



# Annual plan 2021

Association of British Dispensing Opticians



abdo

# WELCOME to ABDO'S ANNUAL PLAN

Looking to 2021 and beyond

The Association of British Dispensing Opticians' Annual Plan for 2021 sets out the wide range of activities that ABDO will be carrying out to continue to support, develop and represent you.

We know that Covid-19 made 2020 a hugely difficult year for everyone - both personally and professionally. We will continue to support members in dealing with the pandemic's challenges, while managing our finances prudently and hoping that the coming year brings more positive news.

## We will support members by providing:

- High quality continuing education and training (CET) to support your professional development – through articles, webinars, online workshops and, when feasible, regional events.
- Professional and personalised responses to your requests and enquiries.
- A range of professional qualifications to enable entry to the profession and the expansion of roles.
- Guidance and tools via our business support hub.
- Advice and guidance on a wide range of clinical and regulatory issues, including via a new clinical support hub.
- A regular supply of news and information through eNews and *Dispensing Optics*.

## We will represent the profession by:

- Representing members on cross-sector-bodies and committees to ensure the voice of dispensing opticians (DOs) and contact lens opticians (CLOs) is heard.
- Working collaboratively with other organisations to promote eye health and the importance of high-quality dispensing.
- Negotiating opportunities for members to develop their roles.

## We will build on your development opportunities by:

- Reviewing the syllabus for our FBDO Level 6 Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing and responding to the GOC's Education Strategic Review once this is concluded.
- Having a greater focus on providing education and training that supports members continuing professional development.
- Encouraging members to work towards the management and leadership qualifications that we now offer in conjunction with the Chartered Management Institute.
- Seeking to inspire the next generation of dispensing opticians through our Careers in Eyecare campaign.
- Developing a new strategic plan – to take effect in January 2022 – that will set out a positive vision for the future, explain ABDO objectives and demonstrate the benefits members can expect to see.

As your professional body, we are proud to serve and safeguard your interests and hope that 2021 proves to be a successful year for you all.



Jo Holmes  
ABDO President



Sir Tony Garrett CBE  
ABDO General Secretary

# THE NRC - YOUR VENUE

nrcbirmingham.co.uk



ABDO will continue to position the NRC as the number one venue for optical events, training and professional examinations and build its profile for other events.



Association of British Dispensing Opticians



FINANCE AND ADVICE



LIFESTYLE AND LEISURE



NETWORKING AND EDUCATION



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

## SUPPORTING our MEMBERS

### Membership benefits for you

In 2021, ABDO will be highlighting the many benefits of being a member. From financial savings and discounts which can cover the cost



of your fees through to professional development opportunities and professional indemnity insurance, the ABDO Membership Department is here to help.

The Membership Department will continue to support members both professionally and personally through telephone and email advice, putting you in touch with the services you need, when you need them. This includes legal helplines, counselling helplines and the Benevolent Fund. Staff can also supply you with patient leaflets and corporate items to increase public awareness of the importance of good eye care and the skills of a dispensing optician.

With a new and improved range of membership grades coming into operation in 2020, 2021 will see members joining ABDO from across the optical professions, with a particular emphasis on optical assistants to enable them to upskill and train to become dispensing opticians. The Membership Department can help you if you are planning a career break or need to change any of your details. What's more, did you know that you can pay your membership at a time of the month that suits your pay date?



### Staying in touch with you

ABDO is committed to staying in touch with you. Every week you can find out about the latest news for members in eNews.

#### WATCH OUT FOR:

- ABDO news
- Business info
- Links to the latest CET and CPD
- *DO Online* with news from the world of optics
- Job vacancies and career news
- Policy briefings and advice

*Dispensing Optics* will enter the first part of 2021 as a digital only publication, via Issuu and in PDF format. While ABDO is keen to bring the magazine back in print format, the ongoing financial constraints caused by the Covid-19 pandemic mean that the organisation is remaining cautious and conserving funds for vital services to members. Check out *Dispensing Optics* eNews for your links to read and news of when you might expect a print magazine again. In the meantime, don't forget to visit *DO Online* for news, job adverts, features and jottings.

