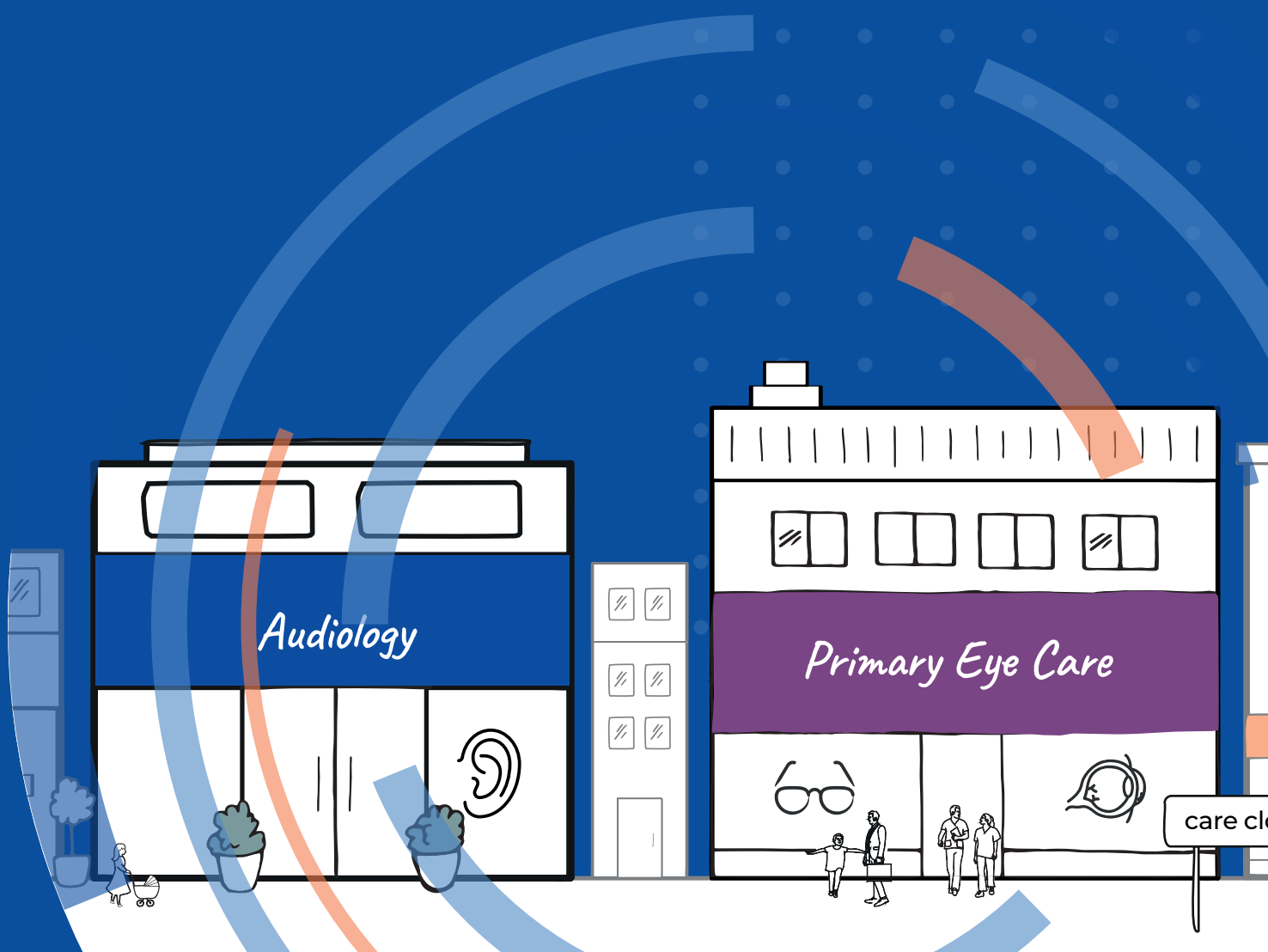


Annual report

2022

FODO GROUP: 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2022



About us

The FODO Group comprises FODO, FODO Ireland and the National Community Hearing Association (NCHA).

