

EYE HEALTH ALLIANCE VISION CARD

We've got our sights set on...

www.eyehalliance.co.uk



- Improved community eye care provision in England, to match Scotland and Wales
- Local eye emergency services in the community
- Regular sight testing to detect eye disease is detected at an early stage
Half of all sight loss is preventable through regular eye tests
- Vision screening or an eye examination for all children starting school
- Drivers to be checked for side vision as well as distance
- Immediate support on diagnosis for people with visual impairments

Supporting points

There needs to be improved and easily accessible community eye care provision (as exists in Scotland and Wales). This means more people having a regular sight test; more eye disease detected at an earlier stage; and more people's sight saved.

We need to ensure high quality specialist services are available in secondary care, and that people referred through from primary care get the treatments they need to save their sight.

We need rapid access to services at time of sight loss including rehabilitation and emotional support.

Half of all sight loss is preventable. However, far too many people are not having a regular eye test that can identify eye disease at an early stage. Even though sight loss is more feared than cancer, AIDS, stroke, & heart disease⁽¹⁾ many people are simply not caring for their eyes. With a disease such as glaucoma robbing up to 40% of a person's sight before they are aware of it, a regular sight test is vital. Many eye diseases, such as glaucoma, one of the main causes of blindness, are treatable if detected early enough.

Sight Tests: The UK sight testing system is second to none in terms of clinical and cost effectiveness. The challenge is to persuade people who have no immediate symptoms to have regular eye checks to prevent vision loss in older age. There is also a need for PCTs to commission additional and enhanced community eye care services to meet the need for uniform high standards of community eye care across the UK, with England following the example of Scotland and Wales.

(1) American Foundation for the Blind, 2007.

The UK Vision Strategy

The UK Vision Strategy brings together the wider eye professions and vision loss sector and responds to shortfalls in the UK's eye health and sight loss services and addresses the exclusion of blind and partially sighted people and widespread ignorance and apathy about eye health.

Candidate details can be found at:

www.conservatives.com/.../Prospective_Parliamentary_Candidates.aspx

www.labour.org.uk/ppc

www.libdems.org.uk/parliamentary_candidates.aspx

www.libdems.org.uk/parliamentary_candidates.aspx

For further information and guidance please contact:

Heather Marshall or Ben Cook

Eye Health Alliance

e-mail: electioncampaign@aop.org.uk

website: www.eyehalliance.co.uk

**Urgent
action**

The 2010 General Election

A guide for
Local Optical Committees



SUPPORT FOR PRIMARY
EYE CARE DEVELOPMENT

In the run-up to the election, we have been very successful in lobbying many candidates and sitting MPs.



Now the election is upon us, we are asking for your help with just two further tasks as described inside this leaflet.

Making our case now and getting to know the new MPs could make the difference for the profession as we lobby for better eyecare in the community.

Bob Hughes

AOP Chief Executive

LOC Support Unit Board Member

During the Election...

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There will be opportunities to use the vision cards locally.

For instance in nearly every constituency there will be at least one joint meeting where all the candidates will be present - often such meetings are organised by the local Churches. Ask an LOC member to attend the meeting, and give each candidate a copy of the vision card. Also, they could ask the organisers if they can put the cards out on the chairs for the audience.

You, and other LOC members, could also give them to your patients during the election campaign.

More supplies of the vision card are available **FREE** from:

Janice Phillips at LOCSU.

Tel: **020 7202 8156** e-mail: janicephillips@locsu.co.uk

After the Election... Write to your new Member of Parliament



For a change, let's get our message in first. To achieve this we need you to help by organising locally to write to every MP within a day of their election or re-election on May 6th.

Every new or re-elected MP receives a deluge of pleas and demands. On their first visit to Parliament as an elected member, those elected for the first time will find a sack of mail waiting for them.

Our plan is that one local practice, on behalf of the others, should write a letter to the new or re-elected MP, which could be hand written, and deliver it to the MP's local office (often their political party local office) within 24 hours of the election.

We are asking Local Optical Committees to organise this because in reality you are the only people who can. If every LOC plays its part, it could lift our profile in an unprecedented way.

Sample letter

The sample shown here is a suggested format and wording for you to adapt as you choose.

NOTES:

If possible, write the letter on your practice notepaper and, if you are an LOC officer, do mention it.

If you have already met your MP, and particularly if they have already visited your practice, then the wording should reflect that.

If there are local optometric enhanced services already operating, your letter should briefly mention them in non-technical language.

Two important guidelines for your letter:

- keep it as brief as possible, and
- ensure that your MP receives it at his or her local office the day following the election.

Finally, don't forget to enclose a copy of the vision card.

See back page for sources of advice

Many congratulations on your election (re-election) to Parliament for [name of constituency]. I hope you will enjoy being our MP.

I run [name of optometric practice] in [address], and I would like to invite you to visit my practice at your convenience..

or

I run [name of optometric practice] in [address], and you may recall that you visited my practice [earlier this year].

I am hoping that you will make another visit to discuss local eyecare initiatives and to discuss the extended eyecare services that can be delivered by optometrists and opticians and are already proving to be a great success in Wales and in Scotland.

After you have had time to settle [back] into parliament, I will call your office to see if we can arrange a time for you to visit.

Again, congratulations and best wishes