### Supporting you to come together

ABDO is now supporting members through new Regional Meetings. Launched at the end of 2020, these meetings initially took place online with plans for face to face meetings to start as soon as is safe. These meetings will help you meet and get to know your regional team, to find out more about ABDO activities and policies both nationally and locally, and to take part in CPD.



The ABDO Membership Department is here to help.





**Supporting you through the Covid-19 pandemic**

ABDO will continue to support you through the Covid-19 pandemic for as long as is needed. The Policy team will continue to work to maintain the position of dispensing opticians and contact lens opticians in practice and support you in relation to guidelines on delivering eye care safely. ABDO will aim to ensure that dispensing opticians and contact lens opticians are included in any Covid-19 related pathways. We will ensure you have the opportunity to work at the top of your competencies in relation to any enhanced pathway implemented to manage eye health care during the pandemic.

**We will support you in relation to guidelines on delivering eye care safely.**

**You, the clinician**

Over the course of 2021, you will see the development of a dedicated Clinical Hub on the ABDO website. This will support you in practice and enable your clinical progression and development beyond your core competencies. The Clinical Hub will take inspiration from ABDO's successful Business Hub. It will bring together clinical information, advice and guidance, resources, learning links and other external assets into an easily accessed and navigated section.

Midway through 2021, ABDO will be launching Virtual Review, a way for you to get support with practice-based queries. You will be able to email in for clinical support from experienced professionals, bringing the benefits of reassurance, education, and the reduction of risk.

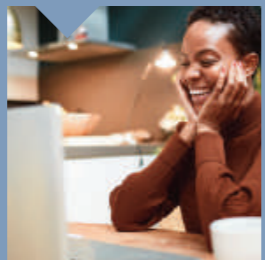
ABDO advice and guidance will be reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout 2021, looking at guidance on a range of policy and regulatory issues to build on the review of the Clinical section which took place in 2020. This structured plan and timetable for review will future-proof ABDO's guidance and allow ABDO to make the most of advice from experts and key organisations, developing consistent advice and guidance across the profession aligned with other professional bodies. It will help you maintain the highest standards of professional conduct and performance for the benefit of the public.



## SUPPORTING our MEMBERS

### Your career, your business

ABDO will continue to offer members fresh business resources and expertise via the Business Support Hub. This also includes the ABDO Peer to Peer mentoring platform for mentor and mentee matching which enables ABDO members to support each other through mentoring.



### Management & Leadership courses

In 2021, ABDO will continue to offer you management and leadership training leading to level 5 CMI qualifications at discounted prices for members. These courses will also start to be offered to non-members within the optical sector, with the dual benefits of raising ABDO's profile and creating income. On top of this, it is hoped that it will be possible to offer a series of one-day management and leadership workshops for anyone who is interested in growing their skills and knowledge in this area.

ABDO's successful Become an Independent Optician event had to be postponed in 2020, but plans are underway to run this event in 2021 to help anyone thinking of starting a practice.



