

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2022 / 2026

Incorporating the  
**Annual Plan 2022**



Association of British Dispensing Opticians





# WELCOME to ABDO'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Building a brighter future for dispensing opticians



**W**e are delighted to launch ABDO's strategic plan, which will guide our work over the next five years on behalf of our members.

Developing our strategic plan has involved looking closely at the developments that are likely to shape the future and considering the implications for our members and for ABDO as an organisation. So while we cannot predict precisely what the future holds, we can look forward with confidence and with a positive vision of what we want to achieve for our members.

This will involve a wide range of activity as we support and represent members, promote awareness of their roles, enable their professional development and advance the profession as a whole. It will also mean acting in line with our new organisational values.

Each year we will publish an annual plan showing how we are working towards our future vision and enabling us to respond to any new developments. Alongside our strategic plan, we are pleased to publish our annual plan for 2022. (See page 11.)

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the development of our strategic plan. We look forward to working with you over the next five years – for the benefit of dispensing opticians and contact lens opticians, and ultimately, for the benefit of the public across all four nations of the UK.



**Jo Holmes**  
ABDO President



**Sir Tony Garrett CBE**  
ABDO General Secretary

Association of British Dispensing Opticians





## Executive Summary

### Introduction

ABDO's strategic plan will guide its work for the next five years.

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

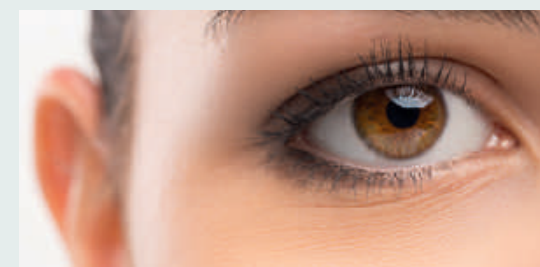
### External developments

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.

## ABDO's purpose

As a membership organisation, everything ABDO does must be for the benefit of its members. Our purpose is:

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



## ABDO's vision

ABDO's vision is that by 2026 it will have:

- Provided more opportunities for members to develop their roles.
- Implemented the new General Optical Council (GOC) 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 it communicates and collaborates.
- Ensured the organisation is sustainable.



## ABDO's values

To achieve its vision, ABDO is 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.



## 1. Introduction

As ABDO looks forward to the next five years, it needs to be clear about its 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 defined the values that will underpin our work and enable us to work effectively with members and colleagues, and in collaboration with other organisations.

We will review progress against the strategic plan regularly and where necessary, will adjust it in response 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.

Looking ahead to 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 increasing demand for low vision services and increasing opportunities for dispensing opticians to provide clinical services, such as dry eye clinics, advice and guidance and clinical 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 myopia management solutions, including 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 optical 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. 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.

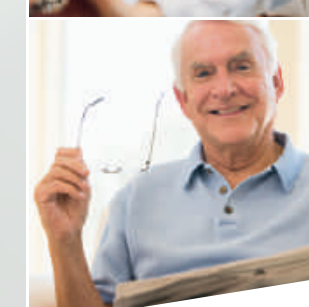
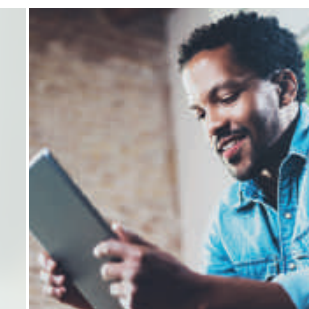
**5.** The online supply of spectacles and contact lenses has increased during the pandemic as part of the wider trend towards more shopping online. Support for members and cross-sector

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 considered and the new regulatory framework supports the development of the profession and protects the public.





## 3. Purpose

In planning 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.



Everything we do should be designed to benefit our members, including student members and we will continue to support, develop and represent members throughout their careers.

We also want to give greater emphasis to the need 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 and the NHS
- policy makers across the UK nations.

A further aspect of our role which we intend to focus on more is the need to advance 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.

There are, therefore, five key elements of ABDO's role:

### SUPPORTING MEMBERS

supporting members by providing services, products and benefits that recognise their diverse needs and interests.

### 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.

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 opposite. This highlights the fact that by improving the quality of eye care, these activities will benefit patients and the public too.*

### In summary, ABDO's purpose is:

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





### 4. Vision

It is also important for our strategic plan to set out our future vision. Another way of thinking about this is to ask what we want to have achieved by 2026 after we have implemented the 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.

