



# Public perceptions of the optical professions

A report prepared by ComRes for the  
General Optical Council



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## A. ABOUT THE GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

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The General Optical Council is the regulator for the optical professions in the UK. Our purpose is to protect and promote the health and safety of the public by promoting high standards of education, performance and conduct amongst opticians. We currently register around 26,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student opticians and optical businesses.

## B. ABOUT COMRES

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ComRes provides specialist research and insight into reputation management, public policy and communications. It is a founding member of the British Polling Council, and its staff are members of the UK Market Research Society, committing it to the highest standards of research practice.

ComRes won the 2014 Market Research Society Award for Public Policy / Social Research for its innovative research into online communications.

The consultancy also conducts regular public research for organisations including The Independent, ITV News, the BBC, and other media outlets, as well as a wide range of public sector and corporate clients.

For further information about ComRes, this research or any other research requirements please contact [Katharine.Peacock@comres.co.uk](mailto:Katharine.Peacock@comres.co.uk).

## C. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

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### i) Objectives

The General Optical Council (GOC) commissioned ComRes to undertake public perception research as part of its commitment to better understand the views and experiences of the general public. More specifically, the GOC wanted to:

- Conduct robust research into public perceptions and experiences of the optical professions across the UK;
- Understand what the public expects from a regulatory body;
- Use the research to improve as a regulator and ensure that the GOC fulfils its statutory obligation to protect and promote the public's health and safety; and
- Benchmark public perceptions in order to track how these may change in the future.

### ii) Methodology

ComRes conducted a three phase research project in order to achieve these objectives, comprising qualitative scoping to inform questionnaire design; a cognitive test of the questionnaire; and a quantitative survey of UK adults.

#### Quantitative survey

ComRes interviewed 2,250 UK adults aged 18+ via telephone from the 18<sup>th</sup> November to the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2014. Quotas were applied to ensure a suitable sample size for analysis in each of the UK nations, as well as by age and gender to ensure a representative sample. The final achieved sample is shown below:

Demographic	Unweighted base
<b><i>Gender</i></b>	
Male	1099
Female	1151
<b><i>Age</i></b>	
18-29	439
30-44	564
45-59	601
60-74	459
75+	187
<b><i>Socio-economic grade</i></b>	
A	271
B	604
C1	402
C2	428
D	197
E	179
<b><i>Nation</i></b>	
England	1901
Wales	100
Scotland	154
Northern Ireland	95
<b><i>English Region</i></b>	
North East	146
North West	319
Yorkshire & the Humber	247
East Midlands	180
West Midlands	178
East of England	132
London	182
South East	324
South West	193

<i>Ethnicity</i>	
White	2003
BME	193

A telephone approach allowed for certain questions to be unprompted, with the coded list not being read out to respondents. A copy of the final questionnaire including interviewer instructions has been provided in Appendix 2.

*In addition, ComRes conducted the following research to inform the development of the quantitative phase:*

### **Qualitative scoping**

ComRes conducted four focus groups on behalf of the General Optical Council, broken down as follows:

#	Location	Specification <sup>1</sup>	Age	Gender
1	London	Non-patients	18-39	50:50
2	London	Patients	40+	50:50
3	Cardiff	Patients	18-39	50:50
4	Cardiff	Non-patients	40+	50:50

Alongside this, ComRes conducted six telephone in-depth interviews, two with each of the following target groups:

- Those aged 75+ living with significant or partial sight loss;
- Those aged 18+, who are parents of children aged 8 or under;
- Those aged 18+, who are low-income patients.

### **Cognitive testing**

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<sup>1</sup> Patients are defined as those who last visited the optician two years ago or more recently, and 'non-patients' as those who have visited the optician more than two years ago or never.

Following this qualitative phase, ComRes conducted four cognitive testing interviews over the telephone to help to gain feedback on the draft questionnaire from the following groups:

- 2 male, 2 female participants;
- Spread of age, region and SEG;
- 2 patients, 2 non-patients.

On completion of the cognitive testing, ComRes produced a note on the implications of the findings for the final questionnaire design, which is provided as an appendix to this report.

### iii) Analysis

Data were weighted to be nationally representative of all adults aged 18+.

Sub-group differences have been highlighted throughout this report where of interest and where these differences are statistically significant at a 90% confidence level. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Please note that analysis of 'patients' refers to those who last visited the optician two years ago or more recently. Conversely, 'non-patients' refers to those who have visited the optician more than two years ago or never.

Social Grade is the 'common currency' social classification (the 'ABC1' system) used by the advertising industry and employed throughout marketing, advertising and market research. The classification assigns every household to a grade, usually based upon the occupation and employment status of the Chief Income Earner, but in some cases using other characteristics. For more information see [https://www.mrs.org.uk/cgg/social\\_grade](https://www.mrs.org.uk/cgg/social_grade).

Throughout the report, we refer to 'opticians' rather than the two optical professions – optometrists and dispensing opticians. This is as the initial qualitative scoping

demonstrated that the majority of the public do not distinguish between the two professions. As such, questions were asked which reflect their understanding of the professions in order to obtain meaningful findings, and the analysis reflects this.

## D. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### i) Introduction

The General Optical Council (GOC) commissioned ComRes to undertake public perception research as part of its commitment to better understand the views and experiences of the general public.

ComRes conducted a three-phase research project in order to achieve these objectives, comprising:

- Qualitative scoping to inform questionnaire design:
  - Four focus groups, two each with patients and non-patients<sup>2</sup>;
  - Six in-depth interviews, two each with parents with children under the age of 18 living at home, older people living with significant or partial sight loss, and low income patients;
- Four cognitive testing interviews;
- A quantitative survey of 2,250 UK adults aged 18+, conducted over the telephone, weighted to be representative of all UK adults aged 18+.

### ii) Key findings

**UK adults have a high level of confidence<sup>3</sup> in the standards of care provided by opticians.<sup>4</sup>** In the wake of the Francis report, there has been an increased public focus on care quality and standards. Many commentators within the healthcare sector have been concerned that recent negative media coverage has damaged public confidence

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<sup>2</sup> 'Patients' refers to those who last visited the optician two years ago or more recently, and 'non-patients' refers to those who have visited the optician more than two years ago or never.

<sup>3</sup> As one of the General Optical Council's strategic objectives is to promote public trust in the optical professions, it is worth noting that confidence in standards of care can provide some indicative sense of broader trust in the professions. While trust overall is a multifaceted concept, and therefore was not directly tested in the questionnaire to avoid confusion among respondents and lack of clarity at the analysis stage, confidence in standards of care is likely to play a significant part in driving this broader metric. As such, it may be worth considering this as a key performance indicator for the future.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout, we refer to 'opticians' rather than the two optical professions – optometrists and dispensing opticians. Questions used this descriptor to avoid confusion, as the qualitative research indicated that the majority of the public do not distinguish between the two professions.

in the health and care professions. However, this report of the first research into public perceptions run by the General Optical Council shows that confidence in the optical profession is very high.

- This research compared opticians to GPs, dentists and pharmacists, and of these professions, the public are second most likely to say that they are very or fairly confident of receiving high standards of care from opticians (92%), after pharmacists (94%).
- In terms of differences between nations, Welsh (61%) and Scottish adults (59%) are more likely than UK adults overall (51%) to say that they are very confident of receiving a high standard of care from opticians.

Exploring **what contributes to public confidence** is the first step to maintaining confidence going forward. Public attitudes and perceptions are therefore explored in detail below.

### *1. Previous experience of opticians*

**As with confidence, patients' satisfaction with their overall experience of visiting the opticians is high.** The vast majority (96%) of patients say that they were satisfied with their overall experience of the opticians.

- Three quarters (75%) say that they were very satisfied, and a further one in five (21%) say that they were fairly satisfied with the overall experience. The main reason cited for this is that they had a good quality examination or that the issue which they visited for was corrected (32%).
- Among the minority who were not satisfied (3% of patients), the reasons given range from a poor quality product, an individual who was rude or unfriendly, that they felt pressurised into spending, or that they had bad or no advice on treatment options.

**There is a clear relationship between confidence in standards of care and satisfaction with patients' overall experience at the opticians** – with 98% of patients who were satisfied with their last visit saying that they are confident of receiving a high standard of care from opticians, compared to only 77% of those who were not satisfied.

## *2. Understanding of guidelines and the roles of opticians*

In addition to high levels of confidence and satisfaction, when prompted, **a significant proportion of UK adults are aware that people should visit the opticians at least every two years**, as recommended by the College of Optometrists.

- The majority (80%) say that you should go ‘regularly’ to an optician, compared to 20% who say you should go only when there is something wrong with your vision or eyes.
- Of those who say that you should go regularly, two in five (40%) say that it is recommended that people go more frequently than every two years, but no more frequently than every year, and a further 36% say that it is recommended that people go every two years.

**Positively, reported behaviour largely reflects this** – around three quarters (73%) of UK adults say that their last visit to the optician was two years ago or less. However a significant minority say that they last went to the opticians more than two years ago, which may require further reflection.

- More than one in seven (15%) say that their last visit to an optician was more than two years ago and around one in ten (11%) say that they have never been to an optician.
- There are a number of groups of particular interest – one in ten (10%) with a family history of diabetes say that they have never been to the opticians. In addition, 4% of those who report using contact lenses say that they have never been to the opticians despite the fact that contact lenses should be fitted only by an optician with the necessary expertise.
- The main reason given for not visiting the optician two years ago or more recently is having had no problem with vision (71%). More than one in ten (13%) say that they have not had time, and around one in ten (9%) say that they have not had issues with eye health unrelated to sight or that it is too expensive (8%).

However, high levels of confidence and satisfaction are based on a narrow understanding of what opticians do – in particular, only a minority associates opticians with eye health.

- Unsurprisingly, two thirds (68%) of UK adults say that their main association with opticians is providing sight tests.
- However, only slightly more than a third (35%) make any reference to opticians' ability to detect eye health problems.

**GPs rather than opticians are the first port of call for eye health problems** (despite not typically having the specialist equipment or specialist training to examine patients' eyes).

- More than half (54%) say that they would go to their GP first if they woke up with an eye problem tomorrow. One in five (19%) UK adults say that they would go to the optician. 5% of UK adults say that they would go to A&E.
- **Patients are more likely than non-patients to say that they would go to an optician for this reason**, potentially suggesting that visiting the optician is habit-forming (21% of patients compared to those who have been less recently – more than two years but less than five years ago (13%), five or more years ago (11%), or have never been (9%)).
- **If the optical professions are looking to integrate further with primary care, relatively low associations of eye health with opticians may be a barrier to this.**

### *3. Product usage and purchasing behaviour*

Overall, seven in ten (70%) UK adults who have ever been to the opticians say that they have a **prescription for glasses or contact lenses**. Six in ten (59%) UK adults say that they **currently use glasses with a prescription**, and 10% say the same of **contact lenses**.

When looking specifically at purchasing behaviour, the data further reinforce the overall positive picture of public confidence and satisfaction. **The majority of UK adults who recall where they bought their corrective appliances (whether glasses with**

a prescription or contact lenses) were satisfied with their most recent purchasing experience.

- Almost all (97%) who have purchased corrective appliances and recall where they did so say that they are satisfied with their purchasing experience.
- The vast majority (83%) who have purchased corrective appliances (glasses or contact lenses) and recall which they purchased most recently say that they purchased their products from the opticians they had their eye test in. However, although only 4% purchased their corrective appliances over the internet, this rises to 21% of those who most recently purchased contact lenses, compared to only 2% who most recently purchased glasses with a prescription.

**Drivers of purchasing behaviour differ depending on the product.**

- Among those who use corrective appliances and recall where they purchased them, convenience was the main driver for buying glasses at a specific location (37%), whereas price was the main driver for buying contact lenses at a specific location (36%).
- Helpful staff are the main reported driver for satisfaction with purchasing products (17%). Among the small minority who were dissatisfied with purchasing products (3%), the main reason cited for this is incorrect lenses fitted or wrong prescription given.
- A majority of those who use corrective appliances (glasses or contact lenses), and know which they purchased most recently, say that they purchased the corrective appliances two years ago or more recently (79%).

#### *4. Perceptions of effective regulation*

**Few have had cause to complain about opticians.** In addition, the majority of UK adults are confident that if necessary they would be able to find information about qualifications or how to complain; although significant minorities are not confident in this.

- Nine in ten (92%) of those who have ever been to the opticians say that they have never complained or considered complaining about their experience.
- 62% of UK adults are very or fairly confident that they would be able to source information about qualifications, and 68% on how to complain.
- However, significant minorities are not confident that they would be able to find information about qualifications (31%) or how to complain (26%).

More research among those who have complained or considered complaining would help to identify specific barriers to complaining. The qualitative research indicates that if the public had a bad experience, rather than complaining, they would tend not return to the opticians in which they had a negative experience.

Corresponding with high levels of overall confidence and satisfaction, **most UK adults (79%) think that opticians are regulated.**

- However, a smaller proportion of the public think that opticians are regulated than GPs (93%), nurses (90%), dentists (88%) or pharmacists (84%).
- On being told that the profession is regulated, 86% of UK adults are broadly **confident that this regulation works effectively.**
- **Keeping a register of optical professionals** who are allowed to practice (89%) and ensuring that opticians are properly trained (88%) and are the responsibilities most strongly associated with the role of a regulator of the profession.
- A majority also associate the role of a regulator with providing consumer information on what to expect from an optician (71%) and with raising public awareness of eye health (70%) – areas which the General Optical Council has not traditionally focussed on – although of the responsibilities tested these are the least commonly associated with the role of a regulator.

**Around one in ten (12%) adults mention the General Optical Council unprompted as the organisation which is responsible for regulating opticians.**

- When prompted, a further 12% of those who were not able to name the General Optical Council as the regulator unprompted say that they had heard of the General Optical Council prior to the interview.

### *5. Potentially 'at risk' groups*

There are some demographic groups where views differ significantly from the overall picture and which may therefore be of particular interest to the General Optical Council and the optical professions. These groups are highlighted because they tend to be more likely than their counterparts to report behaviours which are not in line with the College of Optometrists' guidelines, to report lower levels of knowledge about the role of opticians, and/or to report lower levels of confidence in opticians. However, it should be noted that some of these groups – including younger people – are also demographically low risk groups with regards to eye health problems, and the implications of the findings should be considered in this context.