ABDO  
MANAGEMENT  
TRAINING

### Diversity

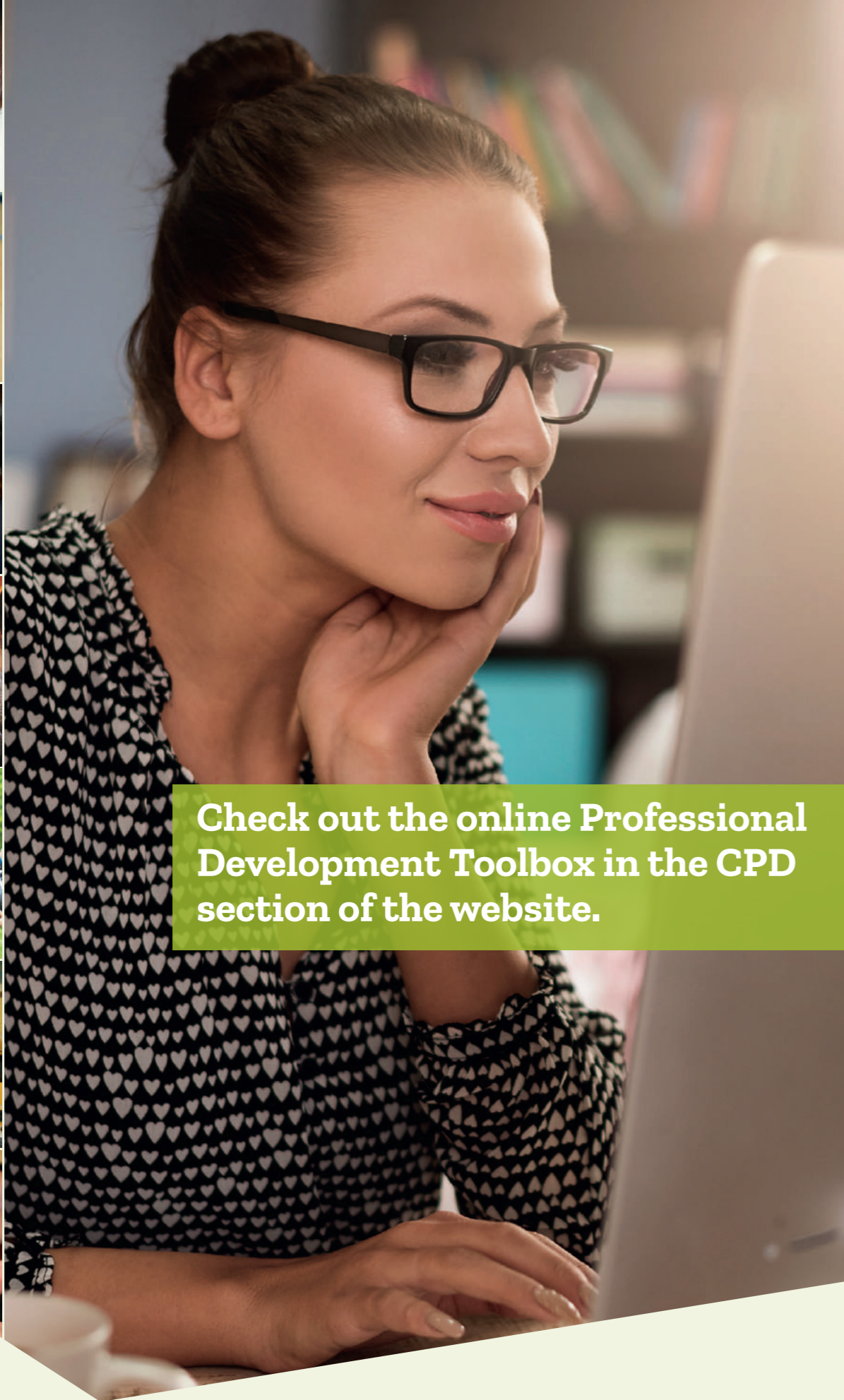
As part of its work to support members, ABDO wants every member to feel supported in reporting or receiving reports of harassment and discrimination. Building on the 2020 Discrimination and Harassment survey, ABDO will continue to highlight problems and raise awareness of resources for employers and employees members about their responsibilities and rights.

### Your environment

Throughout 2021, ABDO will continue to look at initiatives to help the environment, developing ABDO strategy with the environment in mind and supporting members to do the same in their workplaces. ABDO is midway through a practical programme of change, building on a significant reduction in paper use which will continue in 2021. Alongside this, ABDO will draw upon its experience of remote working in 2020 to extend the use of technology for meetings, thereby reducing the environmental effects of travel. ABDO will also look at how the organisation uses energy and deals with waste.

**ABDO will continue to offer all our members management and leadership training.**





**Check out the online Professional Development Toolbox in the CPD section of the website.**

## DEVELOPING your PROFESSION



### Continuing your education and professional development

In 2021, ABDO will support members with their regulatory CET requirements by providing:

- Access to a Child Safeguarding course which will provide Level 2 certification in child safeguarding education to all members, specifically written for those working as dispensing opticians.
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Information and resources to stimulate culture change and support you with developing your life-long learning support skills.
- Interactive CET lecture webinars on a range of topics, giving you high quality, up to date and relevant education.
- Online discussion based CET sessions, successfully launched in 2020, provided at times accessible to working members and covering relevant topics.

