

Policy priorities

for 2026 to 2030

We are the leading national association for eye care providers working in primary and community care settings.

Each year our members provide over 18 million eye examinations and offer a wide range of other eye care services across the UK.

Our mission

Our mission is to ensure high-quality, accessible and sustainable primary eye care for all by influencing policy, regulation and system design.

Our vision

Our vision for primary eye care is described in our publication: 'The future of primary eye care – principles and priorities'.

This document sets out our policy priorities for the period 2026 to 2030, as we continue to work with members, sector partners and stakeholders to make our vision a reality.

Our policy priorities are to:



PROTECT

patient access to core primary eye care services



SUPPORT

the expansion of enhanced eye care services to meet patient needs



ENABLE

innovation, workforce and system reform to drive improvement

To achieve this, we will:

Safeguard the national sight testing service and the protection and flexibilities in the Opticians Act.

Support universal access to high-quality, clinically led eye care.

Fight to preserve patient protections and choice, especially for vulnerable groups.

Advocate for sustainable, nationally negotiated NHS sight test funding via the General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) contract.

Support members to deliver enhanced services (NHS and self-funded care).

Develop and support policies that reduce hospital delays and prevent avoidable sight loss.

Promote models that deliver care closer to home and remotely, especially for ageing and underserved populations.

Work with members and the wider system to tackle unwarranted regional variation in care that leads to a 'postcode lottery'.

Champion evidence-based technology and integrated IT systems.

Invest in workforce development, training, and new clinical roles.

Promote proportionate regulation and system-wide collaboration.

Support inclusive, multidisciplinary teams to meet growing demand when it arises.

Delivering our priorities

To deliver our priorities, our work will include both planned activities and work that arises during each year, for example supporting our members to respond to stakeholder initiatives.

Our core activities include:

- Horizon scanning to identify and address risks and opportunities for the sector
- Influencing policy by engaging with stakeholders and responding to consultations
- Undertaking research and policy analysis to generate insight, using this to develop assets that support our members
- Collaborating with sector partners on our shared priorities
- Communicating our work to members, sector partners, stakeholders and the public.