#### *Men compared to women*

**Men tend to be less engaged with the optical professions than women.**

- **Men tend to visit the opticians less frequently** than women (65% of men last went to the optician two years ago or less, compared to 81% of women), and are more likely than women to have **never been** (15% compared to 7% of women).
- Men who have not been to the opticians in the last two years are more likely than women to say that this is because **they have no problem with their vision** (74% compared to 66%).
- Men are less likely to think that **opticians are regulated** than women (76% compared to 82%), although they are more likely to be able to **name the General Optical Council unprompted** than women (17% compared to 7%).

Men also tend to be **less aware than women of opticians' role in identifying eye health issues.**

- 7% of male patients say that one of the main reasons for their last visit to the optician was **to detect any eye health problems**, compared to 10% of female patients.

- Men are less likely than women to say that they would **go to the opticians first if they woke up tomorrow morning with an eye problem** (16% compared to 21%).
- In addition, men are more likely than women to say that you should **only visit the opticians when there is something wrong with your vision or eyes** (26% vs. 15% of women).

However, men are also **less likely than women to report using prescription eye products** (65% of women report using prescription glasses compared to 53% of men; 13% of women report using contact lenses compared to 7% of men). Given that less frequent visits to opticians are related to not believing there are any problems with your vision or eyes, further research would be beneficial to better understand which of these factors drives the other.

#### *Black and minority ethnic (BME) adults compared to white adults*

**Black and minority ethnic (BME) adults are less likely to report following recognised guidelines** on regularity of visiting the optician, and tend to be **less confident** in finding information. However, they are **more informed about the role of opticians** in detecting eye health problems, and **more likely to be aware of the GOC** as a regulator.

- 69% **last visited an optician two years ago or more recently**, compared to 74% of white adults.
- In addition, BME adults (39%) are much more likely than white adults (18%) to say that **you should only go to the opticians if there is something wrong with your vision or eyes**, rather than regularly.
- However, they are also **more likely to associate opticians with detecting any eye health problems** than white adults (21% of BME adults report that their main association with opticians is detecting any eye health problems, compared to 16% of white adults).
- BME adults tend to be **less confident than white adults in their ability to find information about opticians' qualifications** (57% of BME adults compared to 63% of white adults say that they are confident) **and in the effective regulation**

of opticians (12% of BME adults are not confident compared to 6% of white adults).

- However, they are **more likely than white adults to correctly identify the General Optical Council** as the organisation responsible for the regulation of opticians (17% compared to 11%).

Given that certain BME groups are **at particular risk of certain eye conditions** these findings may warrant further investigation. A small sample size in this survey means that the BME group cannot be broken down further into groups such as southern Asian (more likely to develop diabetic retinopathy) or African/Caribbean (at greater risk of developing glaucoma) ethnic minorities.

### *Younger people compared to older people*

**Younger people tend to have a lower level of awareness of guidelines around good optical care than older people.**

- Younger people are more likely to say that you should **only visit the opticians if there is something wrong with your vision or eyes** (35% aged 18–29 compared to 13% aged 75+).
- In addition, they are more likely to say that they have **never been to the opticians** (18% aged 18–29 compared to 5% aged 75+).
- Non-patients in the younger age group are also more likely than older people to say that they **have not been to the optician two years ago or more recently because they have no problem with their vision** (79% aged 18–29 compared to 54% aged 75+, although with a small base (n=27) for those aged 75+ this finding should be treated with caution).

In addition, young people tend to be **less confident in the standards of care provided by the profession, and in the regulation of the profession**, than older people.

- Younger people tend to be **less confident in the standards of the profession, although a large majority are still confident** – 88% of those aged 18–29 say

that they have confidence in receiving a high standard of care from opticians, compared to 95% of those aged 75+.

- Younger people also tend to be **less confident than older people that they could find information about how to complain about an optician** (26% of those aged 18–29 are not confident compared to 19% of those aged 75+) **or to check the qualifications of an optician** (43% of those aged 18–29 are not confident, compared to 17% of those aged 75+).
- Younger people are **less likely to think that opticians are regulated** than older people (73% of those aged 18–29 compared to 84% of those aged 75+).

In considering the implications of these findings, it is necessary to take into account the fact that younger people are **less likely to experience problems with their vision or develop serious eye conditions**. However, it is also important to note that **forming good habits early on with regard to optical care is potentially important in driving better eye health outcomes** in later life.

## *6. Key national differences*

In addition to the demographic trends outlined above, there are some **national differences** of note. Given the different systems in different parts of the UK, however, it is interesting to note that there are not a greater number of or more consistent trends with regard to national differences in perceptions.

In terms of **confidence in and previous experience of opticians**:

- Welsh and Scottish adults are more likely than UK adults overall to say that they are **very confident of receiving a high standard of care from opticians** (61% and 59%, compared to 51% of UK adults).
- Welsh adults (81%) are more likely than English adults (72%) to say that they **last visited an optician two years ago or more recently**.
- Scottish and Northern Irish patients are more likely than patients overall to say they **last visited an independent optician** (38% and 45% compared to 27% overall), and less likely to say they last visited a **chain optician** (59% and 50% respectively, compared to 67% overall).

When looking at **understanding of the guidelines and roles of opticians**:

- Northern Irish and Welsh adults are more likely than UK adults overall to say that they **don't know how often it is recommended you visit the optician** (12% and 11% compared to 6% overall), but are also more likely than UK adults overall to say that their **main association with opticians is detecting any eye health problems** (23% compared to 16%).
- Welsh adults are more likely than UK adults overall to say that they would **go to an optician if they woke up tomorrow morning with an eye problem** (26% compared to 19%).

Finally, with regards to **regulation**:

- Welsh adults are less likely than UK adults overall to say that a healthcare professional being **monitored by a regulatory body is important** in giving them confidence in the standard of care provided (87% important vs. 93% important respectively).
- Scottish adults are more likely than UK adults overall to say that they are very confident that **the profession is regulated effectively** (40% compared to 32%)
- Scottish and English adults are more likely to say that they have **complained** about an experience with an optician than Welsh adults (6% and 5% compared to 1%); and Welsh adults are more likely to say that they have **not complained or considered complaining** than English adults (97% vs. 92%).

It will be interesting to continue to track perceptions by nation over time, as enhanced services become more embedded, resulting in potentially greater divergence across the UK.

### iii) Conclusions

**Overall confidence in and satisfaction with opticians is high**, and the two metrics are closely related, with those who report higher levels of confidence also tending to be more satisfied. However, this research also indicates that there is limited

understanding among the public about the role performed by opticians in promoting eye health as well as improving vision, and therefore the expectations against which satisfaction is being judged may be limited. It will be important to **monitor these core metrics over time** to pick up any changes in public perceptions. This is particularly true in the light of the ongoing debate around quality and standards of care provided by healthcare professionals.

However, it is notable that public belief in the effectiveness of **regulation does not necessarily drive confidence in the care received from opticians**. Indeed, regulation appears to be less important in contributing to public confidence in standards of care, compared to the qualifications of the healthcare professional, the quality of treatment and the quality of communications. **Past experience of opticians is closely related to confidence** – those who report high levels of satisfaction with their overall experience of the opticians are more likely to say that they have confidence in the standards of care provided by opticians than those who are not satisfied. While **very few say that they were not satisfied with their experience** overall, or with their purchasing experience, consideration of how the professions can **guard against barriers to satisfaction** may be valuable. In particular, low levels of satisfaction are driven by perceived bad quality service or products, bad advice on treatment options, and feeling pressured into spending.

**Encouraging more people to visit an optician regularly could help** to ensure improved eye health and wider health outcomes for the public. A significant minority last visited the optician more than two years ago, or have never visited, and these metrics should continue to be an area of focus for the sector going forward.

Moreover, given the link between satisfaction and past experience, encouraging more people to visit an optician regularly may also contribute towards the broader objective of **driving confidence in the professions**. Specifically, the professions may wish to consider what can be done to boost the proportion of the public visiting an optician at least every two years, as is recommended. In addition, it will be important to continue to **monitor whether the proportion of people buying their products through non-traditional channels** such as the internet is increasing. If so, this will increase the need to consider the impact of purchasing products in a harder to regulate

environment on patient safety, as well as whether this results in them going longer without an eye test.

In this context, it will be important to consider **how best to target key demographic groups** – including men, younger people, and BME groups – who are less likely to have visited an optician two years ago or more recently, and more likely to say that you should only visit an optician if there is something wrong with your vision or eyes. It may also be worth considering those groups who are at risk through a family history of medical conditions affecting the eyes – including those with a family history of diabetes, of whom 10% have never been to the optician, as well as those with family histories of glaucoma, macular degeneration, and cataracts. It may therefore be worth considering a further examination of the barriers to visiting regularly among these groups.

Further, it will be important to consider **how to raise awareness of the wider role of the optical professions beyond the provision of sight tests and dispensing of corrective appliances**. In particular, if the professions are looking to integrate further with primary care, low awareness of the role of opticians – and the corresponding association of opticians with the ‘high street’ – may be a barrier to this. There is low awareness of the role opticians can play in the treatment of acute eye health issues, as well as in the detection of health problems both within and beyond the eye. Looking ahead, **the optical sector may wish to consider how this can be increased**, and future tracking should continue to **monitor this key metric** to track progress against this objective.

Given the close relationship between perceptions of standards of care and complaints, it may be beneficial for the sector to **focus on standards as a way of maintaining confidence at its current high levels, as well as ensuring that levels of complaints do not rise**. While the regulator of the optical professions is most closely associated with complaints, a large proportion of the public also see standards as part of the regulator’s role. Positive messaging around **the standards of care that the public can expect to receive from optometrists and dispensing opticians, and the breadth of the role of the optical professions**, may therefore have a significant impact on how frequently the public visit the optician, as well as driving a broader understanding of the role of opticians as healthcare professionals.

In addition, the General Optical Council may also wish to further consider its role in **providing consumer information** on what to expect from an optician and **raising public awareness of eye health**. Although these are areas which the General Optical Council has not traditionally focussed on, a majority of the public associate both of these with the role of a regulator of the professions. That said, in considering this it should be noted that, of the responsibilities tested, these are the currently least commonly associated with the role of a regulator.

## 1. PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF OPTICIANS

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### i) Perceptions of the remit of opticians

*This section covers the perceived remit of opticians, associations with opticians, and where the public would reportedly go if they had an eye health problem across all UK adults.*

#### Key findings

- Only one in five (19%) adults say they would go to the opticians first if they woke up with an eye problem tomorrow. UK adults are most likely to say that they would go to their GP in these circumstances (54%).
- UK adults are most likely to say that their main association with opticians is providing sight tests (68%), rather than detecting any eye health problems (16%).

#### *The role and remit of opticians*

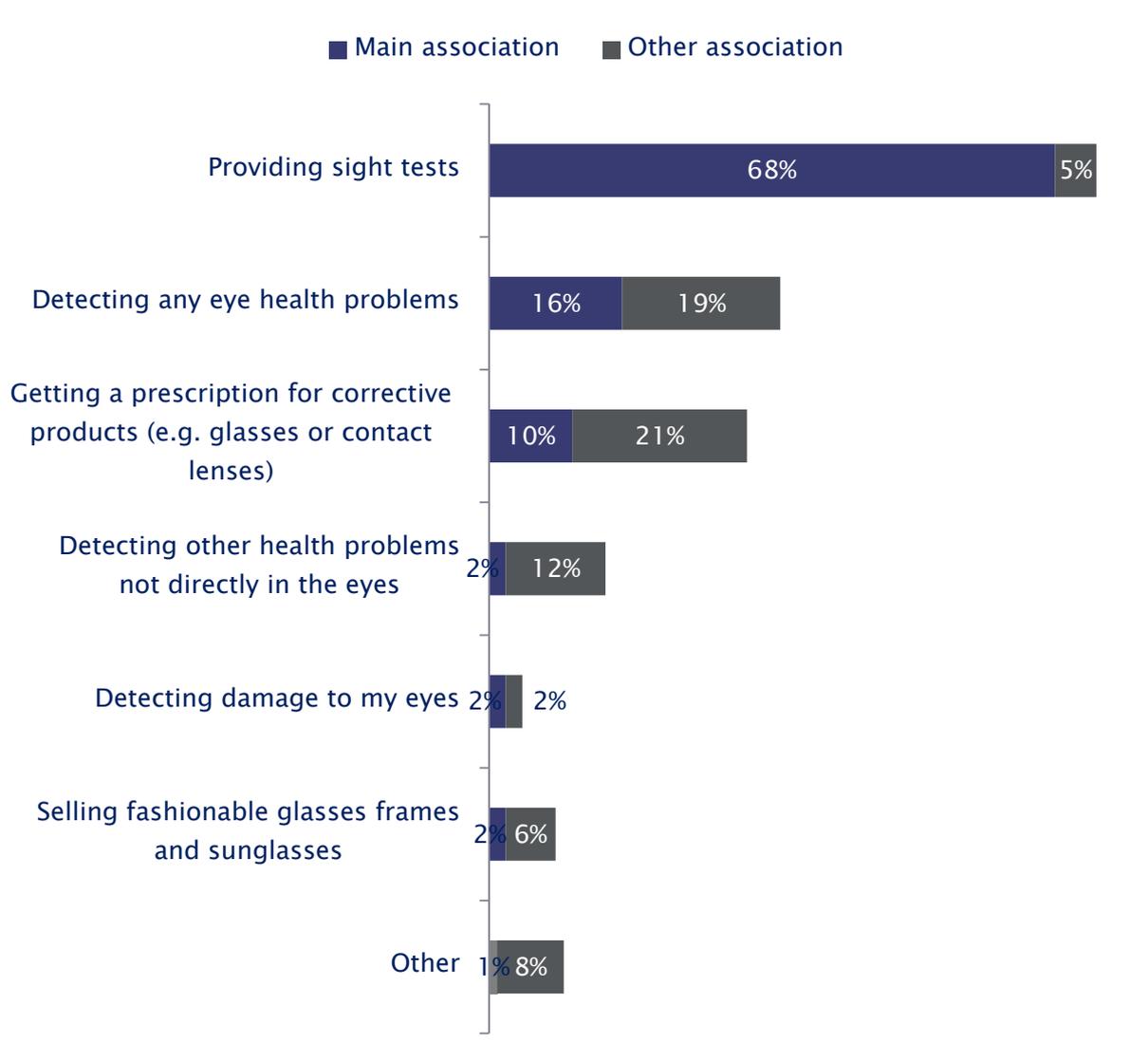
The public tends to understand opticians primarily as a place to get a sight test, rather than as healthcare professionals detecting eye health problems.