Check out the online Professional Development Toolbox in the CPD section of the website which provides a growing range of tools to help you engage and develop your understanding of life-long learning. On top of this, ABDO will offer specifically themed continuing professional education (online or face to face as suitable and viable) to support professional development. This education will be targeted to the appropriate professional group and/or relate to a specific topic of education or development need. And new for 2021, watch out for a series of CPD podcasts.



### Supporting your continuing education

ABDO is continuing to work towards DOs having access to the Directorate of Optometric Continuing Education and Training (DOCET) to support them in achieving their regulatory required CET.

**ABDO Level 6 Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing**  
**ABDO Level 6 Diploma in Contact Lens Practice**  
**ABDO Level 7 Diploma in Advanced Contact Lens Practice**  
**ABDO Level 7 Certificate in Spectacle Lens Design**  
**ABDO Level 6 Diploma in the Assessment and Management of Low Vision**  
 Visit [www.abdo.org.uk/examinations](http://www.abdo.org.uk/examinations) to find out more

### Supporting your studies

The ABDO Examinations department will continue to be available to student members, supervisors, employers and training departments to respond to queries by telephone and email. In addition, they will continue to offer welcome meetings for first year students, advice talks for Final Qualifying Examination (FQE) and Pre-Qualification Period (PQP), as well as a presentation and support for supervisors.

Subject to Covid-19 restrictions, ABDO will repeat the successful Student Revision event in 2021, offering an intensive two-day practical revision training event which will not only support students but highlight the ABDO family and values.

The examinations team also continuously review and deliver all five of ABDO's registerable qualifications both in the UK and overseas: 2021 will have particular emphasis on innovative ways to deliver the various elements of the awards in order to further support members.

## DEVELOPING your PROFESSION

### Developing your education and examinations



Once the GOC has concluded its Education Strategic Review, the ABDO Examinations department will be working to implement these changes whilst maintaining the clinical standards for the dispensing profession.

In conjunction with the ESR the Level 6 Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing syllabus review will be completed with a view to extending the scope of practice of the dispensing optician.

## ABDO is looking at a new way of post-registration qualifications

Developments on apprenticeships should also resume, potentially allowing employers to offer an ABDO qualification in apprenticeship format as another route to registration, meeting the same high standards as currently required of the profession.

The department will review post-qualification modules for further career development options.

New supervisor training and support will be developed, to ensure that supervisors feel better equipped and all students receive a more standardised experience.

### Developing your scope of practice



Work will continue on Enhanced and Extended Services Accreditation, allowing members to achieve Minor Eye Condition Services, Covid -19 Urgent Eye Care Service and Glaucoma Repeat Measurement accreditation, all of which reinforces the contact lens optician's position as part of the Primary Care Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) in England and Wales.

ABDO will also work to facilitate dispensing optician and contact lens optician progression, putting dispensing opticians at the heart of primary care services. In coming years you will

## abdo | Examinations

discover new pathways of clinical progression to ensure DOs are equipped with the recognised clinical skills and qualifications to work within secondary and primary care settings, leading to greater job opportunities.

Work will continue in 2021 to enable DOs to deliver refraction as a delegated function in, for example, the interim between eye health checks for low risk patients replacing or changing spectacles and to verify prescriptions. ABDO hopes to work with the College of Optometrists on the initiative which will allow DOs to maximise their skill set in practice and support the evolving roles of optometrists.



### Developing your profession across the UK



ABDO will work with governments across the UK. There will be a focus on increasing the number of contact lens opticians in Northern Ireland. In Wales, ABDO will take part in the Review of Eyecare Services, ensuring the inclusion of DOs and CLOs in this review of services delivered in optical practice. In England, ABDO will take a key role in the review of General Ophthalmic Services (GOS), exploring options to enhance the eye health care delivered within GOS, and further inclusion of DOs and CLOs in delivery wherever possible. In Scotland, ABDO is working with the Government to have all DOs listed in relation to GOS delivery although a change in legislation is required to achieve this.

## ABDO will take part in the Review of Eyecare Services, ensuring the inclusion of DOs.



### Developing your profession worldwide

International development was slowed in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but plans are still in place which ABDO aims to take forward in 2021 and beyond.