- 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.

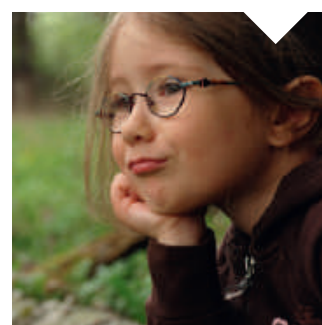


**ABDO's strategic plan sets out its future vision and what we will achieve by 2026.**

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, including by delivering our programme of continuing professional development and a range of flexible qualifications and accreditations to deliver clinical and low vision services.

- 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 ABDO 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.*
- *We are open and transparent about our work.*
- *We strive to continuously improve what we do and how we work together.*







FINANCE  
AND ADVICE



LIFESTYLE  
AND LEISURE



NETWORKING  
AND EDUCATION



PROFESSIONAL  
SERVICES

## PART 2: ANNUAL PLAN 2022

*In the coming year, we will begin to implement ABDO's five-year strategic plan. This will involve working towards our vision by carrying out activity in relation to all five elements of our purpose:*

### Supporting members

**We will support members by providing services, products and benefits that meet their diverse needs and interests. We will:**

- Respond to members' enquiries, providing professional, personalised advice and identifying issues that require action for the benefit of members generally.
- Give guidance and support in relation to managing the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Continue to provide members with clinical support and guidance, including through the Clinical Hub on our website.
- Enable members to operate in a more environmentally sustainable way. This will include promoting the wide range of resources available on our website and more widely, and the use of our self-assessment tool.
- Support members through our regular communications, including promoting all ABDO services, products and member benefits.
- Continue to offer a mentoring platform, a free and convenient way for members to gain access to the support that can come from an experienced mentor.
- Offer support and advice for members aspiring to run their own independent practice, with the return of ABDO's 'Become an independent' event.
- Continue to provide members with business support and guidance through the Business Hub on our website.

### Representing members

**ABDO will represent members to protect and promote their interests. We will:**

- Influence the commissioning of, and fees payable for, eye care services across the UK by representing our members in a wide range of forums. For example, in England we will participate in the Ophthalmic Fees Negotiating Committee and the Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning, in Wales we will contribute to the Welsh Government's Eyecare Review and in Scotland, we will support the move to enable dispensing opticians to be listed as NHS performers.
- Contribute to the development of new eyecare services through, for example, NHS England's Special Schools project.
- Track and influence developments in regulation, which will involve continuing input to the Government's programme of regulatory reform, including the issue of how many healthcare regulators there should be in future. We will also engage closely with the General Optical Council (GOC) as it undertakes a review of the Opticians Act and develops a revised strategy for dealing with illegal practice, including the illegal online supply of optical appliances.
- Influence and learn from international developments, particularly through our membership of the European Council of Optometry and Optics and the European Academy of Optometry and Optics.



**The ABDO Membership Department is here to help.**

**“Throughout my career, I have always relied on the support and guidance from the team in the membership department. Being able to call them and asked for advice has been invaluable, particularly at the moment. In fact there seems to be no question that they can't answer!”**

Kim Walker FBDO





**We will raise awareness of the benefits of a career in eyecare and eye wear.**

### Promoting awareness

ABDO will promote awareness of the roles which members carry out for the benefit of patients and the public. We will:

- Continue to raise awareness of the benefits of a career in eyecare and eye wear through our Careers in Eyecare programme.
- Highlight our members' roles at the 100% Optical trade exhibition.
- Continue our programme of engagement with employers, recognising that they have a key role in determining the roles that our members play and the opportunities they have to develop.
- Develop a strategy to achieve raised awareness of members' roles as a priority in line with our strategic plan.