The qualitative research uncovered a distinction between those working in “frontline NHS services” (such as paramedics, surgeons and nurses) and “high-street”, “ancillary” or “self-referral services” (which include opticians, dentists and pharmacists). Of this latter group, participants felt opticians and dentists were most similar, in terms of the importance and nature of the services provided. However, there was some sense that those making a non-routine trip to the dentist will have an acute issue leading to notable pain. In comparison, very few mentioned visiting an optician to resolve acute issues – rather, the public perceive that the optician is there to improve their vision.

This is further evidenced by the quantitative data, which show that two thirds (68%) of UK adults say that their main association with opticians is providing sight tests. While this is unsurprising and indeed unproblematic in itself, it is notable that only

one in three (35%) make *any* reference to opticians detecting any eye health problems when asked about the services opticians provide.

### Associations with opticians



*Q29: Thinking about the services provided by opticians, what is the main service you associate with opticians? And are there any other services you associate with opticians? [Open response, pre-coded list] Base: All UK adults (n=2250)*

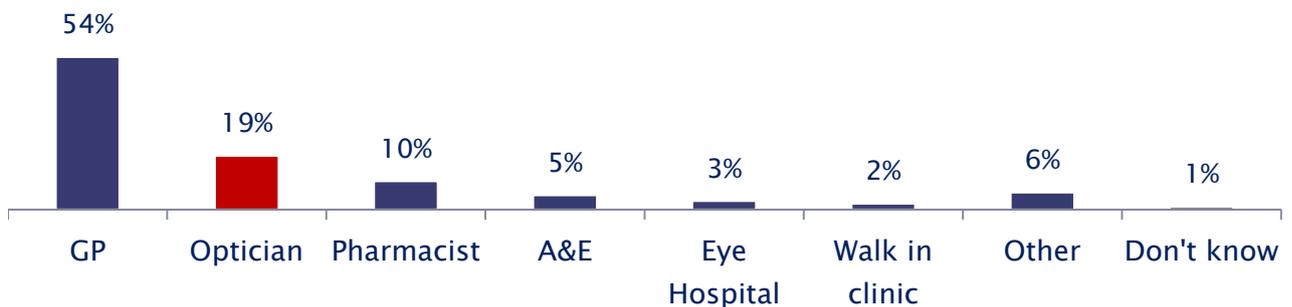
Black and minority ethnic (BME) adults are more likely to associate opticians with detecting any eye health problems than white adults. One in five (21%) BME adults report that their main association with opticians is detecting any eye health problems, compared to 16% of white adults who say this.

Northern Irish adults are more likely than UK adults overall to say that detecting any eye health problems is their main association with opticians. More than one in five (23%) Northern Irish adults say that this is their main association, compared to 16% of UK adults overall. All other associations are consistent across nations.

### *Experiencing an eye problem*

More than half (54%) of UK adults say that they would go to a GP first if they woke up tomorrow morning with an eye problem. One in five (19%) say that they would go to an optician first.

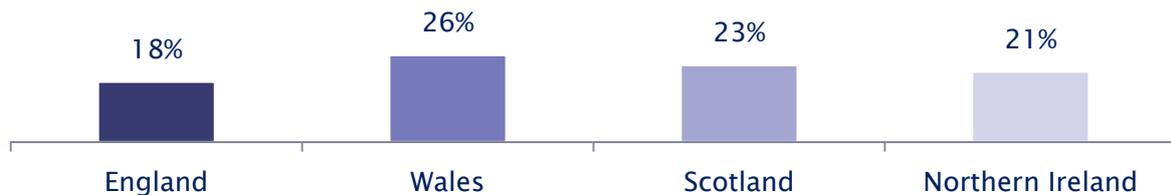
Where adults would go if experiencing an eye problem



*Q4: If you woke up tomorrow morning with an eye problem, such as something in your eye, a red eye or blurred vision, where would you go or who would you speak to first? [Open response, pre-coded list]*  
*Base: All UK adults (n=2250)*

There are differences across the nations on this point. Welsh adults (26%) are more likely to say that they would go to the opticians than UK adults overall, whereas Northern Irish adults are more likely to report they would go to the pharmacist (17%) than adults from any other nation.

Those who would speak to an optician first if they had an eye problem: By nation



*Q4: If you woke up tomorrow morning with an eye problem, such as something in your eye, a red eye or blurred vision, where would you go or who would you speak to first? Opticians. [Open response, pre-coded list] Base: All English adults (n=1901); All Welsh adults (n=100); All Scottish adults (n=154); All Northern Irish adults (n=95)*

In addition, women (21%) are more likely than men (16%) to say that they would go to the opticians first if they woke up tomorrow morning with an eye problem. There are no significant differences between people of different age groups.

The intention to visit an optician regarding an eye problem appears to be linked to how recently the public have visited an optician, potentially suggesting that visiting the optician is habit-forming. Patients are more likely to say that they would go to an optician for this reason than non-patients (21% of patients compared to those who have been more than two years but less than five years ago (13%), five or more years ago (11%), or have never been (9%).

In light of the finding that more than half of UK adults would go to their GP first if they woke up with an eye problem tomorrow, it is notable that the qualitative research indicated that there is some uncertainty with regards to where one should go for problems with sight. As a result, they tend to turn to the healthcare services most familiar to them, such as their GP. This may go some way to explaining why those more familiar with visiting the optician as a result of more recent experience are also more likely to say this would be their first port of call with an acute problem.

*"I didn't know where to go first of all, so I went to the GP"*

However, there was also a sense that the waiting times at GPs can be seen as prohibitive to receiving fast care for emergency symptoms, which may be a barrier to seeking care for an acute problem through this channel.

*“You’d have a job making an appointment to go and see your GP”*

In comparison, many felt that it is easier to acquire an appointment at an optician than it is to book one with the GP, although few considered the optician as a provider of emergency appointments, and as such were unable to comment on waiting times in this context. Among the minority who said that they would use an optician as their first port of call, many also felt that if they did visit their GP initially, they would be likely to refer them to the opticians. It should also be noted that, for some, cost may be a barrier to visiting an optician with an acute problem – particularly in England where sight tests are only free for certain groups. Although this was not raised in the context of treatment for an acute eye problem, it is certainly a consideration for some when visiting an optician.

*“You pray your eyes haven’t got any worse and that you have to spend more money... You just think ‘how much this is going to cost?’”*

## ii) Awareness of recommended frequency of visiting the opticians

*This section covers levels of awareness of how often it is recommended they go to the opticians among UK adults.*

### Key findings

- When asked to choose whether opticians visits should be routine or ad hoc, four in five adults (80%) state that you should go to the opticians regularly, compared to one in five (20%) who state that you should only go when there is something wrong with your vision or eyes.
- Men, those aged 18–44, those from lower social grades and those who claim that they have 20:20 vision are more likely than other groups to say you should only go to the opticians if there is something wrong with your vision or eyes<sup>5</sup>.
- Most who say that you should go regularly to the opticians say that you should go at least once every two years (40% say you should go between one year and less than two years, followed by 36% who say you should go every two years).

### *Regular vs. ad hoc visits to the opticians*

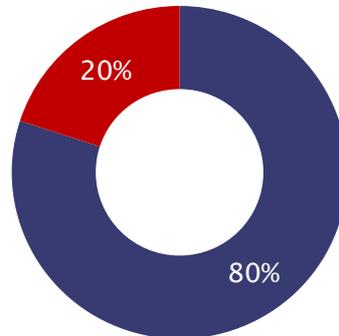
When asked to choose between two options, four in five UK adults (80%) say that you should go to the opticians regularly, whereas one in five (20%) say that you should only visit the opticians when there is something wrong with your vision or eyes.

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<sup>5</sup> 26% of men vs. 15% of women; 35% of 18–29 year olds and 27% 30–44 year olds vs. 13% of 45–59 year olds, 7% of 60–74 year olds and 13% of those aged 75+; 36% of those reporting 20:20 vision compared to those who are reportedly short sighted (12%), long sighted (13%) or partially sighted (19%\*).

### Perceptions of when you should visit the opticians

■ Regularly     ■ Only if there is something wrong with vision or eyes



*Q7: To the best of your knowledge, is going to the opticians something that you should do regularly or something that you should do only when there is a problem with your vision or eyes? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All UK adults (n=2250)*

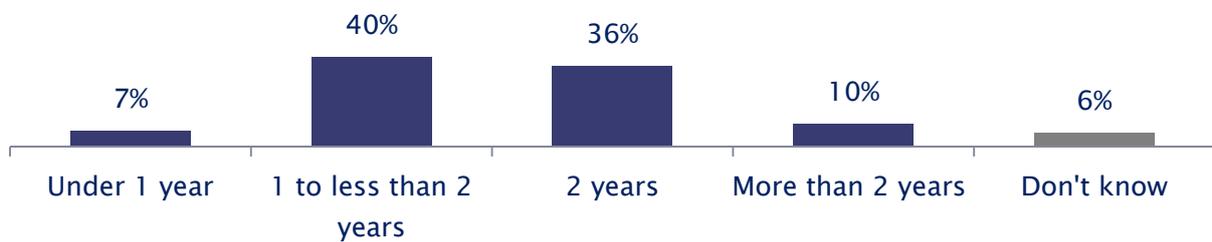
However this is not universal – certain groups of people are more likely to say that you should only visit the opticians when there is something wrong with your vision or eyes. These include men (26% vs. 15% of women), those aged 18–29 and 30–44 (35% and 27% vs. 13% of 45–59 year olds, 7% of 60–74 year olds and 13% of those aged 75+), those from lower social grades (23% of those from social grade E compared to 14% of those from grade A), and those who say that they have 20:20 vision (36% compared to 12% of those who are reportedly short sighted). BME adults (39%) are also much more likely than white adults (18%) to say that you should only go to the opticians if there is something wrong with your vision or eyes.

Those who do not use glasses (prescription or non-prescription) or contact lenses are also more likely to say that you should only go to the opticians if there is something wrong with your vision or eyes (41%, compared to 20% of those who wear reading glasses without a prescription, 9% of those who wear glasses with a prescription and 10% of contact lens wearers).

*Recommended frequency of visits to the opticians*

Of those who say that you should go regularly to the opticians, four in ten (40%) say you should go between one year and less than two years, and more than a third say you should go every two years (36%).

Perceptions of recommended frequency of going to the opticians



*Q8: You said you should go regularly to an optician. To the best of your knowledge, how often is it recommended that you go? [Open numeric response] Base: All who say you should go regularly to an optician (n=1804)*

Men are more likely than women to think that it is recommended to go less often than every two years (14% compared to 7% of women). One in ten (11%) of those from Northern Ireland (n=79) say that they don't know how often it is recommended that you go to the optician, compared to just 6% of all UK adults

### iii) Experience of opticians

*This section covers the UK adults' last reported visit to the opticians.*

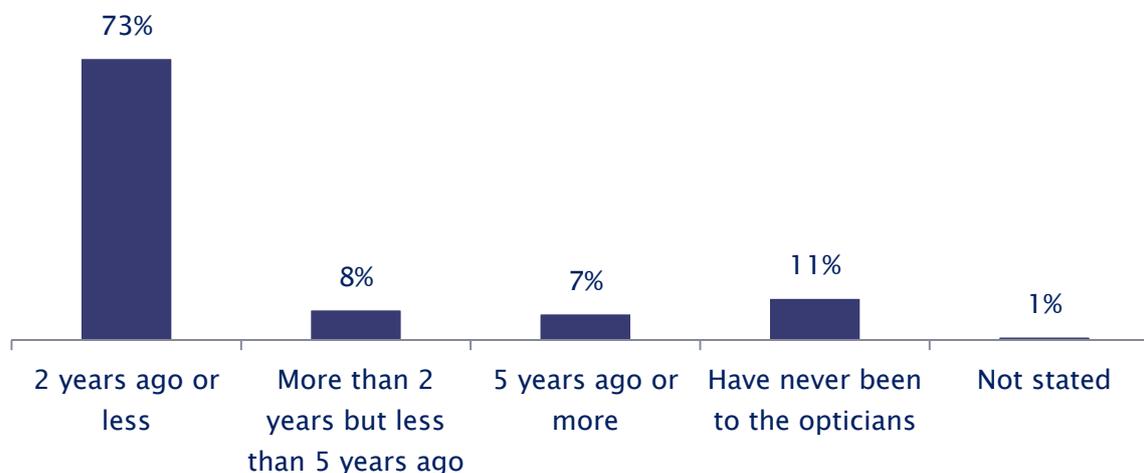
#### Key findings

- Around three quarters (73%) of UK adults say that they last visited an optician two years ago or more recently.
- Less than one in six (15%) say that they last visited an optician more than two years ago but less than five years ago; and a further 7% have visited five years ago or more.
- One in ten (11%) say that they have never been to the opticians.
- Those who have not been to the opticians in the last two years are more likely to be men (19% compared to 11% of women), or younger people (20% of 18–29 year olds compared to 9% of those aged 75+).
- One in ten (10%) of those with a personal or family history of diabetes say that they have never been to an optician, as do 4% of those who report using contact lenses.

#### *Last reported visit to an optician*

Around three quarters (73%) of UK adults say that they last went to the opticians two years ago or more recently, while 15% say that they last visited more than two years ago. Around one in ten (11%) UK adults say that they have never been to the opticians.

### Last reported visit to an optician



*Q5: When was the last time you visited an optician, if ever? [Open numeric response] Base: All UK adults (n=2250)*

Those who have not been to the opticians two years ago or more recently are more likely to be men (19% compared to 11% of women), or younger people (20% of 18–29 year olds compared to 9% of those aged 75+). Welsh adults are more likely to say that they have been to an optician two years ago or more recently (81%) than English adults (72%).

Seven in ten (70%) of those who have never visited an optician report that they have 20:20 vision, suggesting that they are happy with their eyesight and that this is driving their decision not to visit.

One in ten (10%) of those with a personal or family history of diabetes say that they have never been to an optician, despite the increased risk of eye conditions associated with the condition – although it may be that they are instead attending specialist screening services.

