



The dispensing of spectacles is a regulated function in the UK, whereby only registrants of the General Optical Council, dispensing opticians and optometrists, are permitted to dispense spectacles to children under the age of 16. In cases where a non-registered person is involved in the dispensing process, a registrant must be in a position to supervise at all times and if necessary intervene to ensure the work is carried out to a satisfactory standard.

In the developing eye it is essential that children are given spectacles that are fit for purpose and it is equally vital that there is a mechanism of support for on-going frame adjustments to ensure the spectacles remain correctly fitted.

It takes a minimum of three years of specialist training to fit spectacles as good as this!

Dispensing of spectacles is a highly skilled and complex competency

A registered dispensing optician's or optometrist's responsibilities when dispensing a pair of spectacles can be summarised as follows:

- Receiving a prescription from a prescriber or patient, hospital HES or optometrist GOS
- Analysing the prescription, ensuring that the prescription is unambiguous, interpreting its contents and discussing the prescription with the patient
- Providing advice on the suitability of spectacle lenses that would fulfill the requirements of the prescription
- Providing advice on the suitability of spectacle frames that would be appropriate for both the required lenses and the patient's needs - eg. to ensure the child is always looking through the centre of the lens
- Taking facial, frame and other optical measurements as appropriate
- Processing an order for new spectacles and/or other optical appliances
- Being responsible for the accuracy (to relevant standards) of the completed spectacles and/or appliance
- Fitting and adjusting the spectacles and/or appliance
- Providing advice on the use of the spectacles and/or appliance
- Providing an on-going aftercare service for the spectacles and/or appliance including replacements and repairs until the prescription expires

Always seek professional advice when it comes to eyecare

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