FODO is the representative professional body for eye care providers across the UK, and FODO Ireland represents eye care providers across the Republic of Ireland. We lead change by influencing government, legislators, policymakers and opinion formers. In addition, we assist and work with and through our members and in partnership with patient groups, regulators and other professional associations to improve access to high-quality eye care for everyone in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

The NCHA is the representative professional body for community hearing care providers across the UK. We work with the broader hearing sector, governments and decision-makers to lead and influence change. We are the voice of community hearing care and work with our members and stakeholders to improve access to high-quality hearing care for all.



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FODO Group chair statement

Welcome to the 2022 annual report. During the year, we transitioned from Covid to tackling new challenges as a community of eye and hearing care providers across the UK and Ireland.

Due to political and economic uncertainty, 2022 was not the regular year we had all hoped for after Covid. However, thankfully, our members across primary eye care and primary care audiology got on with delivering as wide a range of services as possible to patients and local populations without fuss or delay. And as this annual report sets out, FODO, FODO Ireland and the NCHA were ever active in influencing the conditions for success and supporting members throughout.

Our head office team continued to be proactive, monitoring and responding to risks and influencing strategic issues on members' behalf. Our work included a comprehensive, evidence-based submission to the General Optical Council's call for evidence on the Opticians Act, ongoing analysis and influencing during the debates on the Health and Care Bill (now Act) in England, detailed reviews of planned GOS reforms in Wales and support to Optometry Wales, raising concerns alongside GPs about the risks of a new National Care Service in Scotland taking on primary care, and proactive engagement in multiple national reviews, including the NHS Fuller Stocktake review in England.

In addition to our work on policy and strategy, our membership team continued providing excellent customer service without delay while keeping costs down. This efficient and effective service, alongside our outstanding medical malpractice insurance and participative policymaking, meant our memberships continued to grow.

All our members are part of a community of providers who work together to achieve common goals for everyone's benefit. As this review demonstrates, we remain committed to collaborative working and delivering results for members and the wider sector. We will build on our work in 2023 to make the case for more patients to receive timely care close to home in primary care settings across the UK and Ireland.

I would like to thank you for your ongoing support on behalf of all FODO, FODO Ireland and NCHA directors. We are here to help you succeed, so please continue to be involved with our work and make the most of your membership throughout the year.



Sarah Joyce BEM
Chair

Group managing director statement

As the leading membership body for eye and hearing care providers, we represent and speak up for members who are committed to improving outcomes for patients across the UK and Ireland. In 2022, we dealt with ever-more complex policy challenges on behalf of our members and the wider sector. We will build on our success in 2023 and support the growth of primary care services to meet needs.

At the FODO Group, we work across five nations, with governments, health systems and regulators with different ways of working. This gives us a unique perspective and unrivalled in-house expertise in health policy, health economics, business, and strategy. We use this expertise to lead, protect and advance the sectors for the benefit of members and patients they serve.

Examples include responding to 25 public consultations in 2022, including the GOC consultation on the UK Opticians Act, implementation of new NHS legislation in England, health professions' regulation, and commissioning, procurement and contracts.

We continued to invest in partnership working as we believe it's the right way to deliver the best outcomes.

That is why we worked with sector partners in 2022 to publish joint statements on improving access to enhanced eye care services and with patient groups to agree to tackle unfair VAT on hearing aids. Moreover, throughout the passage of the Health and Care Act 2022, we worked with GP, pharmacy and dental colleagues to ensure primary care's voice was not overlooked.

As members know, in addition to playing a leading role in policy and strategy, we have continued to build on the bespoke guidance and support members can access to build their success. Despite significant growth in member queries, we continue to respond within 24 hours, and members face no barriers to speaking to us on the phone when they need support.