“ As the 2021 Creating Opportunity #YouthFriendlyEmployer Award winner, ABDO has brought together industry and professional partners to highlight eyecare careers. ”

Laura-Jane Rawlings  
CEO of Youth Employment UK





## PART 2: ANNUAL PLAN 2022

### Developing members

**ABDO will enable members to develop their careers and will highlight opportunities for them to do so. We will:**

- Enable members' continuing professional development (CPD). In the coming year, this will take many forms, including articles in our monthly journal *Dispensing Optics*; CPD at regional meetings; online peer discussion workshops; recorded lectures; online child

- Work on implementing the GOC's new standards for qualification providers and new outcomes for both dispensing opticians and contact lens opticians. Linked to this, we will complete our review of the syllabus for our FBDO Diploma and contribute to the development of the apprenticeship standard for dispensing optics.
- Continue to deliver our registrable qualifications under the existing system, including the FBDO Diploma, in parallel with developing our approach to providing qualifications in future. This current activity has many different elements, including running theory and practical

**ABDO will enable members to develop their careers and will highlight opportunities for them to do so.**

and adult safeguarding courses; special schools practical training day; our online journal club; contact lens masterclass workshops; extended services training days, industry partnership events; and CPD on behalf of NHS Education for Scotland (NES).

- Support members in identifying and achieving their CPD goals, including through our professional development toolbox. This will be particularly important as the GOC replaces its longstanding system of Continuing Education and Training (CET) with a system that will give members more freedom to choose CPD aligned with their personal scope of practice and how they would like this to develop.

examinations; assessing pre-qualification period (PQP) portfolios; engaging with and supporting students, academic staff, supervisors and employers; running a student revision event; supervisor training; and support for the delivery of examinations overseas, including Malaysia.

- Enable students to do their theory examinations online, as well as submitting their PQP portfolios online.
- Offer a range of activities under the 'Focus on...' banner to support the extension of members' clinical knowledge and skills, including clinical imaging training and extended services training for contact lens opticians.
- Deliver and develop the range of management and leadership training that we offer. This will involve delivering the existing qualifications that we offer in collaboration with the Chartered Management Institute (CMI); developing shorter courses; and delivering workshops.
- Provide personalised advice to members on the opportunities to develop their roles will also be a continuing area of activity.



**“** I just wanted to contact you to say thank you for your help and support during the pandemic (it) really helped to keep me going, I'm extremely grateful. Thanks again for all your continued support. **”**  
Kimberly Logan

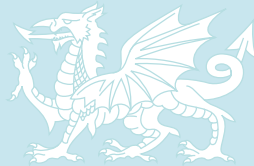


**“** A big thanks to all involved in making the Consultation Day happen. I found it a really interesting and informative range of presentations, Good to see ABDO making great progress and looking to the future. **”**  
David Hutchfield FBDO





## PART 2: ANNUAL PLAN 2022



### Advancing the profession

ABDO will advance the profession, including by developing opportunities for members to expand their roles and commissioning, supporting and disseminating high-quality research. We will:

- Influence and act on the outcomes of NHS England's National Outpatient Transformation Programme, which will lead to more eyecare services being provided in the community rather than hospitals.



- Encourage research to develop a stronger evidence base for the profession in line with our strategic plan. In the coming year, we will develop a strategy to make progress in this area.
- Promote cross-sector collaboration on sustainability, building on the success of the SEE Summit for the Environment held in October 2021.
- Show leadership on equality, diversity and inclusion, promoting opportunities for all members and providing support and guidance for members who experience harassment and discrimination.
- Advance the profession internationally through our membership and support for the International Opticians' Association.
- Develop a career framework for dispensing opticians, highlighting the different ways in which members can develop over the course of their careers.

### Cross-cutting activities

A range of cross-cutting activities will enable ABDO to carry out the work outlined in this report and fulfil our purpose, including:

- Financial management and reporting.
- IT support and development.
- Production of our monthly journal, *Dispensing Optics*.



- Communication with our members through regular communications and via our website and social media.
- Managing and supporting our network of regional and local teams.
- Governance support for the Board and our National Clinical Committee.
- Evaluation and reporting of our performance in implementing the strategic plan, including a survey of members.
- Development of our annual plan and annual report.

**ABDO will advance the profession by developing opportunities for members to expand their roles.**



“Focus on OCT was one of the best lectures I have attended. I know as a DO that some of us are more interested in the anatomy and physiology, and it's always been my passion. Thanks.”

Kelly Carr FBDO

Association of British Dispensing Opticians





abdo



abdo | Examinations



careers in  
eyecare



Unit 2, Court Lodge Offices, Godmersham Park,  
Godmersham, Canterbury, Kent CT4 7DT

**Telephone** 01227 733 905

**Email** [general@abdo.org.uk](mailto:general@abdo.org.uk)

**website** [www.abdo.org.uk](http://www.abdo.org.uk)

**Association of British Dispensing Opticians**

December 2021