In addition, 4% of those who report using contact lenses say that they have never been to the opticians, despite the fact that contact lenses should be fitted by an

appropriately qualified optician and the recommendation that contact lens users have regular check-ups<sup>6</sup>. These are potentially concerning findings for the sector.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Eyehealth/Pages/Contactlensafety.aspx>

#### iv) Drivers for visiting the opticians

*This section covers why patients last went to the opticians and what type of opticians they went to.*

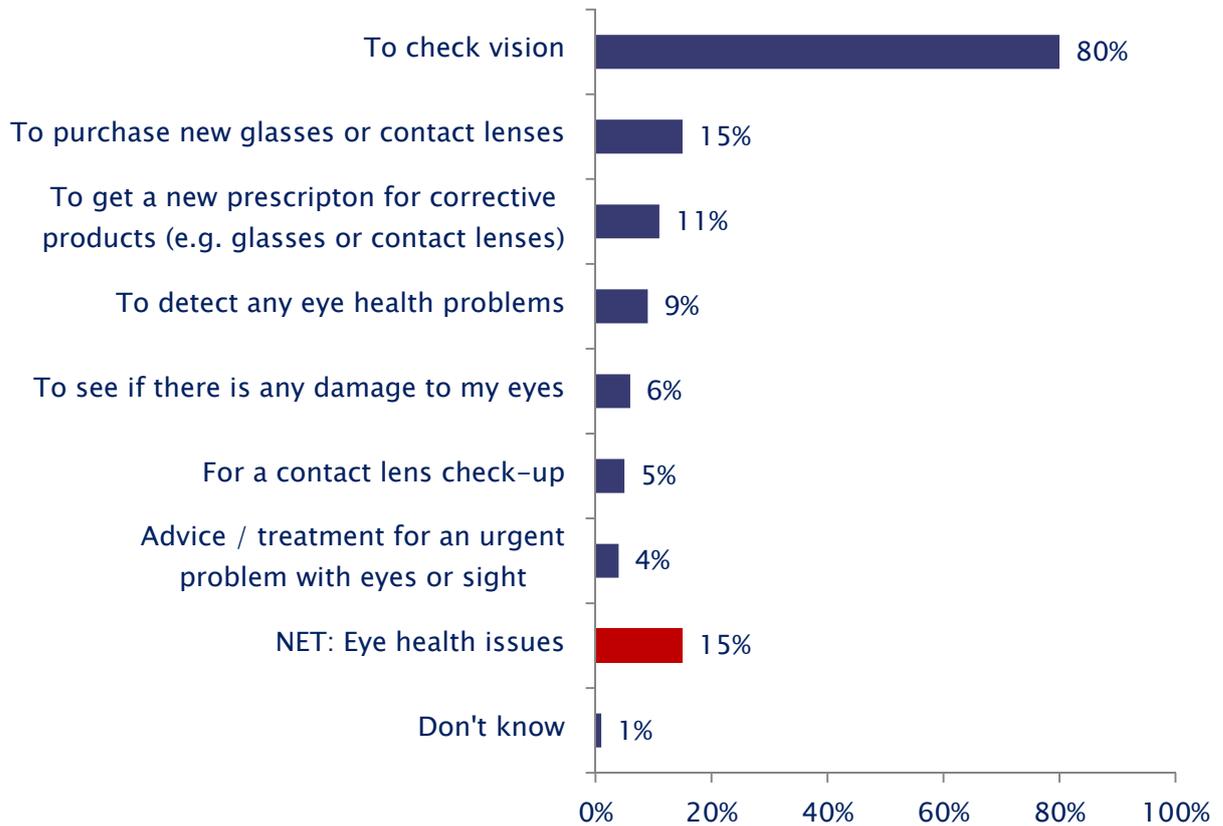
##### Key findings

- Most patients say that they last went to the optician in order to check their vision (80%).
- Attending the optician for an eye health related issue or problem was a secondary reason (15%), as was the purchase of new glasses or contact lenses (15%).
- Two thirds (67%) say that they last went to a chain opticians, while just more than a quarter (27%) report visiting an independent optician.
- Scottish or Northern Irish patients are more likely to say that they last visited an independent optician than English or Welsh patients.

##### *Reason for last visit*

The main reason patients (those who last visited an optician two years ago or more recently) last went to the opticians was to check their vision (80%). Secondary reasons include purchasing new corrective appliances (15%) or for an eye health related issue (15% overall, combining 'to detect any eye health problems', 'to see if there is any damage to my eyes' or 'for advice or treatment for an urgent problem with sight').

### Main reasons for last visit to the opticians



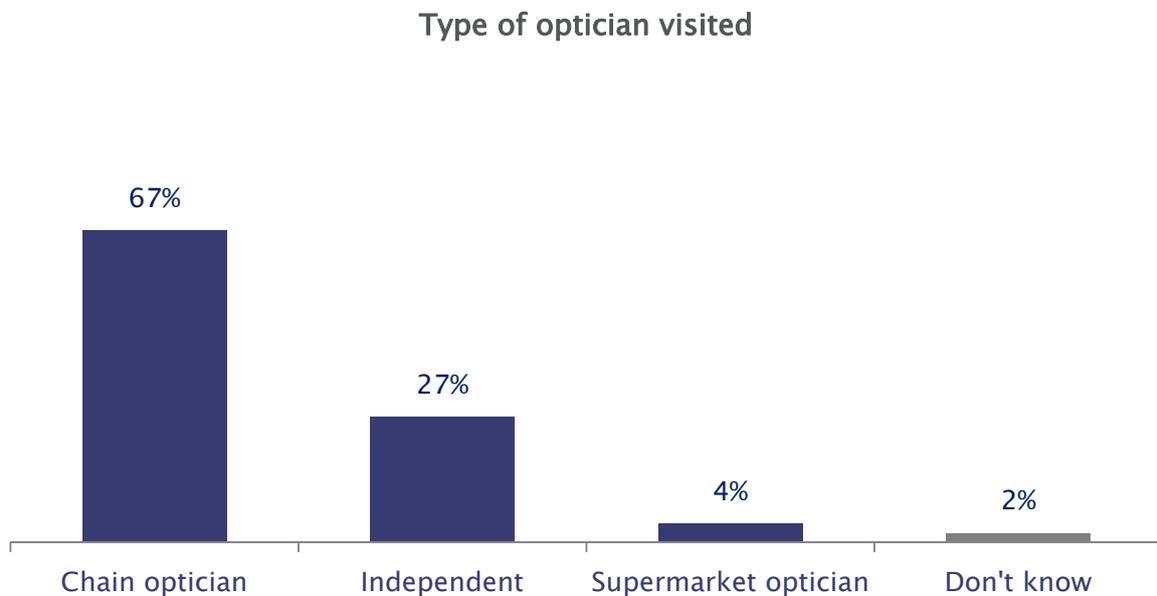
Q11: And what were the main reasons for your last visit to the opticians? [Open response, pre-coded list] Base: All patients (n=1656)

Similar proportions of male and female patients say that they last visited the opticians to check their vision (81% compared to 79%). However, women are more likely to give multiple reasons for their last visit than men. More than one in ten (13%) women say that they went to the opticians to get a new prescription for corrective appliances compared to just 9% of men. In addition, 18% of women chose any of the three options relating to eye health, compared to 10% of men; and 6% of women say that they went for a contact lens check, compared to 3% of men.

Older patients are more likely than younger patients to say that they last went to the opticians specifically to detect any eye health problems. More than one in ten (13%) of those aged 75+ say that this was a main reason for their visit, compared to 8% of 18–29 year olds and 5% of those aged 30–44 years old.

### *Type of optician visited*

Overall, two thirds (67%) of patients say that they last visited a chain optician. More than a quarter (27%) of patients say that they last visited an independent optician, and just 4% say that they visited a supermarket optician.



*Q10: The last time you went to an optician, did you go to an independent optician, or was it one of a chain of opticians? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All patients (n=1656)*

In terms of drivers of this choice, the qualitative research highlights that as opticians are based on the high street, some participants feel less committed to staying with the same store when compared to other healthcare professions. Instead, they are free to shop around for the best deal or for the glasses they like the most.

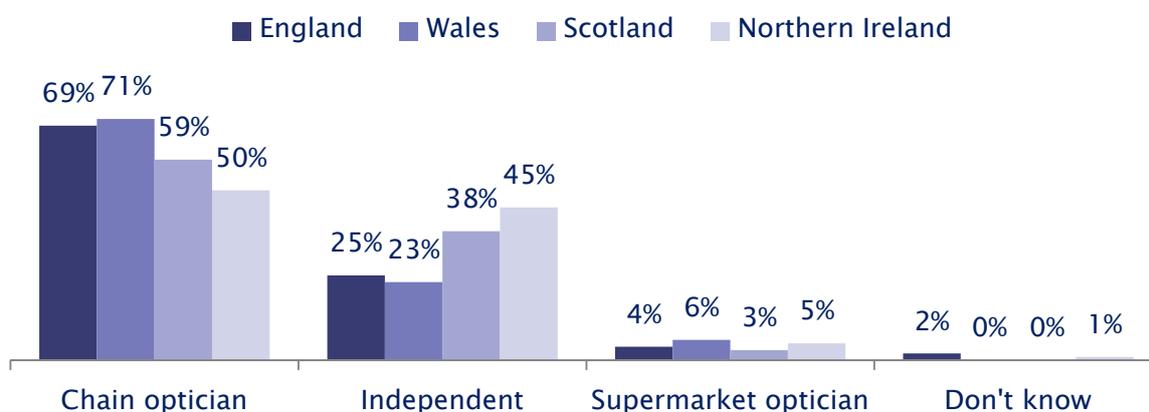
*“These days I view opticians as shops, so shop around... “if [they] haven’t got any glasses we like, let’s have the test elsewhere then”.*

However, there are differences by demographics across both methodological approaches. For example, the qualitative research indicated that older people are more likely to feel a sense of attachment to an individual optician, driving them to visit the same one as they have in the past. However, younger participants were more heavily influenced by convenience and price. The quantitative data indicates that older people are more likely to say that they last visited an independent optician than younger people. A third of those aged 60–74 years old, or aged 75+ (33% and 35% respectively) say that they last visited an independent optician, decreasing to just a fifth (21%) of those aged 18–29.

In addition, the quantitative findings show that men and women are equally likely to say that they last visited an independent optician (28% compared to 26% respectively). However, men are more likely to say that they last visited a supermarket optician (5% compared to 3% respectively), whereas women are more likely than men to say that they last visited a chain optician (70% compared to 64% respectively).

Patients from Scotland (38%) and Northern Ireland (45%) are more likely to say that they last visited an independent optician than patients from the UK overall (27%); and are less likely to say that they last visited a chain optician (59% and 50% respectively, compared to 67% overall).

Type of optician visited: By nation



Q10: The last time you went to an optician, did you go to an independent optician, or was it one of a chain of opticians? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All English patients (n=1381); All Welsh patients (n=81); All Scottish patients (n=121); All Northern Irish patients (n=73)

## v) Barriers to visiting the opticians

*This section covers why non-patients have not been to the opticians in the last two years.*

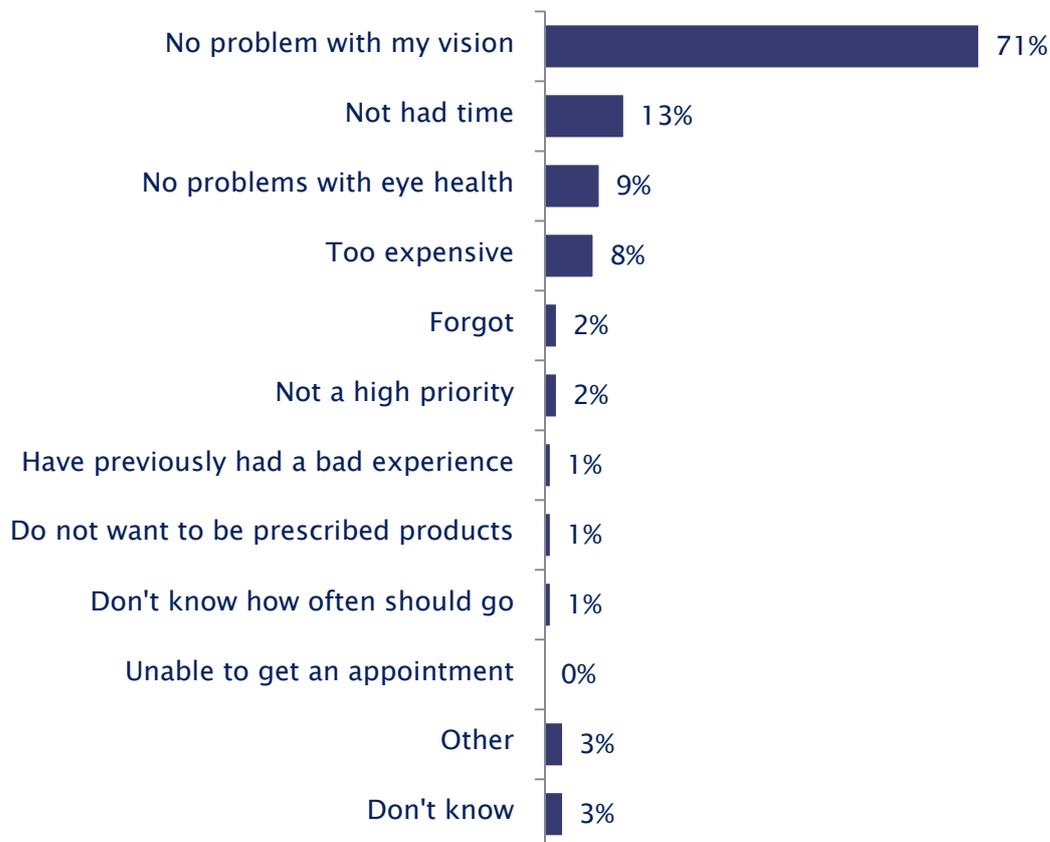
### Key findings

- Seven in ten (71%) of those who have not been to the opticians in the last two years say that this is because they do not feel there is a problem with their vision, and a further 9% report not having problems with their eye health as a reason for non-attendance.
- Lack of time is a factor for 13%, ahead of having no perceived problems with eye health (unrelated to health) which is a factor for 9%, and price, which is a barrier for fewer than one in ten (8%).
- Very few (1%) report not attending because of previous issues or problems with an optician.