We start 2023 with a record number of members and a strong financial position. This growth is driven by members recommending their colleagues to join us for guidance, support, and medical malpractice insurance and to be part of shaping the future. We would like to thank all members for their continued support for our work.

Members have also sent us clear instructions to do more to promote our work and all that we do for eye and hearing care. That is what we will do in 2023. We have consulted on our 2023-26 strategy for FODO UK and have clear public affairs strategies for FODO Ireland and the NCHA. We will raise

awareness about what we do, as you have requested. We remain focused on outcomes on the ground and those that matter most to you – and we will never compromise on this.

Please get involved with our work in 2023. We are always on hand to meet members and, with your help, make positive change happen.



Harjit Sandhu
FODO Group
Managing Director

Policy and influence

Throughout 2022, we continued to horizon-scan, shape, analyse and respond to key movements in public and healthcare policy, as well as formal consultations on behalf of members and sectors we represent. Here are some highlights from across the FODO Group.

FODO UK

There is clear evidence that the post-Covid period has resulted in one of the busiest, riskiest and most complex periods for healthcare services.

As public finances and systems are under pressure, we see governments and public organisations trying to make up lost ground by consulting on a wide range of complex topics. Unfortunately, this has also resulted in some rushed proposals, which then require significant FODO resources to address and de-risk on behalf of patients, members and the wider sector.

One example of this was FODO's leadership during the passage of the Health and Care Act 2022. This included joint work with GP, pharmacist, dentist and audiology leaders to ensure we have a voice within new Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) in England. This led directly to the Fuller Stocktake review, and we now have this opportunity to engage with ICPs as a sector, which we must seize in 2023. Part of our role is to help the new LOCSU leadership focus

on assisting LOCs to articulate that voice locally in this new world.

Another example was spotting the risks of a National Care Service in Scotland and responding in a coordinated way with Optometry Scotland. In Wales, we continued to analyse and respond to proposed GOS reforms and welcomed more sustainable funding for clinical services and making better use of primary eye care professionals and infrastructure. However, we also raised concerns about cutting patient benefits during a cost-of-living crisis and the risks to domiciliary services. We have continued to work with all sector partners to support Optometry Wales on these complex issues.

In England, we continued working with all sector bodies to develop, support and promote enhanced eye care services, including supporting various NHS England transformation initiatives and through Optometry First pilots. As England trails behind other UK nations on equitable access to NHS-funded enhanced primary eye care services, this remains a priority for 2023 and beyond.

As well as this work, we continue to play a key partnership role with the GOC, universities and sector partners in implementing the new UK Education and Training Requirements (ETR), especially regarding placements and funding. The role forms part of our wider workforce analysis and future planning and our work on IT connectivity, electronic referral, digitisation and AI.

As a leading member of the OFNC, we achieved a 2% increase in GOS fees in England, following a 1.9% uplift in 2021. We also designed a practice cost survey with OFNC partners and collected up-to-date data on the cost of providing this essential NHS service as described in our 2023-24 bid.

Then, there was the GOC's consultation on the Opticians Act and associated policies. We consulted widely with members, undertook extensive research and submitted our detailed analysis to demonstrate the Act remained a robust piece of patient protection legislation permitting safe innovation. Although the GOC has published its initial analysis of the consultation, the process it started will take several years to work through. FODO will continue to analyse, consult and respond on your behalf throughout.

In 2023, we will launch our principles and priorities for primary eye care, setting out the FODO strategy for 2023-26. We were privileged to co-create this with members from individual, independent,

regional and national eye care providers. It will explain the simple route map we will follow and invite members to play a bigger role in each of these steps. Our clinical committee will ensure we take these safely and positively. I hope you will take the opportunity to have your say and help shape the future of eye care across all four nations of the UK.

