

Annual plan 2024



Association of British Dispensing Opticians



Welcome to ABDO's Annual Plan 2024

Building a brighter future for dispensing opticians



The past few years have been a rollercoaster for everyone. The ripples of the Covid pandemic are still being felt as they affect not just health and the way we work in practice but also everything from global finance to procurement, supply and political stability. Against this difficult backdrop, members of the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO) are continuing their vital work, providing eyecare and eyewear across the UK and beyond. And ABDO has continued to fulfil its purpose to support and represent members, to enable them to develop their roles, to promote the roles of members and to advance the profession as a whole.

Notably, 2023 saw the first Myopia Management Conference for ABDO members. This sold-out event enabled practitioners to hear from those at the forefront of this fast-developing field as they delivered essential information for every dispensing optician (DO) to know. Myopia management is an area where members can develop their roles and the profession can advance. an area where members can develop their roles and the profession can advance. 2023 also saw the introduction of ABDO's new syllabus for the Level 6 Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing, which will ensure students are prepared for future roles in practice.

ABDO has also been a leading force for change in the field of sustainability in eyecare and eyewear. ABDO is acknowledged both in the UK and most recently in Europe to be leading the move towards sustainable and carbon neutral supply and practice, involving professional bodies and businesses as well as individual members in this move.

The end of 2023 showed the potential for recovery and even growth as inflation finally dropped, leading to hopes of improved finances in 2024. In optics there is a positive outlook too: alongside myopia management there is renewed interest in paediatric dispensing. Both of these areas reinforce the value of the DO and the contact lens optician (CLO) in practice and to patients.

Now is the time to look to the future. ABDO is working to ensure that it is prepared to seize opportunities on behalf of members and face the challenges that lie ahead. The Association will be carrying out work in relation to all five elements of its purpose. You can read about the key areas of focus in each area over the following pages...



Daryl Newsome
ABDO President



Alistair Bridge
Chief Executive



1 Introducing the FBDO apprenticeship following approval of the apprenticeship standard



2 Launching a new professional certificate in paediatric eyecare



3 Providing an excellent service for members, now and into the future

Read on to discover ABDO's priorities in each of the five areas of its purpose

Supporting members

PRIORITIES:

1. Strengthening engagement through more proactive interaction with members and employers to understand and respond to their varied needs; and a renewed focus on supporting our network of regional leads in order to strengthen engagement at local level and gain feedback from members.
2. Ensuring ABDO's policy and clinical guidance is updated to reflect developments in practice, research and regulation, including in fast-moving areas such as myopia management.
3. Reviewing ABDO's insurance products to ensure the Association meets the needs of members, both individuals and business owners.
4. Reviewing ABDO's membership categories and expanding involvement in the profession by introducing a new affiliate membership category for those aspiring to become DOs



Representing members

PRIORITIES:

1. Engaging with the General Optical Council (GOC) to ensure that the voice of DOs is heard as the GOC updates the standards of practice for DOs and optometrists and the standards for optical businesses.
2. Ensuring that DOs are represented effectively at local and national level by supporting members to participate in local optical committees (LOCs) and gain roles with national bodies, such as the GOC and LOCSU.
3. Contributing to effective engagement with the NHS and governments across the UK, including through membership of the OFNC, and ensuring that the interests of DOs are represented effectively.



Enabling members to develop their roles

PRIORITIES:

1. Introducing the FBDO apprenticeship, with students starting on the apprenticeship route from September 2024.
2. Launching a new professional certificate in paediatric eyecare in Q1, which will enable members to build on their core expertise in paediatric eyecare.
3. Introducing a new contact lens syllabus in Q3 to reflect developments in practice and to minimise practical barriers to students completing the course.
4. Holding a clinical conference at the National Resource Centre (NRC) in Birmingham in Q3.
5. Providing a comprehensive programme of CPD that will enable members to meet the GOC's requirements as they reach the end of the current 3-year cycle.



Promoting awareness of members' roles

PRIORITIES:

1. Engaging with large and small employers plus other key stakeholders across the UK to highlight the value that DOs and CLOs bring to practice.
2. Continuing the *Yes a DO can* campaign.
3. Promoting ABDO's award-winning *Careers in Eyecare* campaign to inspire the next generation of DOs and allied professions.



Advancing the profession

PRIORITIES:

1. Relaunching the ABDO research fund in Q3 to support members to carry out research and add to the evidence base for the profession.
2. Promoting ABDO's research to enhance members' understanding, highlight the importance of dispensing expertise, and encourage the development of well-fitting spectacles for the benefit of patients and members.
3. Finalising and launching ABDO's research strategy, which will set out our longer-term objectives as ABDO seeks to advance the profession.



Underpinning all ABDO's work will be activity to ensure that the Association is a professional, modern and sustainable organisation providing an excellent service to members now and into the future.

THIS WILL INCLUDE:

- 1** Implementing improvements to financial systems and processes that will enable ABDO to minimise costs and provide good value for money for members.
- 2** Developing ABDO's IT function, with network security being a particular priority.
- 3** Enhancing ABDO's HR policies and processes to support the organisation's development and to maximise performance.





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