### *Reasons for not visiting the opticians*

The main reason why people have not been to the opticians in the last two years is because they have had no problem with their vision (71%). In terms of secondary reasons, more than one in ten (13%) say that they have not had time, around one in ten (9%) say that they have not had issues with eye health, and a similar proportion (8%) say it is too expensive.

### Reasons for not going to the opticians in the last two years



*Q9: What were your reasons for not going to the optician in the last two years? [Open response, pre-coded list] Base: All non-patients (n=579)*

A higher proportion of men than women report that they have not been to the opticians in the last two years because they have no problem with their vision (74% compared to 66%). Those who have glasses with a prescription (16%) are more likely than those who have reading glasses without a prescription (8%) or no products (5%) to cite the cost of going to the optician as the reason for not having been in the last two years.

## vi) Use of corrective appliances and purchasing behaviour

*This section covers use and purchasing of corrective appliances among UK adults.*

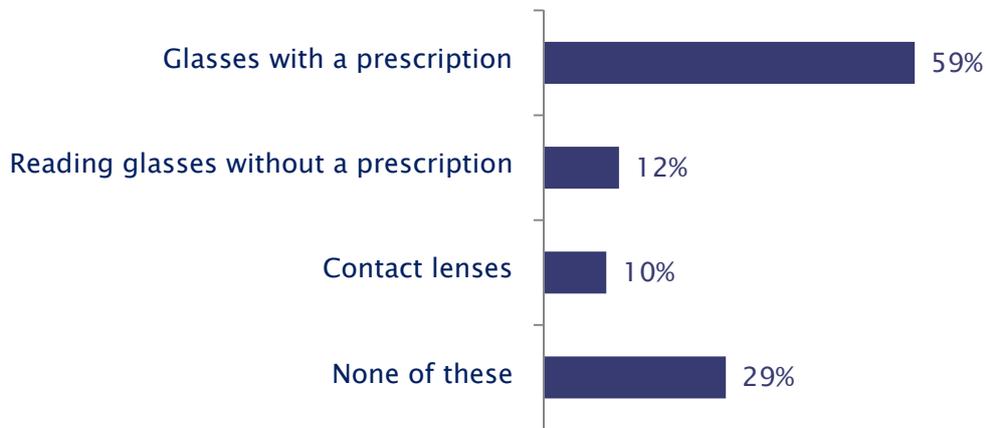
### Key findings

- Most (70%) UK adults who have ever visited an optician say that they have been prescribed either glasses or contact lenses.
- Three in five (59%) UK adults say that they use glasses with a prescription, just over one in ten (12%) use reading glasses without a prescription and one in ten (10%) say that they use contact lenses.
- Most of those who use corrective appliances say that they purchased their products less than two years ago, and are most likely to say that they purchased their products from the opticians in which they had their eye test.

### *Use of specific types of corrective appliances*

Six in ten (59%) UK adults say that they use glasses with a prescription to improve their eyesight, while around one in ten report using reading glasses without a prescription or contact lenses (12% and 10% respectively). Three in ten (29%) say that they do not use any products to improve their eyesight.

### Use of products to improve eyesight

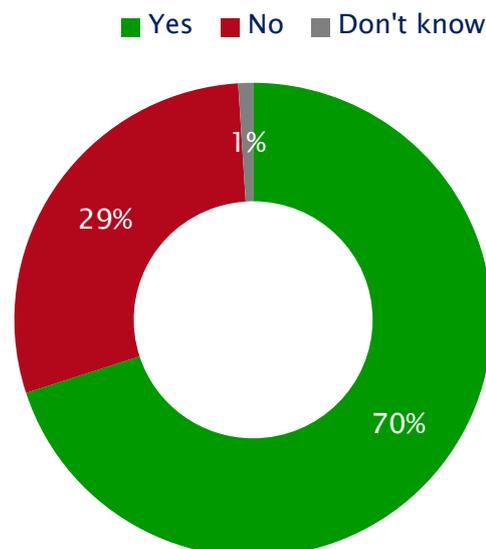


Q18: Do you currently use any products such as glasses or contact lenses to improve your eyesight?  
 [Open response, pre-coded list] Base: All UK adults (n=2250)

### Prescriptions for corrective appliances

Seven in ten (70%) UK adults who have ever been to the optician say that they hold a prescription for glasses or contact lenses, possibly reflecting the finding that UK adults say that they are most likely to visit an optician if there is a problem with their vision.

### Those with a prescription for products



Q17: Do you currently have a prescription for glasses or contact lenses? [Open response, pre-coded list]  
 Base: All who have ever visited an optician (n=1994)

A greater proportion of women than men say that they have a prescription for glasses or contact lenses (75% compared to 64% respectively), corresponding to the fact that women are also more likely to have visited an optician two years ago or more recently.

More than three quarters (77%) of those who went to the opticians two years ago or more recently have a prescription for either glasses or contact lenses, and around half (49%) of those who went to the optician more than two but less than five years ago have a prescription for glasses or contact lenses.

### *Products purchased most recently*

The vast majority of UK adults who use prescription glasses or contact lenses say that they purchased glasses with a prescription most recently (86%).

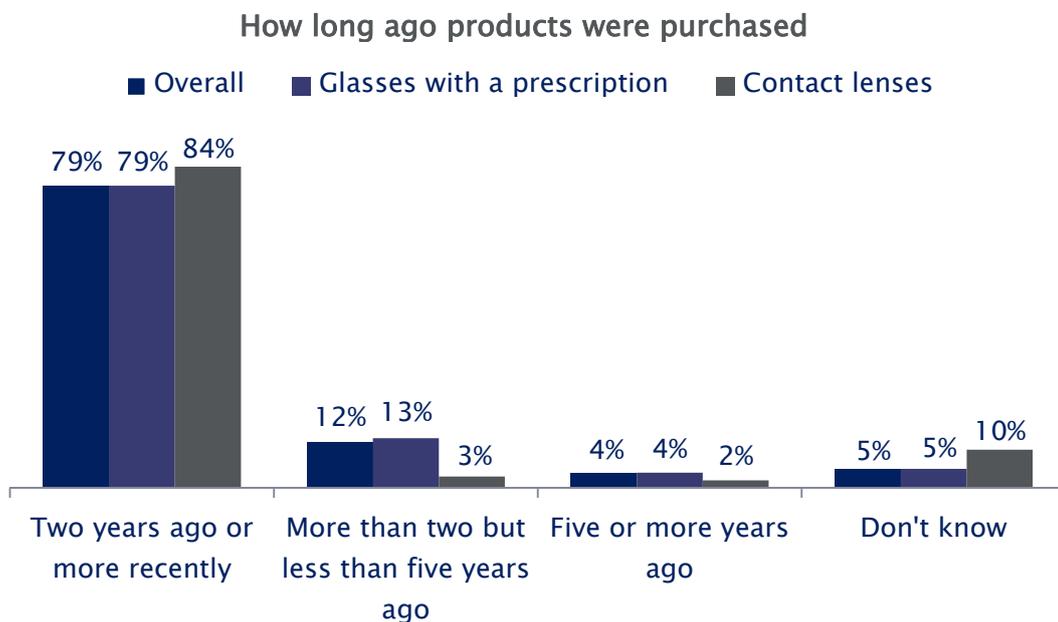


*Q19: And which of these did you buy most recently? [Open response, pre-coded list] Base: All who use prescription glasses or contact lenses (n=1373)*

### *How long ago products were purchased*

A majority of those who use corrective appliances (glasses or contact lenses), and know which they purchased most recently, say that they purchased the corrective appliances two years ago or more recently (79%).

Those who last purchased contact lenses are more likely to say that they bought them two years ago or more recently (84%) than those who last bought prescription glasses (79%). This may potentially be influenced by two factors: that contact lens wearers are generally advised to have an aftercare appointment once a year; and that contact lenses can only be worn for a limited period of time, and as such need to be bought more frequently. One in ten (10%) of those who most recently purchased contact lenses say that they don't know when they last bought them.



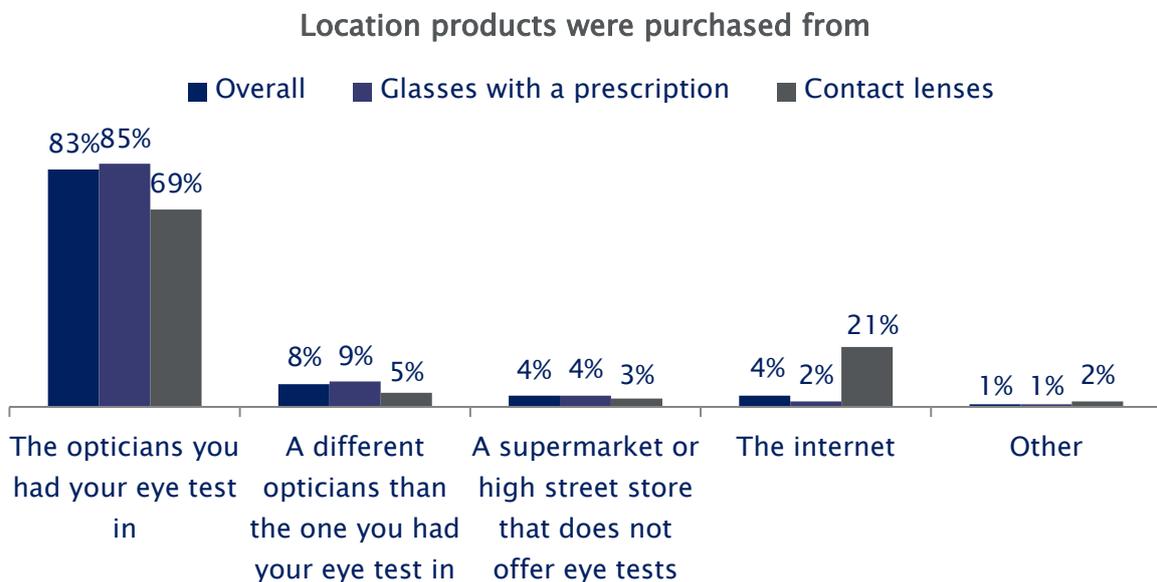
*Q20: And when did you last purchase those glasses with prescription / contact lenses? [Open numeric response] Base: All who have glasses or contact lenses and can recall which they purchased most recently (and answered the question) (n=1341) – All who most recently purchased prescription glasses (n=1177); All who most recently purchased contact lenses (n=164)*

Overall, purchasing behaviour appears to be related to optician visits. Nearly nine in ten (87%) of those who last went to the opticians two years ago or more recently purchased their corrective appliances in the same time period. Three quarters (76%) of those who last visited the opticians more than two but less than five years ago purchased their corrective appliances in the same time period.

### Location of purchase

The majority of those who have glasses or contact lenses and know which they purchased most recently say that they purchased these from the opticians that conducted their eye test (83%). Fewer than one in ten reportedly purchased their products in a different optician to the one that conducted their eye test (8%), from a supermarket or high street store that does not offer eye tests (4%), or from the internet (4%).

UK adults who most recently purchased prescription glasses, and those who most recently purchased contact lenses, are each most likely to say that they bought them from the opticians they had their eye test in (85% and 69% respectively)<sup>7</sup>. However, one in five (21%) of those who most recently purchased contact lenses say that they bought their contact lenses from the internet, compared to only 2% of those who most recently purchased glasses.



*Q21: Where did you purchase your glasses with prescription or contact lenses from? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All who have glasses or contact lenses and can recall which they purchased most recently (n=1341) – All who most recently purchased prescription glasses (n=1177); All who most recently purchased contact lenses (n=164)*

<sup>7</sup> In interpreting this finding it is worth noting that either of these groups may use a combination of corrective appliances, and this analysis only looks at the corrective appliance purchased most recently

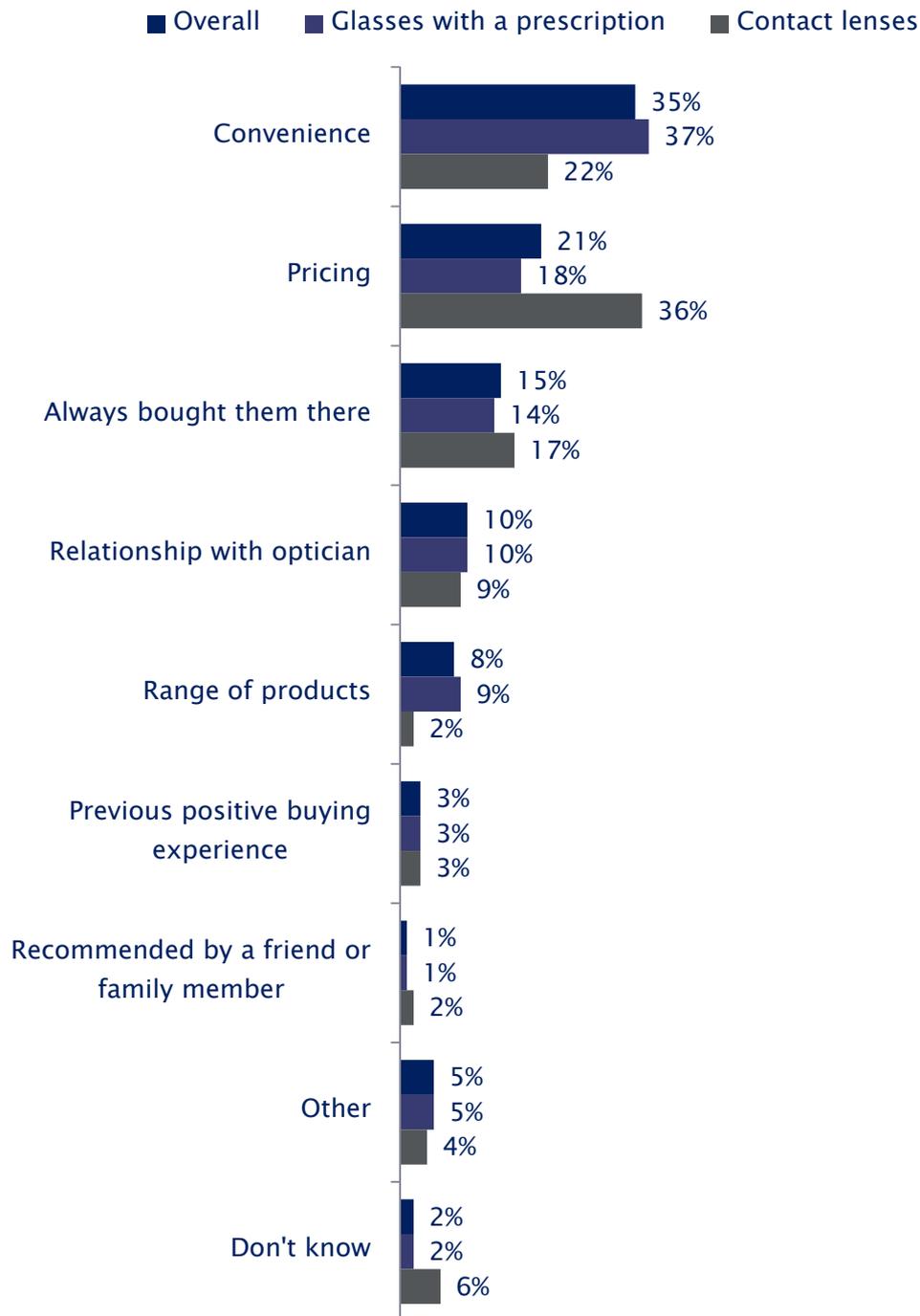
Younger people are more likely to say that they purchased products from the internet than older people (8% aged 18–29 and 9% aged 30–44, compared to 1% aged 45–59, 2% aged 60–74 and no respondents and 1% aged 75+). In addition to this, one in ten (10%) of those with young children in their household aged 8 or under say that they purchased products from the internet, compared to 3% with older children aged 9–18 in the household who say the same.