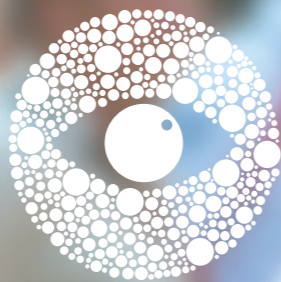
Every ABDO member is also able to take up membership of the International Opticians Association (IOA) as a membership benefit. The IOA Summit which should have taken place in Bangkok in 2020 had to be postponed, but a new date and venue will be announced in Spring 2021. The IOA website is currently available in English, French and Spanish. Partner-funding permitting, the IOA aims to also make it available in Arabic in late 2021, to enable the IOA to extend its reach to new territories and continue to promote education and high standards in ophthalmic dispensing across the world. The IOA will continue to nurture partnerships with professional organisations and companies to this end.

Work has been ongoing over a number of years with a university and a hospital group in China, and ABDO will continue to maintain and develop these relationships in order to build the role of the dispensing optician and provide education for those currently dispensing spectacles.

ABDO is also reaching out to develop optical education in a number of African nations and has been liaising with professional bodies where they exist as well as other organisations with an interest in improving ophthalmic dispensing across the continent.

There is continuing liaison across the Middle East, where there is also a need for optical education. ABDO has been liaising with local contacts to identify gaps in skill sets and to raise the visibility of ABDO's gold standard education.

### INTERNATIONAL OPTICIANS ASSOCIATION



**ABDO is reaching out to develop optical education right across the world.**




## DEVELOPING your PROFESSION

### Promoting Careers in Eyecare

ABDO will continue to highlight the range of careers available in eye care and eye wear through the Careers in Eyecare campaign. This campaign will target both teenagers and those looking for a career change, with the benefit of bringing new people into the professions and raising ABDO's profile as a leading organisation in this area, and will develop goodwill and synergy across the eye care sector.

### Representing your profession in the media

Throughout 2021, ABDO will continue to represent its membership on social media, using it to promote ABDO activities, promote the profession and to promote eye care and eye wear across Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram, via national and regional ABDO accounts.



**Throughout 2021, ABDO will continue to represent its membership on social media.**



**eyecare +FAQ**

### A plan for your professional body

This year, ABDO has embarked upon a programme to develop a strategic plan for 2022 - 2026. This will ensure that your membership contributes to goals and activities which will drive the profession forward and support you as a member. Throughout 2021, the ABDO staff team will be seeking your views on what your professional body should prioritise, with the aim of launching the plan in January 2022.

ABDO will continue to work to reach the public via EyecareFAQ with eye health messages across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram for EyecareFAQ. ABDO will work with other organisations promoting eye health and co-operate on joint online activities, ensuring the role of the DO/CLO is included in such health focus weeks.

In 2022, ABDO will deliver an online annual report, for the first time tied into the ABDO annual plan so members can see how what has been delivered matches plans made.

The ABDO Communications department will continue to send regular press releases to trade media, and consumer media as appropriate. It will continue to liaise with journalists across a range of media to promote ABDO as a thought leader and ensure a steady flow of coverage of ABDO activities and policies and eye health issues.

**careers in  
eyecare**



**abdo**

## REPRESENTING you. REPRESENTING your PROFESSION

### Your membership body's finances

We know that 2020 has been a tough year financially for members and the profession. As in line with the wider economy, ABDO is also facing many challenges.

Due to the pandemic many members are facing an uncertain future, which may have a significant impact on ABDO's income, investment and routine operation. Based on the information available in October 2020, subscription and examination income is likely to record a significant decline, while NRC income, sponsorship and journal adverts may also be seriously impacted in 2021.

ABDO has taken many measures to reduce costs, including moving the journal to online as a temporary arrangement, redundancies, renegotiation of leases and curtailing all discretionary spending. The above measures may be useful in the short term, but may have negative impact on future growth due to lack of investment in, for example, IT infrastructure.

