

ABDO Strategic Plan

Consultation document

October 2021

Association of British Dispensing Opticians



ABDO Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABDO is seeking your views on how we should define our purpose, vision and values as part of the development of our five-year strategic plan, which will guide our work with effect from January 2022.

In an uncertain world it is difficult to predict exactly how events will unfold, but through careful analysis and planning we can ensure that our work on your behalf takes account of likely developments and seeks to capitalise on them.

External developments

Looking ahead over the next two to five years, members will continue to manage and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Other trends will include continuing growth in the number of older people in the UK; increasing delivery of eye care services in the community; continuing growth in childhood myopia and myopia management; the increasing use of technology in optical practices, such as OCT and other diagnostic equipment; growing awareness of the need to operate sustainably; increased focus on promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and reform of the regulatory framework that governs members' work.

Our purpose

As a membership organisation, everything we do must be for the benefit of our members and we propose to describe our purpose as:

"To support and represent members, promote awareness of their roles, enable their professional development and advance the profession as a whole."

Our vision

Our vision is that by 2026 we will have:

- Provided more opportunities for members to develop their roles.
- Implemented the GOC's new education standards and outcomes.
- Supported members by providing continuing professional development, including qualifications and accreditations.
- Increased the understanding and recognition of members' roles.
- Developed the profession's evidence base.
- Improved member services, products and benefits.
- Improved how we communicate and collaborate.
- Ensured our organisation is sustainable.

Our values

To achieve our vision we are proposing to adopt the following values:

- We are passionately committed to our members, who are at the heart of everything we do.
- We maintain high standards for our members and our own work.
- We are proactive in adapting to changing circumstances.
- We are driven by a sense of common purpose.
- We respect each other and our different areas of expertise.
- We work collaboratively with our colleagues and other organisations.
- We are open and transparent about our work.
- We strive to continuously improve what we do and how we work together.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As we look ahead and develop our strategic plan for the next five years, it is vital that we are clear about our purpose as an organisation. All our activity will then be linked to this purpose.

We also need a clear vision of what we want to achieve on behalf of our members. This must be informed by the external landscape in which we and our members operate and by how this is likely to change in the future.

To achieve our vision, we also need shared values. As part of the process of developing our strategic plan, we have sought to define the values that will underpin our work and enable us to work effectively with members and colleagues, and in collaboration with other organisations.

We now want to hear your views on our proposed purpose, vision and values. We will take these into account before finalising our strategic plan, which will take effect in January 2022.

We will review progress against the strategic plan regularly and recognise that we will need to be flexible in responding to changing circumstances.

2. EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented our members with major challenges, both personal and professional, and has led to new ways of working, including using personal protective equipment (PPE) and infection control procedures, remote triage of patients in line with clinical advice and guidance and more multi-disciplinary team working.

As we look ahead over the next two to five years, members will continue to manage the impact of the pandemic, with the required safeguards meaning extra costs and that they can see fewer patients.

Several other trends are likely to be significant for members and for ABDO.

1. The UK population will continue to increase, with a growing proportion of older people. The Office of National Statistics projects that by 2025, the UK population will be 68.7 million, up from 67.2 million in 2020. Of the total population, a third is expected to be over 55 compared with 31 per cent in 2020 – an increase of 1.7 million people. This is likely to lead to:

- increasing demand for spectacles, particularly as people are likely to remain in employment and stay active for longer;
- a growing number of people with eye disease, meaning increased demand for low vision services and increased opportunities for dispensing opticians to provide clinical services, such as glaucoma monitoring and data gathering;
- a growing need for dispensing opticians to provide eye care for patients with dementia and co-morbidities and signpost them to other health and care services.

2. We expect to see continuing growth in childhood myopia leading to increasing demand for the dispensing of spectacles and contact lenses to children. There is also likely to be increasing demand for advice on myopia management and for contact lenses and spectacles that can be used to slow down the progression of myopia.

3. Governments across the UK are seeking to deliver more eye health care in the community to relieve the strain on hospitals, utilise the optometric workforce more efficiently and make eye care more accessible to patients. This trend is likely to increase the opportunities for dispensing opticians and contact lens opticians to provide clinical services.

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Linked to this, the growing focus on preventative health care could create opportunities to provide public health services, such as smoking cessation, weight management and nutrition.

4. The increasing use of technology in practice will have a bearing on the roles which dispensing opticians and contact lens opticians play. They may have the opportunity to use OCT and other diagnostic equipment to gather data and interpret and explain this to fellow healthcare professionals and patients. With technology enabling optometrists to focus more on the eye health aspects of their role, including through virtual clinics, this could provide opportunities for dispensing opticians to carry out more clinical services.