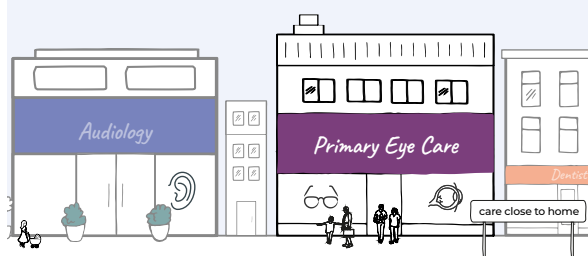


David Hewlett
Director



The future of primary eye care – principles and priorities

Maximising patient, population and health system benefits



FODO Ireland

In 2022, with many Covid restrictions lifted, healthcare thankfully returned to a new kind of normal in Ireland.

However, it also saw a return to more familiar challenges. The setbacks included unacceptable four-month delays for national medical card processing and a significant backlog in processing Optical Benefit forms at Crumlin owing to staff shortages. FODO Ireland was quick to respond and supported system colleagues to get medical card delays down to 5-10 working days and address the root cause of problems in Crumlin.

As well as tackling operational challenges like this, we continued to lead on sector strategy. This included promoting your and patients' interests with key stakeholders, attending eye care conferences, liaising with the HSE and CORU, the Department of Health and Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and joining project groups to develop eye care policy.

We have built on our longstanding and positive relationship with TU Dublin, helping fund more places for optometrists that want to train and live in Ireland. We also developed a

prospectus for other higher education institutes (HEIs) in Ireland to highlight the benefits of delivering optometry education to address workforce challenges. In 2022, it was a pleasure to support the work of other HEIs who are interested in providing eye care education. The first fruits of this should become apparent next year.

We have, as planned, grown our team and accelerated our public affairs work, including engaging with Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly, encouraging him to make better use of primary care optometrists and dispensing opticians to meet growing need and the huge hospital backlogs for children over age eight. We have seen a positive response to this already.

With a new policy and public affairs team in place, we have also defined our strategy for the years ahead. The strategy is already delivering results through radio and press engagement, so we can speak up for members and the patients we serve more publicly.

In 2023, FODO Ireland will continue to represent you and influence on your behalf.

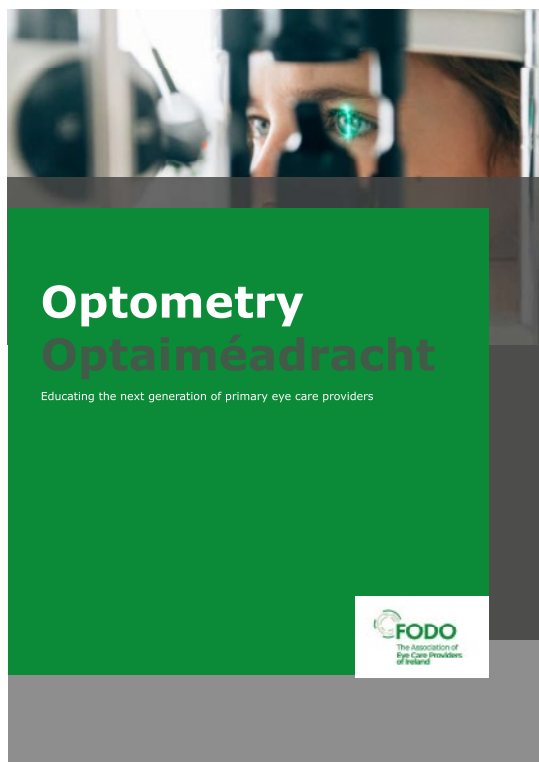
To support you and your patients, we will continue to address workforce shortages through more home-trained optometrists, DOs and overseas recruitment. We will also represent you in discussions with policymakers and government and call for an ever-more strategic role for primary eye care in Ireland.

Our strength lies in our membership, which continues to grow, but we cannot do all this alone. We need your help to raise awareness of eye care's importance for the entire population and the challenges and solutions we can offer in meeting growing needs. We will be in touch throughout the year with updates and opportunities for you to get more involved.

We have much to do in 2023 – not least in children's eye care – but we start from a solid track record of success and political engagement.