Although the small sample means that these results are indicative rather than definitive, those who say that they are not confident in receiving a high standard of care from opticians are more likely to say that they purchased products from the internet (15%) than those who are confident (4%).

#### *Reasons for purchasing from that location*

The main reason cited for purchasing glasses with a prescription or contact lenses from a particular location is convenience (35%), followed by price (21%) and habit (15%), while for 10% the relationship with the optician is cited as a driver.

### Reasons for purchasing products from that location



Q22: What is the main reason that you purchased your glasses with prescription or contact lenses from there? [Open response, pre-coded list] Base: All who can recall where they purchased their glasses or contact lenses (n=1337) - All who most recently purchased prescription glasses and can recall where they purchased them (n=1174); All who most recently purchased contact lenses and can recall where they purchased them (n=163)

This is in line with the finding from the qualitative research, where convenience and cost were the primary factors influencing where patients purchase their products.

*“A lot of it is price. And when I was younger before I had children when I first started driving and stuff, I used to work in the town and I had the opticians in town because it was convenient to where I worked. But now I’ve got family ... I won’t go where it’s going to cost me more money.”*

*“For me, the eye test would be separate from purchasing glasses... I’d think I could shop online and get it cheaper there.”*

Although based on a relatively small base size (n=53), pricing is the biggest driver of buying products from the internet (83%), compared to those who bought them from a supermarket or high street store (36%), a different opticians than the one they had their eye test in (35%) or the opticians they had their eye test in (15%).

Compared to this, almost two in five (38%) of those who bought their products from the opticians which conducted their eye test say that convenience is a driver of purchasing from that location.

Those who most recently bought glasses are more likely than those who most recently bought contact lenses to cite convenience as the main reason that they bought them from the location that they did (37% compared to 22%). Conversely, those who most recently bought contact lenses are most likely to say that the main reason for purchasing them in the location they did is pricing (36% compared to 18% who most recently bought prescription glasses).

## vii) Satisfaction with experience of the opticians

*This section covers how satisfied patients were with their last visit, reported reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and satisfaction specifically with eye tests.*

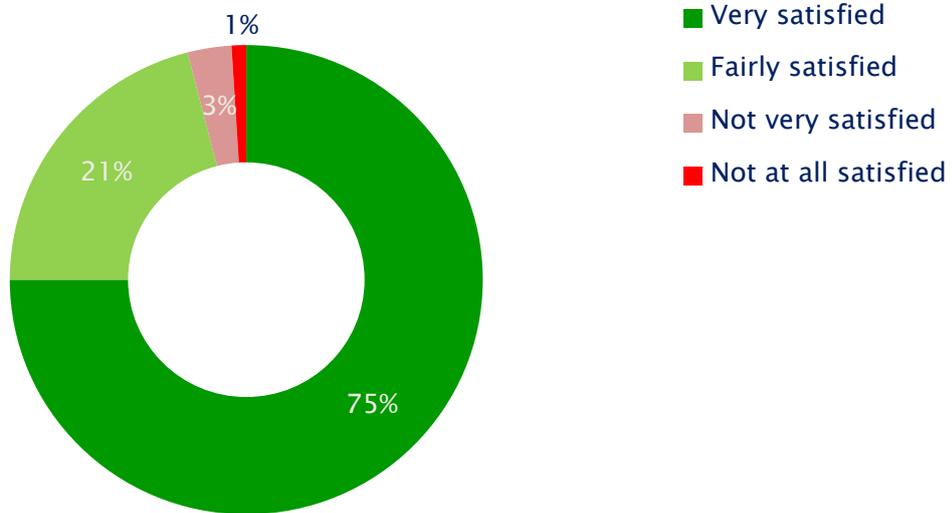
### Key findings

- Most patients say that they were satisfied with their last visit to the opticians (96% satisfied, of which 75% were very satisfied).
- The main reason cited for satisfaction is a good quality examination or that the issue was corrected (32% give this as their main reason). In addition, the staff being polite and friendly (12% main reason), or having good communication skills (7% main reason), contribute to satisfaction levels.
- Among the small minority (3%) who were not very or not at all satisfied, reasons cited for this include that the product did not work, it did not correct the problem or was of poor quality.

### *Overall satisfaction with visit*

Three quarters (75%) of patients say that they were very satisfied, and one in five (21%) say that they were fairly satisfied with their overall experience of the opticians. Just 3% in total say that they were either not very or not at all satisfied.

### Satisfaction with overall experience



*Q12: How satisfied or otherwise were you with your overall experience of the opticians? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All patients (n=1656)*

#### ***Reasons for satisfaction***

The main reason for satisfaction among patients is a good quality examination or an issue being corrected, with a third (32%) of those who are satisfied citing this as the main reason for being satisfied with their overall experience at the opticians.

Reasons for satisfaction – showing all where main reason is > 1%

- Main + other reasons for satisfaction
- Main reasons for satisfaction
- Other reasons for satisfaction



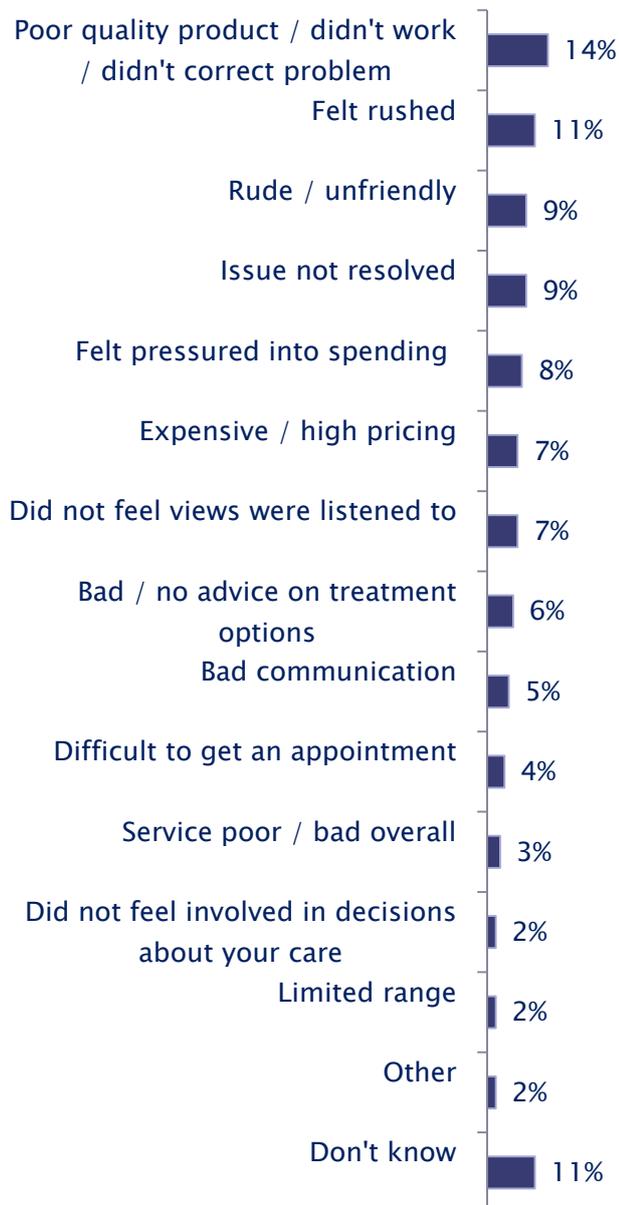
Q13: What was the main reason why you were satisfied with your overall experience of the opticians? And for which other reasons were you satisfied? [Open response, pre-coded list] Base: All patients who were satisfied with their overall experience at the opticians (n=1595)

**Reasons for not being satisfied**

The minority who were not very or not at all satisfied (3% overall) cited a range of reasons for this, with the main one referring to a poor quality product / product that

didn't work / didn't correct the problem (14%). Other reasons given include someone being rude or unfriendly (9%), the issue not being resolved (9%), or feeling pressured into spending (8%). However, these data should be treated as indicative rather than definitive as a result of the small base size (n=57).

### Reasons for not being satisfied\*



Q14: What was the main reason why you were not satisfied with your overall experience of the opticians? [Open response, pre-coded list] Base: All patients who were not satisfied with their overall experience at the opticians (n=57)

\* This data should be treated as indicative rather than definitive due to the small base size.

The theme of feeling pressured also emerged in the qualitative research, where some participants felt that opticians are more commercial than many of the other medical professions explored. In particular, some participants described feeling pressured by front-of-house staff into buying things that they do not need, although they also tended to see this as largely separate from their eye test.

*“They don’t say would you like to have new lenses put in your glasses? They never say that to me, they always offer me new glasses. Sometimes if there is nothing wrong with the glasses, sometimes putting the new lenses in would be cheaper for me.”*

### **Experience of positive outcomes tested**

After exploring reasons for satisfaction unprompted, survey participants were asked to rate their last visit to an optician on a number of metrics (on a scale of 0–10 where 0=not at all and 10=to a great extent). Between 46% and 57% of patients say that they experienced each of the positive outcomes tested ‘to a great extent’.

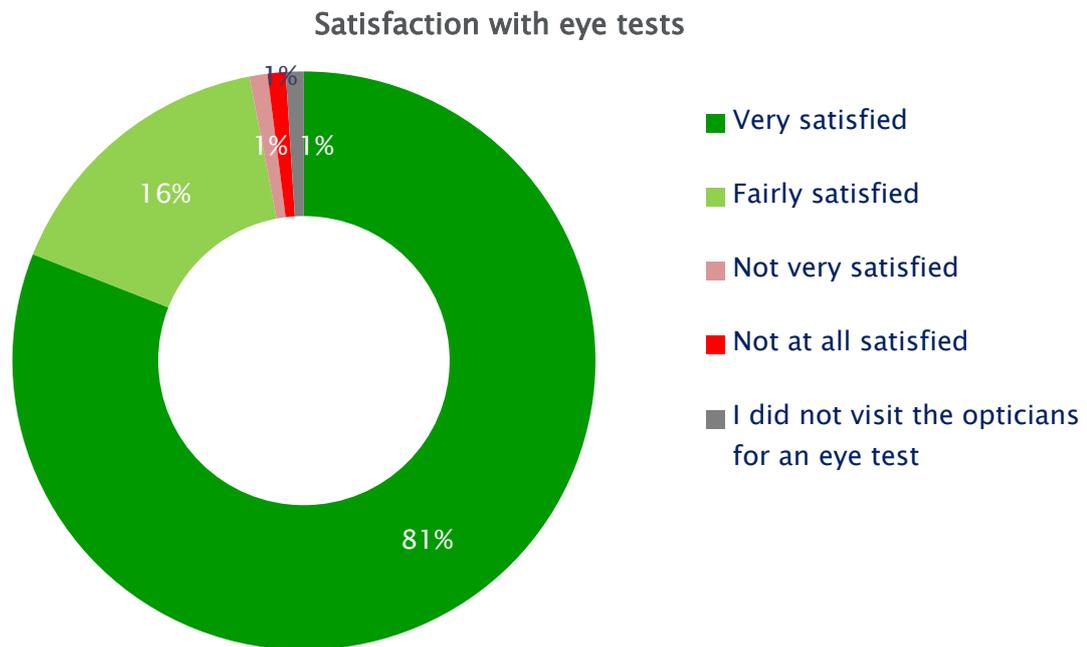
#### **Experiences at the opticians**



*Q15: Thinking about your experience the last time you went to the optician, to what extent, if at all, did you experience each of the following? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All patients (n=1656)*

*Satisfaction with eye tests*

Patients tend to be very satisfied with their eye test specifically, reflecting the high levels of satisfaction with their experience overall. Almost all (97%) patients say that they were satisfied, including four in five (81%) who report that they were very satisfied with their eye test.



*Q16: How satisfied or otherwise were you with your eye test specifically - by which I mean when the optician examined your eyes, rather than the experience of booking an appointment or selecting and purchasing products? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All patients (n=1656)*

## viii) Satisfaction with purchasing corrective appliances

*This section covers levels of satisfaction with purchasing corrective appliances, and reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction, among UK adults who have purchased corrective appliances and know where they purchased them.*

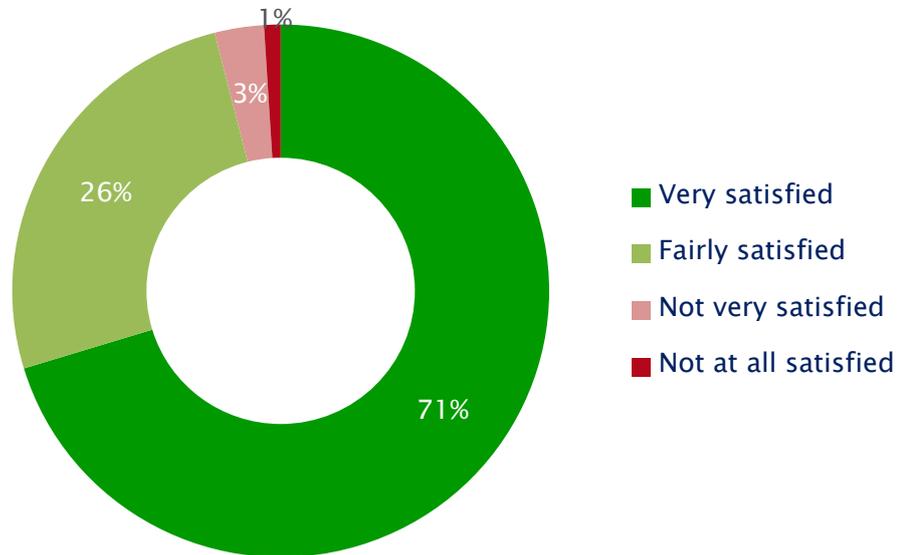
### Key findings

- Almost all UK adults (97%) who have purchased corrective appliances and recall where they purchased them say that they are satisfied with them, and seven in ten (71%) are very satisfied.
- The main reasons cited for satisfaction with purchasing products are helpful staff (17%), reasonable pricing (15%) and a good product range (13%).
- Among the small minority who were not satisfied, the main reasons cited are that the incorrect lenses were fitted or the wrong prescription given, as well as criticisms about the advice provided or costs.