5. The online supply of spectacles and contact lenses has increased during the pandemic as part of the wider trend towards more shopping online. Support for members and cross-sector collaboration will be important, particularly as technological developments make it easier for facial measurements to be taken remotely.

6. There will be a growing focus on safeguarding the earth's resources for the benefit of future generations – in the optical sector and across society generally. Building on the SEE Summit for the Environment, hosted by ABDO in October 2021, there will be continued interest across the optical sector in operating more sustainably. In parallel, we will seek further ways of becoming more sustainable as an organisation.

7. Equality, diversity and inclusion is another area where the experience of our members, and wider societal change, will continue to require action. There will be a need to promote opportunities for all members to contribute to the profession to their full potential and to provide support and guidance for members who experience harassment and discrimination.

8. The Government is planning changes to how healthcare regulators, including the General Optical Council (GOC), carry out their roles and potentially to the number of regulators. There is also the possibility of changes to rules that are specific to the optical sector. This means we will need to engage with the GOC and Government to ensure that the interests of members are taken into account and the new regulatory framework supports the development of the profession and protects the public.

3. PURPOSE

In developing our strategic plan for the next five years, we need to be clear about our purpose, i.e. why ABDO exists. All our future activity will then be linked – directly or indirectly – to this purpose

From discussions with Board members and staff, it is clear that we need to emphasise that ABDO is a membership organisation. Everything we do should be designed to benefit our members, including student members.

We have previously emphasised our role in supporting, developing and representing members.

In addition to these themes, there is a strong desire among Board members and staff to promote awareness of the roles which members carry out. There are several potential audiences for this activity, including:

- *the public*
- *employers*
- *other healthcare professionals*
- *third sector colleagues*
- *optical sector bodies*
- *commissioners*
- *policy makers across the UK nations.*

A further theme which conversations with Board members and staff have highlighted is the need to emphasise ABDO's role in advancing the profession. Performing this leadership role will help to ensure that members are able to continue to play a key role in the delivery of eyecare.

This means that there are five key elements of ABDO's role, namely:

- **Supporting members** – supporting members by providing a wide range of services, products and benefits.
- **Representing members** – representing members to protect and promote their interests.
- **Promoting awareness** – raising awareness of the roles which members carry out for the benefit of patients and the public.
- **Developing members** – enabling members to develop their careers and highlighting opportunities for them to do so.
- **Advancing the profession** – advancing the profession by developing opportunities for members to expand their roles, including the clinical services they provide, and commissioning, supporting and disseminating high-quality research.