Garvan Mulligan
FODO Ireland Chair



National Community Hearing Association

Last year, we began our public affairs work to call for all patients to have access to a primary care audiology service. We have made some good progress here.

We started by building our evidence base to make the case for change. Our work included commissioning economic research from a leading group of health economists to supplement our in-house clinical and policy research to demonstrate the benefits of primary care audiology for patients and the wider health and care system.

In England, because of our work, NHS leadership recognised the value of primary care audiology. For example, the NHS Fuller Stocktake review of primary care recognised audiology's potential as the fifth primary care service. In December 2022, NHS England went further, saying adults with ear and hearing problems should be able to self-refer to audiology services. NHS England is finally acknowledging that audiologists should be the first point of contact for most ear and hearing problems.

We also built relationships across health and care systems during the passage of new healthcare legislation, with other policymakers and strategists recognising the value of primary care audiology.

In Scotland, we gave evidence to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee inquiry into alternative pathways into primary care. This was well received by government and led to a better understanding of primary care audiology's benefits for patients and the wider NHS.

We will build on this initial success in 2023, so that more patients across the UK can benefit from access to high quality and timely care close to home.

Members will also recall that in the 2021 annual report, we explained our plans to fight unfair VAT on hearing aids in the UK. As planned, we strengthened the case for zero-rated VAT on hearing aids throughout 2022. We worked closely with sector partners to fine-tune research and build a consensus on the priorities ahead. In 2023, we will launch more public-facing communications on this unfair tax and call for change.

While prioritising these two important and complex pieces of policy work, our small head office team, supported by members, also continued to horizon-scan, analyse and plan for future change and challenges on the sector's behalf.

Our work included reviewing complex NHS procurement and pricing rule changes, and analysing changes in international markets that could have global impacts, such as the FDA final rule on OTC hearing aids in the USA.

Using this analysis, we are now working on further in-house research and policy to manage the risks and opportunities of OTCs in the future.

As well as leading on policy and strategy in hearing care and shaping the future, we supported members throughout the year on technical and regulatory matters. Our support included issuing guidance on CQC regulation in England and reviewing equivalent regulation across the UK.

Members also know that, while transformation takes time, the NCHA is always on the right side of change and looking to the future. This year, we finally saw a longstanding project bear fruit. For many years the NCHA

has led economic analysis and helped prevent the spread of bad decision making when NHS commissioners in England tried to ration access to hearing care. For example, together with the RNID and sector partners, we have continued to challenge North Staffordshire as being the only NHS region to restrict access to care based on outdated treatment thresholds. Finally, in 2022, NHS commissioners reversed this 2015 decision.

As our workload grows in volume and complexity, in 2022 we restructured the organisation to cope. We also established NCHA Scotland and began the process of establishing our clinical committee, which an independent chair will lead. We also hired new policy officers, including our first hearing health policy officer who is an audiologist and will help us accelerate our clinical work programme. These steps will, in turn, benefit patients, members and wider health and care systems across the UK.

We have an ambitious programme of work for 2023. Together, we will navigate workforce challenges, the impacts of this period of high inflation and economic uncertainty, the government's modernisation of health regulation, and other opportunities and setbacks that come our way. We are a sector with strong fundamentals, and we will build on those in 2023.

Today, NCHA members are delivering more hearing care than ever and provide a larger proportion of UK hearing care than ever before in our history. We will continue to support each member and the wider sector to grow sustainably to meet patient needs, for the benefit of all.



Peter Ormerod
NCHA Chair

Time to act on hearing loss

Hearing loss in the UK

12 million adults have a hearing loss...