### *Satisfaction with purchasing corrective appliances*

Almost all UK adults who have purchased glasses or contact lenses and recall where they purchased them say that they were satisfied with the purchasing experience (97%). Seven in ten (71%) say that they were very satisfied with the experience, and a quarter (26%) say that they were fairly satisfied with the experience. There are no differences in satisfaction in the purchasing experience between different purchasing channels.

### Satisfaction with purchasing glasses or contact lenses



*Q23: How satisfied or otherwise were you with your experience of buying your glasses or contact lenses? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All who have purchased glasses or contact lenses and can recall where they purchased them from (n=1337)*

#### ***Reasons for satisfaction with purchasing***

Helpful staff (17%) are the main reason for being satisfied with the experience of buying glasses or contact lenses, followed by reasonable pricing or good value for money (15%) and a good product range (13%).

### Reasons for satisfaction with purchasing

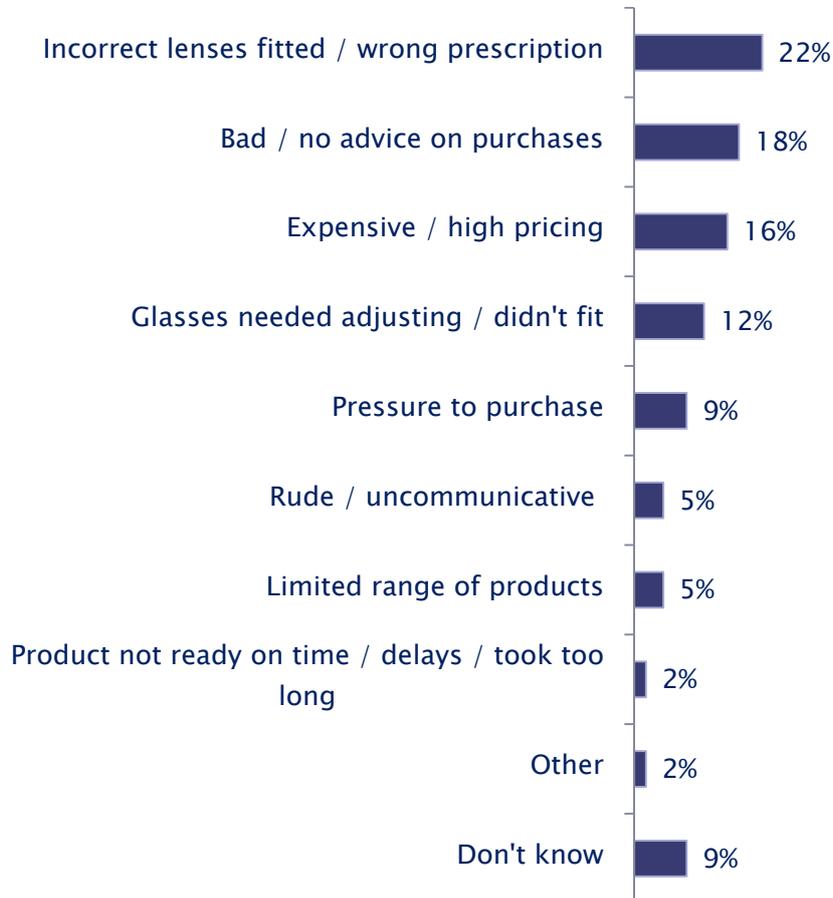


*Q24: And what was the main reason why you were satisfied with the experience of buying your glasses or contact lenses? [Open response, coded from verbatim comments] Base: All who are satisfied with their purchasing experience (n=1291)*

### ***Reasons for not being satisfied with purchasing***

A small minority (3%) report being not very or not at all satisfied with the experience of buying their glasses or contact lenses. Although the small base size (n=44) means that these results should be treated with caution, the main reasons for this appear to be incorrect lenses being fitted or the wrong prescription.

Reasons for dissatisfaction with purchasing\*



Q25: And what was the main reason why you were dissatisfied with the experience of buying your glasses or contact lenses? [Open response, coded from verbatim comments] Base: All dissatisfied with their purchasing experience (n=44)

\* This data should be treated as indicative rather than definitive due to the small base size.

## 2. STANDARDS, COMPLAINTS AND REGULATION

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### i) Confidence in standards of care

*This section covers how confident UK adults are of receiving high standards of care from opticians, and what factors affect confidence in the profession.*

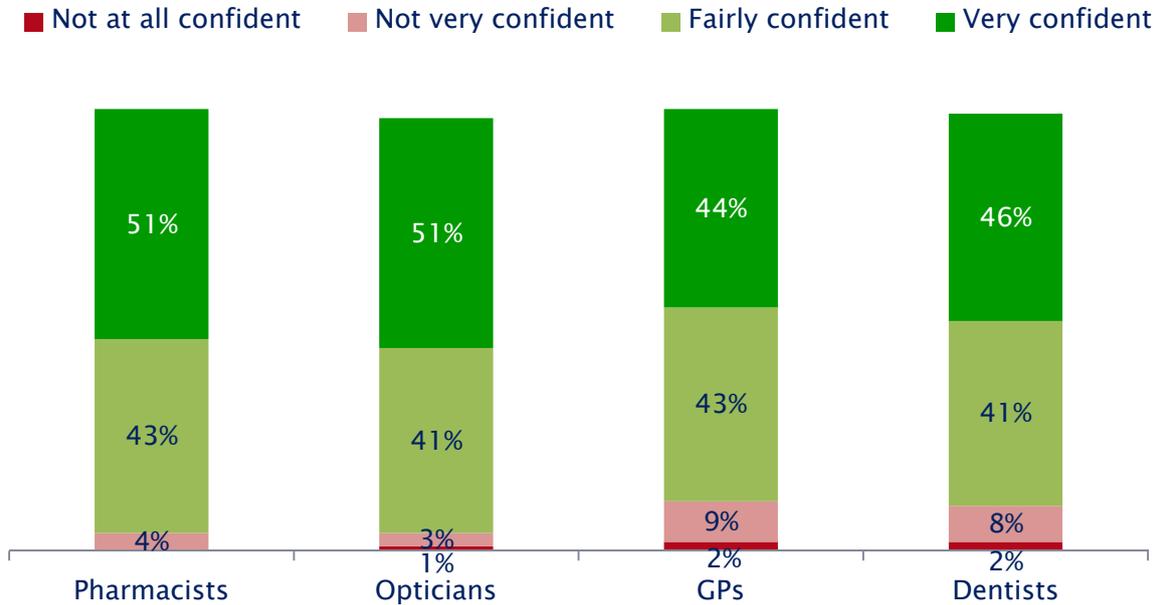
#### Key findings

- The majority of UK adults are confident they will receive high standards of care from opticians (92% confident overall, with 51% very confident).
- Of the four types of healthcare professionals tested, opticians are second to pharmacists in terms of public confidence (92% compared to 94%).
- Nine attributes were tested in terms of their potential impact on public confidence in standards of care. Each of these are very important to the majority of UK adults, with qualifications (90% very important), communication (78%) and the quality of treatment (80%) being the most important overall. Regulation (68% very important), although still important, receives a lower overall rating.
- Those more likely to be confident in standards of care provided by opticians include older people (66% of those aged 75+ vs. 41% of those aged 18–29); white adults (93% compared to BME adults 88%); patients (58% compared to 37% who last visited more than two but less than five years ago and 33% who last visited five or more years ago).
- Welsh (61%) and Scottish adults (59%) are more likely than UK adults overall (51%) to say that they are very confident of receiving a high standard of care from opticians.

#### *Confidence in standards of care*

The majority of UK adults are confident of receiving a high standard of care from pharmacists (94%), opticians (92%), GPs (88%) and dentists (87%).

### Confidence of receiving high standards of care

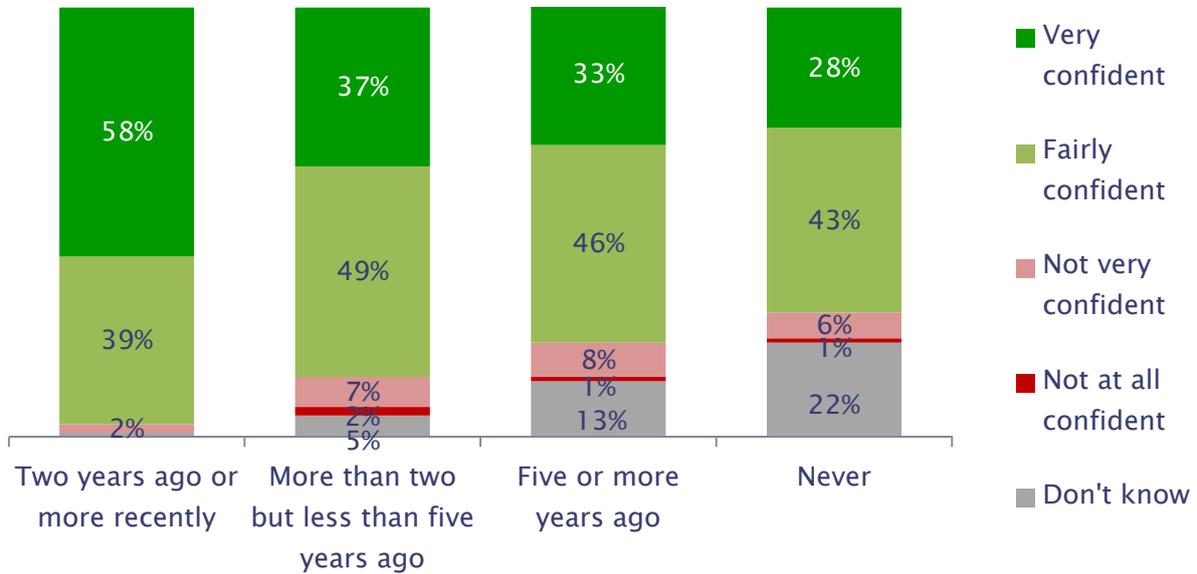


Q1: How confident or otherwise are you of receiving a high standard of care from each of the following healthcare professions? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All UK adults (n=2250)

Confidence in the standard of care provided by opticians varies by key demographics. Specifically, older people are more likely to be confident than younger people; two thirds (66%) of those aged 75+ are very confident compared to just two in five (41%) of those aged 18–29. Further, white adults are more likely to be confident (93%) than BME adults (88%).

There is also a relationship between more recent contact with opticians and increased levels of confidence in high standards of care. Those who last visited an optician two years ago or more recently are more likely to say that they are very confident of receiving a high standard of care (58%) compared to those who last visited more than two but less than five years ago (37%) and those who last visited five or more years ago (33%).

Confidence of receiving high standards of care from opticians: By most recent visit

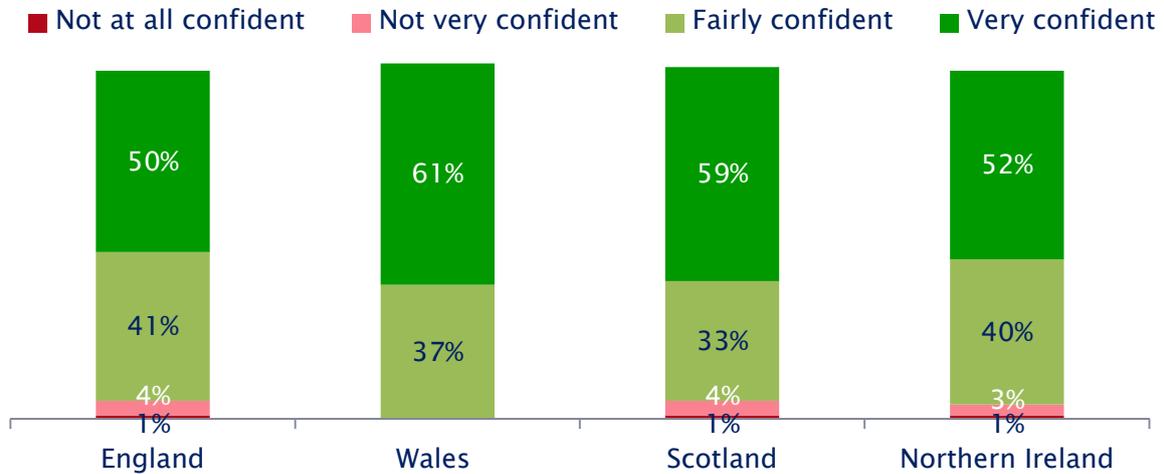


Q1: How confident or otherwise are you of receiving a high standard of care from each of the following healthcare professions? Opticians. [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All who last visited the opticians two years ago or more recently (n=1656); All who last visited the opticians more than two but less than five years ago (n=182); All who last visited the opticians five or more years ago (n=156); All who have never visited the opticians (n=241).

Similarly, those who use glasses with a prescription (57%) or contact lenses (60%) are more likely to say that they are very confident in receiving a high standard of care from opticians than those who use reading glasses without a prescription (49%) or who do not use any products (41%).

In terms of differences between nations, Welsh (61%) and Scottish adults (59%) are more likely than UK adults overall (51%) to say that they are very confident of receiving a high standard of care from opticians.

