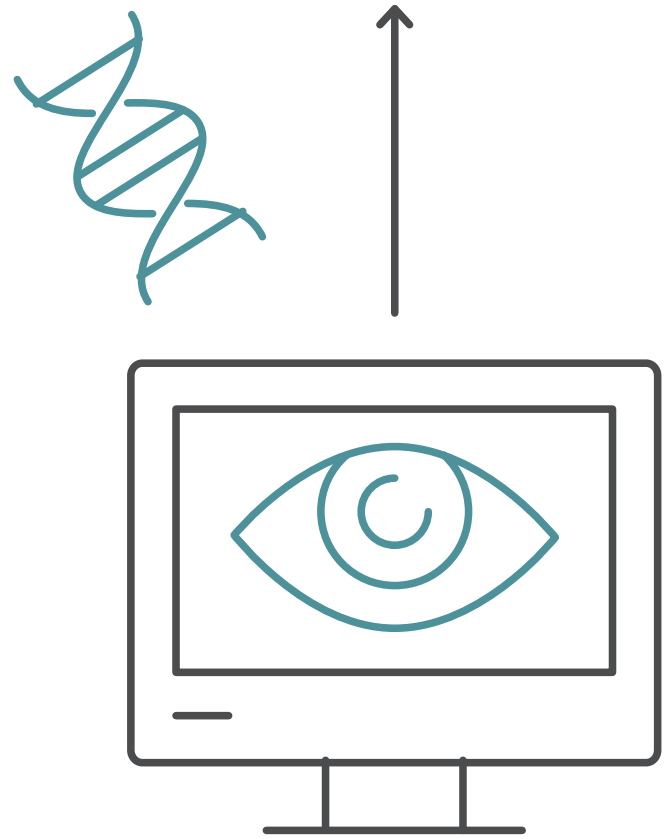


Sight loss is projected to cost the UK economy at least £33.5 billion per year by 2050. [6]



New tools and technologies have the potential to transform eye care, delivering benefits to patients and the economy. To ensure the full value of these technologies can be realised, the NHS needs the infrastructure to support their rollout to patients.





We recommend:

- NHSE ensures the system has the necessary underlying infrastructure and processes in place to support prompt and consistent roll out and application of new technologies and treatment models across the country.
- NHSE, ICBs and service providers ensure that there is adequate staff training and resourcing to deliver new technologies and treatment models, and that evolving professional practice is reflected in workforce planning and training.

6

Investment into research for future treatments



At present, just £9.60 is invested in eye research for every person living with sight loss, one tenth of the per patient spend on dementia research. [6]

To improve outcomes for a growing population living with sight loss, continued innovation and new approaches to diagnosis and treatment are paramount. It is therefore essential that eye care research is sufficiently resourced.





We recommend:

- Government double funding for sight loss research to at least £50 million per year by 2030 and expand this sustainably thereafter, so we can better understand and address the causes of sight loss.
- Government work with the National Institute of Health Research and UK Research and Innovation to increase the provision of early career research studentships and fellowships in the eye health field, expanding the number of clinicians involved in research.

7

Availability of treatments



Between 2018 and 2021, only 66% of all new medicines authorised for use in Europe were made available in the UK. [10]

While new treatments for conditions which cause sight loss are on the horizon, ensuring patient access and uptake for these treatments can be challenging, due to financial or regulatory barriers.



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- NHSE, ICBs and service providers ensure that there is adequate staff training and resourcing to deliver new technologies and treatment models, and that evolving professional practice is reflected in workforce planning and training.

About The Eyes Have it



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Macular Society is the charity dedicated to beating the fear and isolation of macular disease, by funding world-class research, and providing the best advice and support to those affected by macular conditions. macularsociety.org



Fight for Sight / Vision Foundation is the only independent UK-wide funder changing lives through grant investment in ground-breaking scientific research and innovative services for people with sight loss. fightforsight.org.uk

R N I B

See differently

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) is the UK's leading sight loss charity. We want to change our world so there are no barriers to people with sight loss. rnib.org.uk



The Association of Optometrists (AOP) is the voice of the optical profession, representing over 80 percent of practising optometrists. The AOP elevates the work of its members, safeguards their interests and champions eye health across the UK. aop.org.uk



The Royal College of Ophthalmologists is the professional body for ophthalmologists in the UK, committed to developing and promoting the highest standards of patient care. rcophth.ac.uk



Roche Products Ltd is a pioneer in pharmaceuticals and diagnostics, focused on advancing science to improve people's lives. Roche believes that more can and should be done to improve and protect vision. roche.co.uk

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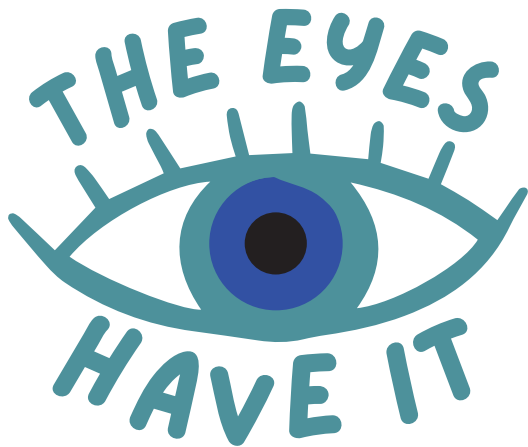
#EyePledge



Together we believe these recommendations can form the basis of a national plan to transform eye care in England.

If you agree, please pledge your support.

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