



Association of British Dispensing Opticians  
Association of Optometrists  
British Medical Association  
Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians

## Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee

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Chair: Paul Carroll

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Secretary: Peter Hampson

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### OFNC meeting with Minister of State for Care

Representatives from OFNC met recently with the Minister, Stephen Kinnock MP at the Department of Health and Social Care, and officials from DHSC and NHSE.

OFNC were able to set out and discuss with the Minister the valuable contribution that primary eye care makes to the nation and how it should be a key part of the NHS 10 Year Plan. OFNC set out how primary eye care can help in meeting the challenges that NHS hospital services are facing, preventing blindness and helping people age well and live independently for longer.

OFNC was also clear that in the case of the essential national sight-testing and case finding service delivered under GOS, and the infrastructure it provides for offering additional care outside hospital, the increasing divergence between fees and delivery costs cannot continue. OFNC would be looking to NHSE make a sustained effort towards restoration of fee value in upcoming fee discussions.

As a first step in delivering the government's aim of moving more care 'from hospital to community', the commissioning of CUES should be rolled out throughout the country to relieve pressure on GPs and reduce workload in secondary care.

The role of IT connectivity as an enabler to aid diagnosis was noted as a priority, so that it is easier to share data between professionals, efficiently manage referrals and obtain feedback.

The OFNC will continue to engage with Minister and officials in advance of the multi-year funding review, scheduled for Spring 2025.

Paul Carroll, OFNC chair said: "We were able to share with the Minister our estimates of the capacity that primary eye care can offer to reform the eye care pathway and keep patients out of hospital, which is a key part of the government's aims to transform the NHS. We highlighted the willingness of our sector to do more but emphasised that this must be underpinned, as Darzi recommends, by the rebalance of investment and decision-making away from secondary care and towards primary care, as the essential 'prevention and gatekeeper' service in eye care.

Minister of State for Care Stephen Kinnock said: "Primary eye care has an important role to play as we move the focus of care from hospitals to the community through our 10 Year Health Plan. It was good to meet with the OFNC to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the sector and I look forward to working with them going forward as we build a health service fit for the future."

**ENDS**

## **Note for Editors**

The Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee (OFNC) is the national negotiating body for eye care in England with the Westminster Parliament, the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England. It comprises the leaders of the UK representative bodies: ABDO, AOP, FODO and BMA (for OMPs) and works in partnerships with the College of Optometrists and the General Optical Council.