Since the past is not a guide to the future ABDO needs to look at every aspect of the operation in detail and identify its relevance. Exploring new markets or products to increase revenue is not a viable option in 2021. For at least for the next twelve months the Association must concentrate on operating within its available income, while maintaining investment at a level to provide satisfactory services to members and exploit any future opportunities.

### Limitations for 2021

Given budgetary constraints for 2021, the Communications department will review use of advertising in external publications, weighing up any cost of advertising against benefits of reaching potential members.

The annual Radio Day will be suspended for 2021 and revisited in 2022.

ABDO will not have a stand at trade shows in 2021, again reflecting budgetary constraints and concerns about the uncertainty of events. As a result, ABDO is also pausing the production of promotional items until such time as the organisation restarts attending trade shows and events.

**In line with the wider economy, ABDO is also facing many challenges.**

## REPRESENTING you. REPRESENTING your PROFESSION

### Representing your profession in policy and education

Throughout 2021 and on an ongoing basis, ABDO will represent members and the profession to governments and representative bodies. This gives ABDO the opportunity to ensure that national policy objectives provide you, our members, with opportunities to develop in relation to the delivery of eye health care and provision of optical aids, spectacles and contact lenses. This ongoing relationship building ensures that ABDO is included in consultations throughout the UK and able to represent DOs and CLOs in relation to all aspects of eye health care.

### ABDO will represent members and the profession.

ABDO plans to have the appropriate policy and/or clinical input at all relevant sector meetings which enables us to influence and shape outcomes to be inclusive of DO and CLO involvement, while at the same time contributing to the development of clinical pathways from an early stage to recognise DOs as part of the wider eye care MDT and encouraging the use of terminology that includes all of the profession

ABDO will continue to have representation on groups including

- *Apprenticeship Group (Scotland)*
- *Apprenticeship trailblazers (optometry and dispensing)*
- *British Standards Institute*
- *Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning*
- *Domiciliary Eyecare Committee*
- *England Special Schools Project*
- *DS-21 Expert Advisor*
- *GOC Expert Advisory Group and Education Standards Review*
- *GOC National Working Group*
- *GOC Overseas Recognition of Prior Learning team*
- *GOC Regulated Qualification Framework group*
- *Local Optical Committee Support Unit*
- *National Outpatient Transformation Programme*
- *National Education Scotland*
- *Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee*
- *Optical Education Committee*
- *Opticians Academic Schools Council*
- *Optical Sector Steering Group*
- *Optometry Northern Ireland*
- *Optometry Scotland*
- *Optometry Wales*

### Low vision

In Wales, ABDO is working to promote National Low Vision Service, to encourage DO uptake and make DOs the first port of call in optical practices for LV services.

ABDO is working with the clinical council for eye health commissioning to develop a National Low Vision Service in England which we hope will reflect the services delivered in Wales with DOs leading provision.

ABDO is also working in Scotland to assist in the implementation of a national low vision service as directed by the Government following the review of eye care services in 2017, with the aim that the DO is the first port of call in optical practices for LV services.



### Special schools

In England's Special Schools Project, ABDO has achieved a goal in having a DO as part of the core team to deliver eye care in special schools.

ABDO is working with NHS England to obtain simulation heads of children/young adults with different facial characteristics including Down syndrome and cerebral palsy to provide vital training in relation to the dispensing side of this service. Further, ABDO will be lobbying to change legislation in relation to vulnerable adults which includes the elderly and adults with learning disabilities.

### Paediatric eye care

In England, ABDO is working with the Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning on paediatric eye care, specifically vision screening and the opportunities available to ensure all children receive the eye health care they need.

A similar initiative is underway in Northern Ireland to raise awareness of the importance of eye health examinations, to get children into the routine of having eye examinations, and provide timely access to eye care and spectacles.

### Representing the best of optics, worldwide

The IOA will relaunch the award for the International Optician of the Year 2021 in a partner programme with SILMO.

Internationally, ABDO is represented on a range of organisations, in order to promote high standards of education and professional competence, share knowledge and ideas to address common challenges. These organisations include:

- European Council of Optometry and Optics
- European Academy of Optometry and Optics
- Joint Optical Committee to the European Union

abdo | International



Association of British Dispensing Opticians



abdo

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**Association of British Dispensing Opticians**

December 2020