



Dear Colleague

**POSITION OF OPTOMETRIC ADVISER
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT
(ONE POST – 0.5 Whole Time Equivalent)**

This letter seeks applications from registered independent prescribing community optometrists for the position of Optometric Adviser at the Scottish Government.

There is one 0.5 Whole Time Equivalent post available. The position would be arranged through either a secondment opportunity or a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Scottish Government and a current employer. A sessional basis may also be available.

The position is within the community eyecare team and requires an Optometric Adviser who will commit to providing GOS for at least one day a week whilst also in post in this role.

The Optometric Adviser will work directly to the Chief Optometric Adviser in Scotland. The detail of the portfolio will be determined according to the skills and experience of the successful candidate.

This is an exciting opportunity at a challenging time, with multiple competing priorities. The postholder will be working to support the Government as we embark on a programme of change and development in the delivery of NHS community eyecare services.

The successful candidate will have the opportunity to make a substantial contribution to how we develop patient care in community optometry practices and how we support optometric teams into the future.

Further information on the position is attached to this letter, including how to apply. The closing date for applications is **Thursday 9 November 2023**.

Yours sincerely

Dr Janet Pooley PhD MCOptom
Chief Optometric Adviser

**From the
Chief Optometric Adviser
Dr Janet Pooley**

23 October 2023

Addressees

For action
NHS Boards

For Information
NHS National Services Scotland
NHS Education for Scotland
Optometry Scotland

Enquiries and applications to:

mike.stewart@gov.scot

POSITION OF OPTOMETRIC ADVISER SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Introduction

1. A new opportunity has arisen for the role of Optometric Adviser (OA) to the Chief Optometric Adviser (COA) within the Scottish Government. There is one 0.5 Whole Time Equivalent post available for an independent prescribing optometrist with significant knowledge and experience of working within community optometry. The detail of the portfolio will be determined according to the skills and experience of the successful candidate.
2. The provision of General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) changed significantly in 2006 with the introduction of new regulations. This heralded improvements to the way that optometrists cared for patients within community practices, and required the whole practice team to support the care of NHS patients. First port of call, the dramatic increase of optometric independent prescribers and the shift of many patients out from the hospital eye service have resulted in a very different service model. These changes will continue, and will ensure that we build a sustainable ophthalmic service with capacity to safely care for all our patients.
3. New community services are planned, and this post will be key to supporting the Scottish Government's delivery of this enhanced patient care.

Role of Optometric Adviser

4. Working within the Scottish Government's small Community Eyecare Team, the OA will form an integral part of the Government's network of senior clinical advisers, which in primary care includes Senior Medical Advisers, a GP Nursing Adviser, the Chief Dental Officer and his clinical team, and an Allied Health Professional lead.
5. The OA will support the COA in ensuring that Ministers and senior officials receive appropriate professional advice on all matters related to ophthalmic policy and the development of community eyecare.
6. The OA will also have a visible role liaising with stakeholder groups from across all ophthalmic professions and supporting the COA in shaping strategic developments.
7. The OA will initially be supporting the delivery of enhanced community services, developing on-line advice to the public and advising on improvements to regulatory requirements.
8. Specific duties include:
 - Ensuring Ministers and senior officials receive appropriate professional advice on optometric policy and eyecare provision, including deputising where appropriate for the COA;
 - Similarly, advising on (and leading on some) aspects of health improvement and other policy developments, including deputising where appropriate for the COA;
 - Supporting the appropriate clinical governance of NHS optometric care and systems;
 - Liaising as appropriate with NHS Boards and National Services Scotland, and other public and partner bodies to optimise the delivery of high quality of care;
 - Maintaining an effective professional network across Scotland;

- Negotiating and consulting with colleagues representing ophthalmic professionals as appropriate;
- Maintaining an effective working relationship with the General Optical Council (GOC);
- Supporting meaningful workforce planning of the ophthalmic workforce;
- Ensuring ophthalmic policy features in cross-cutting policy change within the Health and Social Care Directorates and wider health policy environment;
- Supporting civil service colleagues in answering Ministerial correspondence, Parliamentary correspondence, briefing and other enquiries, including media;
- Any other roles and responsibilities agreed with the COA.

Skills and Qualifications

9. The OA position is based within the Scottish Government's Community Eyecare Team, which is part of the Community Dentistry, Eyecare and Hearing Division. We are looking for an individual who will be an excellent team player and able to work collegiately in a strong team environment. We specifically value people with leadership credentials and with experience of managing teams of people, a self-starter able to take a lead role developing and leading policy change within optometry in Scotland.

Essential Criteria

- An independent prescribing optometrist with current GOC registration and extensive experience of delivering care for NHS Scotland;
- A commitment to provide GOS for at least one day a week whilst in this post;
- An excellent working understanding of the GOS regulations in Scotland, as well as the relationship with other relevant legislation and the role of professional guidance;
- An ability to scope, prioritise, plan, implement and evaluate a programme of work;
- Strong leadership skills;
- A professional optometrist who is honest and knowledgeable, and acts ethically in the best interests of patients;
- Confident and assured with the ability to advise Ministers;
- A clear understanding of clinical governance and the ability to apply knowledge to support clear and high quality advice;
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills and the ability to influence;
- Able to work collaboratively with a range of people including other ophthalmic professionals, civil servants and other specialist staff;
- Adaptive, resilient, flexible and able to respond to a changing fast-paced working environment.

Time Commitment:

10. The post is on a 0.5 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) basis, and job sharing arrangements will not be considered.

Further Information on the Post

11. The post will be offered either through a secondment opportunity (where the individual is not currently an NHS employee) or Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Scottish Government and your current employer. The successful candidate will continue to be an employee of their current employer, and the salary will therefore be determined accordingly. There may be the opportunity to work on a sessional basis.

12. The initial period of the post will be for 23 months.
13. The Scottish Government is presently following a hybrid model of working. The successful candidate must be happy to work from home and be able to occasionally travel to meetings and events in Scotland and around the UK as required.

Further Enquiries

14. Please contact mike.stewart@gov.scot with any specific enquiries or requests for an informal discussion.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

How to Apply

Supporting Statement

15. This should be no more than two sides of A4 and **must explain how, in your view, your qualifications, skills and experience meet the criteria for the role** (i.e. **do not** include information that falls outwith this, such as your own personal views about community eyecare in Scotland). Please confirm that you are currently GOC registered and included on an NHS Board's Ophthalmic List to provide GOS. You will be asked to provide evidence.

Curriculum Vitae

16. Please also send us a comprehensive CV which must include details of your qualifications and career history, with dates of employment and reasons for leaving. Please include your present salary and, if applicable, your NHS Banding.

17. Please e-mail both documents (the Supporting Statement and CV) to mike.stewart@gov.scot.

18. **The closing date for applications is Thursday 9 November 2023.**

Selection Process

19. The selection exercise will comprise a panel interview chaired by the COA, a presentation and a written task.
20. The interviews will be held via Microsoft Teams.