

With an Eye to the Future: Working together for a more comprehensive holistic service.

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As the population of developed nations continues to both grow and age, increased demand for Health and Social Care services creates challenges for all those tasked with planning and delivering services. Increased demand for eye-care services is mirrored by demand for other health and disability related services delivered by the broader family of health care providers, including those from Rehabilitation Medicine, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Hearing and Speech Therapy, Mental Health and Elderly Care services. Demand for Eye-Care services is fueled not only by the strong correlation between ageing and the 5 main conditions resulting in sight loss (Macular Degeneration, Glaucoma, Diabetic Eye Disease, Cataract and Uncorrected Refractive Error), but by increased patient expectations, the availability of new, novel and often expensive treatments and improved diagnostic investigative instrumentation and techniques. Demand for other services is accelerated in cases where failing vision correlates with other health related problems (i.e. Falls and Fractures; Medication Mismanagement and Non Compliance; and Isolation, Loneliness and Depression). Across the UK models of multi-professional enhanced service delivery that straddle primary and secondary care and link health, education and social services teams, seek to make maximum effective use of the workforce and to tackle escalating waiting lists for specialist care.

In this presentation I will select 4 new and novel models of care, covering Paediatric and Child Vision Services; Low Vision and Visual Disability Services; Corneal and Contact Lens Services; and Glaucoma Services, and demonstrate how Health, Social and Educational Service Providers working together can deliver patient friendly, easily accessible and quality assured cost effective services to those needing eye care. I will also postulate as to how these models could be applied outside the UK and as to how the wider Health and Social care Communities can share expertise working together to provide effective holistic care.