...that is
1 in 5 adults



Impacts of hearing loss

Unaddressed hearing loss is associated with communication difficulties and an increased risk of:

- Social isolation and loneliness
- Depression
- Cognitive decline
- Dementia
- Other mental health issues



Time for action



THE GOOD NEWS IS
Early diagnosis and management can reduce these and other risks

Evidence shows hearing aids are one of the most cost-effective interventions the NHS has to offer



Parliamentarians

Support universal access to a primary care audiology service for all adults



Commissioners

Invest in early diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss



People affected by hearing loss

Don't put off hearing care, visit your local audiologist for support with ear and hearing problems. Early action can improve your hearing and communication, and reduce other risks

Support our call for action, email
healthpolicy@the-ncha.com

Finances

2022 was a year of rebuilding after Covid and, as planned, we ended the year to 31 December 2022 with a surplus of £160,000 on a turnover of £1,270,000.

Owing to the sale of our building, temporary holds on work and hiring during the pandemic, and care and efficiency, our reserves stand at £1,609,000. Our six-month running costs reserve is £556,000. With the support of the FODO UK, FODO Ireland and NCHA Boards we have ring fenced £53,000 for agreed projects, leaving additional reserves of £1,000,000.

Our finance and risk management working group of Board members continue to review the reserve management policy and make recommendations to the Board. The goal as ever remains to manage these funds in the best interests of members.

We have also continued to see membership grow, which has allowed us to keep membership subscriptions down over time, in real terms membership per FTE costs less in 2023 than it did in 2019. We continue to operate with high levels of efficiency and rigorous cost control, all of which means members continue to benefit from one of the most cost-efficient membership bodies in healthcare.



Alan Tinger
Director

Financial report

Income and expenditure account		2022		2021
31 December 2022		£000		£000
Turnover		1,270		1,124
Administrative expenses		(1,110)		(1,292)*
Operating (deficit)/surplus		160		(168)

Balance sheet – 31 December 2022		2022		2021
		£000		£000
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		8		5
Current assets				
Debtors	8		45	
Cash at bank and in hand	1,731		1,688	
	1,739		1,733	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(138)		(289)	
Net current assets		1,601		1,444
Total net current assets less current liabilities		1,609		1,449
Members' funds		1,609		1,449

S Joyce
Chair

H Sandhu
Managing Director

*As reported last year, this figure reflects that Eusebius Ltd was the company that owned our head office building. FODO held one third share capital of Eusebius Ltd. Our share of improvements to the building were held in the FODO balance sheet. On the sale of the building, our one-third share of the net proceeds of sale were received by way of a dividend from Eusebius Ltd and return of the share capital when it was liquidated. To comply with accounting conventions for purposes of the audited accounts, the dividend is shown as a separate item in the accounts rather than offsetting in part against the improvements. The improvements are shown as written off. Therefore, the accounting presentation is to show a trading deficit and a surplus post the dividend.

These summarised accounts are an extract from the statutory financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022. They have been audited by Menzies Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors, who gave an unqualified audit report on 27 April 2023. The auditors have confirmed to the directors that these summarised accounts are consistent with the statutory financial statements.

Our team

AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2022:

FODO UK non-executive directors

- Sarah Joyce, Chair
- Lynda Oliver, immediate past Chair
- Paul Carroll
- Peena Govind
- Stephen Hannan
- Hayley Holford
- John Hopcroft
- Dan McGhee
- Claire Slade
- Glenn Tomison

FODO Ireland non-executive members

- Garvan Mulligan, Chair
- Owen Blee
- Clodagh McGovern
- Peter McGrath

NCHA Board non-executive members

- Peter Ormerod, Chair
- Richard Boyd
- Echo Lu
- Mark Georgevic
- Stephen McAndrew
- Francesco Turriziani
- Steve Witts

Head Office team

- Harjit Sandhu, Group Managing Director
- David Hewlett, Group Director
- Alan Tinger, Group Director
- Daniel Hodgson, Head of Policy and Public Affairs
- Giusy Maniscalchi, PA to Managing Director
- Emily McCabe, Hearing Health Policy Officer
- Kirsten Ross – Clinical optometry officer
- Sue Silvester, PA to Group Director
- Rajan Verma, Membership Officer

Annual report

www.fodo.com

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