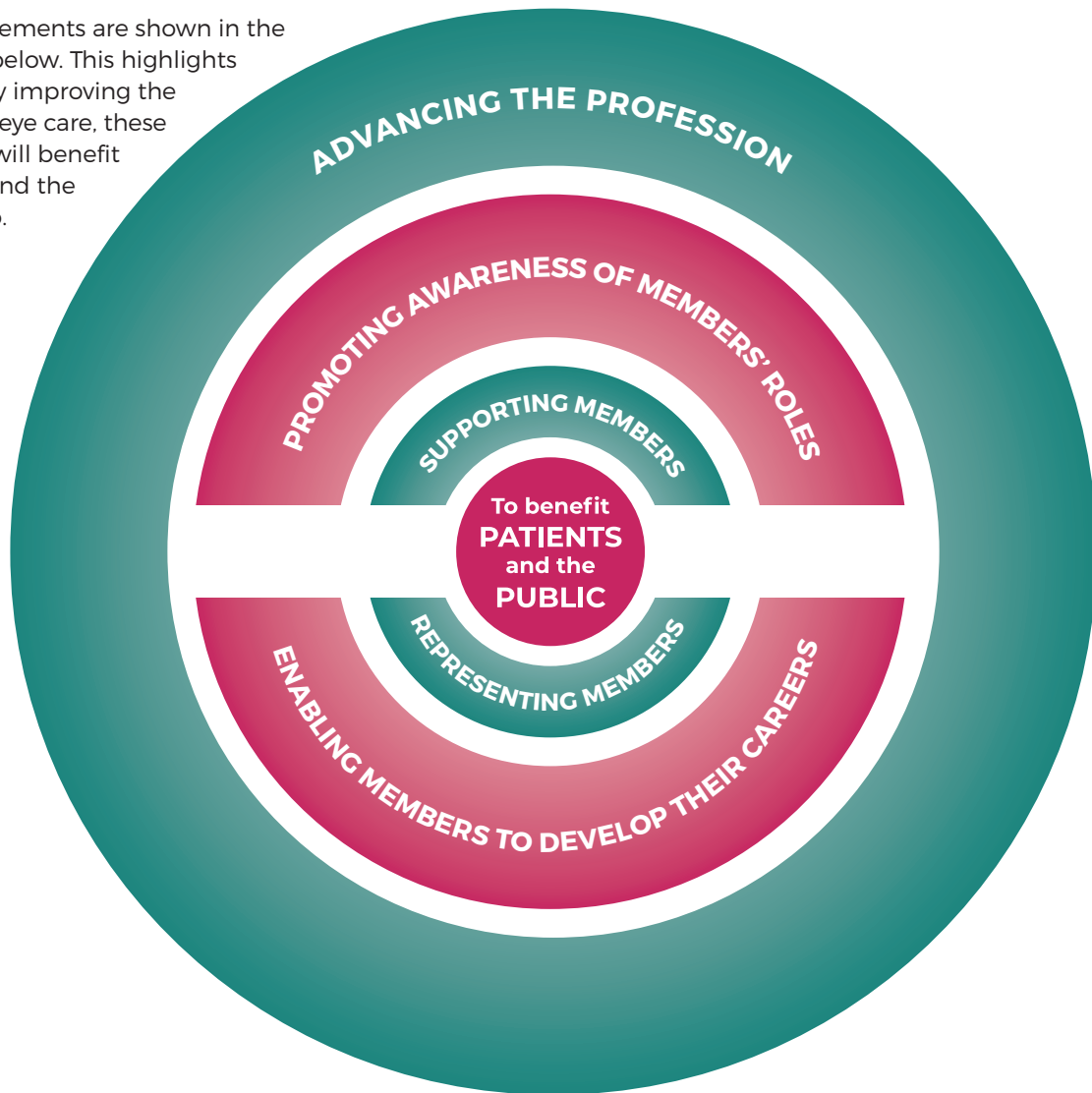
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Our strategic plan will show how we will fulfil these five elements of our role over the next five years.

These five elements will also feed through to and provide the framework for each year's annual plan, where we set out our planned work for the year ahead, and for each year's annual report, where we report on our activity and achievements.

The five elements are shown in the diagram below. This highlights the fact by improving the quality of eye care, these activities will benefit patients and the public too.



In summary, we are proposing to describe ABDO's purpose as being:

"To support and represent members, promote awareness of their roles, enable their professional development and advance the profession as a whole."

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4. VISION

In the conversations with Board members and staff, we have explored what ABDO's future vision should be. Another way of thinking about this is to ask what we want to have achieved by 2026 after implementing our five year strategic plan.

Taking into account our analysis of the external landscape and our purpose as an organisation, we have identified the following outcomes to work towards. Our vision is that by 2026 we will have:

- Advanced the profession by developing opportunities for all members to enhance their roles, including delivering clinical services and taking on responsibility for leadership and management.
- Implemented the GOC's new education standards and outcomes and ensured that our registrable qualifications prepare students for future roles and protect patients and the public.
- Supported members in their careers by delivering our programme of continuing professional development and a range of flexible qualifications and accreditations.
- Developed the evidence base for the profession by commissioning, supporting and disseminating high-quality research.
- Continued to improve the range of services, products and benefits that we provide to members in order to meet their diverse needs.
- Improved how we communicate and collaborate with stakeholders and colleagues.
- Increased the understanding and recognition of members' roles among the public and patients, healthcare professionals, employers, commissioners, and policy makers.
- Ensured that our organisation is sustainable, including financially and environmentally, for the benefit of current and future members, and the world in which we all live.

5. VALUES

Achieving our vision will depend on Board members and staff having shared values. These are the beliefs and attributes which define who we are as an organisation and who we wish to be in the future.

In developing our strategic plan, we have identified the following values to support our work. They reflect our role as a membership organisation and our commitment to serving the needs of our members. They also highlight the need for us to adapt as the world changes and to work collaboratively with each other and other organisations.

- We are passionately committed to our members, who are at the heart of everything we do.
- We maintain high standards for our members and our work.
- We are proactive in adapting to changing circumstances.
- We are driven by a sense of common purpose.
- We respect each other and our different areas of expertise.
- We work collaboratively with our colleagues and other organisations.
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