### Confidence of receiving high standards of care from opticians: By nation

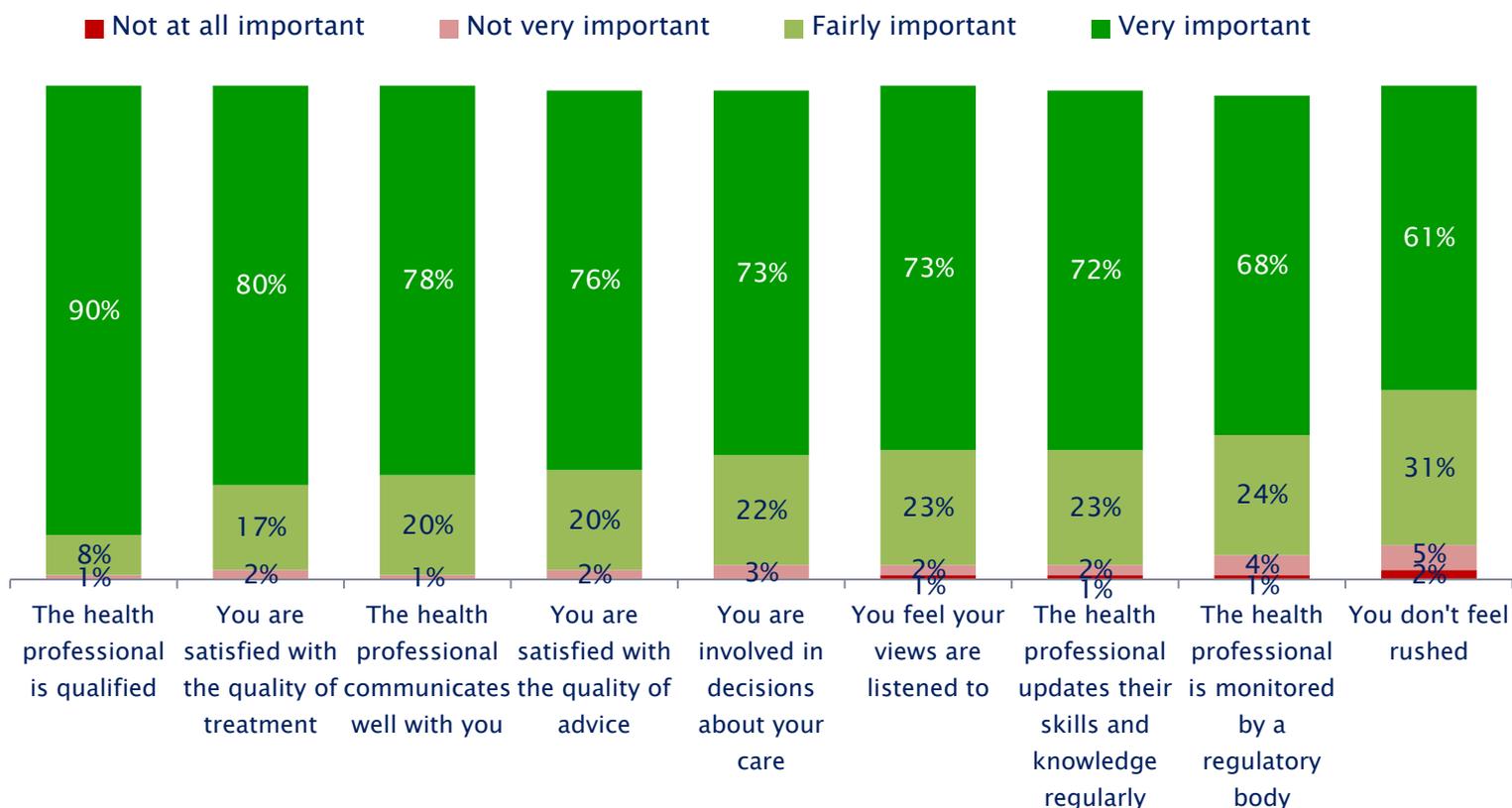


Q1: How confident or otherwise are you of receiving a high standard of care from each of the following healthcare professions? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All English adults (n=1901); All Welsh adults (n=100); All Scottish adults (n=154); All Northern Irish adults (n=95)

#### Drivers of confidence

Two thirds (68%) of UK adults say that a health professional being monitored by a regulatory body is very important in giving them confidence in the standard of care they provide. However, this is relatively less important in giving the public confidence in the standard of care provided, compared to other factors such as qualifications (90% very important), good communications (78% very important), or attributes relating to satisfaction with the quality of the experience.

### Important attributes in giving confidence



Q2: When you go to see a healthcare professional, how important or otherwise is each of the following in giving you confidence in the standard of care they provide? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All UK adults (n=2250)

Older people are more likely than younger people to say that the health professional being monitored by a regulatory body is very important; more than seven in ten (72%) of those aged 75+ say this, compared to around half (54%) of those aged 18–29. There is consensus between nations about the importance of each factor in giving them confidence in the standard of care provided, however Welsh adults are less likely than UK adults overall to say that the healthcare professional being monitored by a regulatory body is important in giving them confidence in the standard of care provided (87% important vs. 93% important respectively).

Those who are not confident in the standard of care provided by opticians are less likely to say that it is very important that the health professional is monitored by a



regulatory body than those who are confident (53% compared to 69% respectively), although this is based on a small base size (n=88 not confident).

## ii) Complaints about opticians

*This section covers data from all UK adults who have ever visited an optician, and explores reported behaviour regarding complaining or considering complaining about opticians; as well as analysis of whether all UK adults would be confident in finding information about how to complain should they need to.*

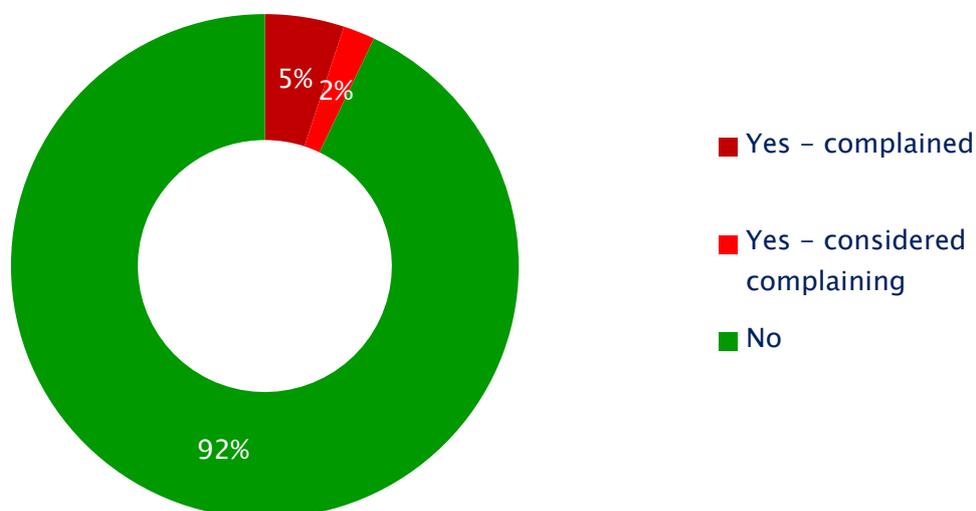
### Key findings

- More than nine in ten (92%) of those who have ever visited the opticians say that they have not complained or considered complaining about their experience.
- A quarter (26%) of UK adults say that they are either not very confident or not at all confident that they would be able to find information about how to complain about an optician.
- Three in ten (31%) UK adults say that they are not very or not at all confident that they would be able to find information to check the qualifications of an optician.

### *Reported complaints behaviour*

One in twenty (5%) of those who have ever visited an optician say that they have complained about an experience with an optician, and a further 2% say that they have considered complaining.

### Reported complaints behaviour



*Q26: Have you ever complained or considered complaining about an experience with an optician? [Open response, pre-coded list] Base: All who have ever visited the opticians (n=1994)*

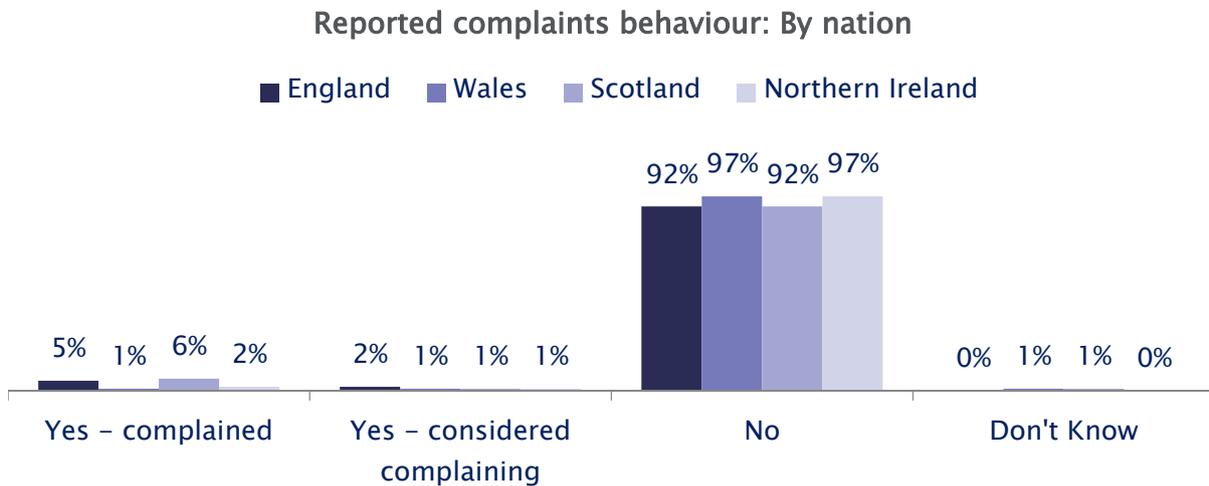
While still a small minority, those from social grades A (8%) or B (6%) are more likely to say that they have complained about an experience with an optician than those from lower social grades (decreasing to just 2% of those from social grade E).

Previous negative experience with an optician is related to overall confidence in the profession. Those who are not confident that opticians are regulated effectively are more likely to say that they have either complained or have considered complaining (12% and 8% respectively), compared to those who are confident that the profession is regulated effectively (5% and 2% respectively).

Adults who currently use contact lenses or prescription glasses more commonly report that they have complained (9% and 7%) or considered complaining (6% and 3%) about an experience with an optician, compared to 1% and 0% respectively for those who do not currently use any products.

Scottish (6%) and English (5%) adults who have ever visited the opticians are more likely to say that they have complained than Welsh adults (1%). Similar proportions of those from all four nations say that they have considered complaining. Welsh adults

are more likely to say that they have not complained or considered complaining (97%) compared to English adults (92%).

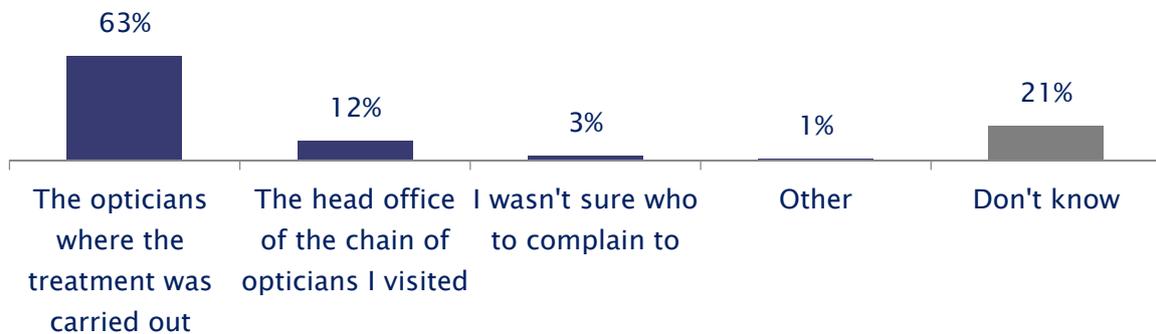


*Q26: Have you ever complained or considered complaining about an experience with an optician? [Open response, pre-coded list] Base: All who have ever been to the opticians in England (n=1670); Wales (n=94); Scotland (n=143); Northern Ireland (n=87).*

### ***Where complaints were made***

UK adults who have either complained or considered complaining about an experience at the opticians are most likely to do so at the opticians where the treatment was carried out (63%). Just 3% say that they weren't sure who to complain to, however a further 21% answered 'don't know' to this question. No UK adults in this survey report that they complained or considered complaining to the General Optical Council.

### Where complaints were or would be directed



*Q27: Thinking about the most recent time you complained or considered complaining, who did you complain or consider complaining to? [Open response, pre-coded list] Base: All who have ever complained or considered complaining (n=143)*

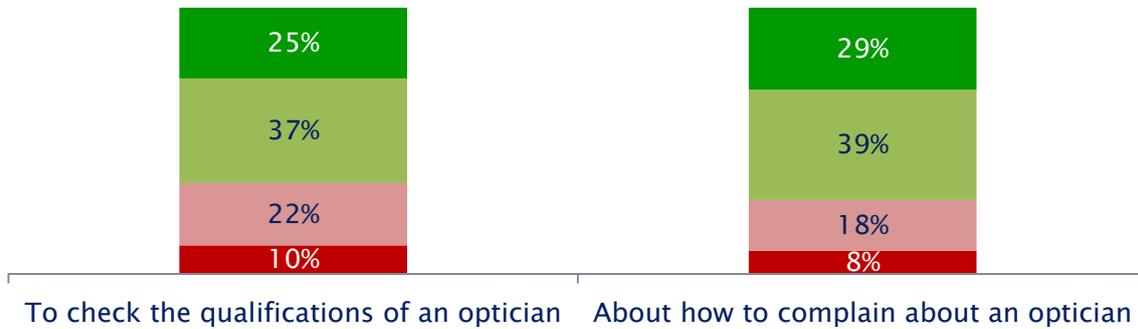
### ***Confidence in finding information***

More than three in five (62%) UK adults say that they are very or fairly confident that they would be able to find information on where to check the qualifications of an optician. Additionally, two thirds (68%) say that they are very or fairly confident that they would be able to find information about how to complain about an optician.

However, three in ten (31%) say that they are either not at all or not very confident that they would be able to find information on where to check the qualifications of an optician, and a quarter (26%) say the same about how to complain about an optician.

### Confidence in finding information

■ Not at all confident ■ Not very confident ■ Fairly confident ■ Very confident



*Q28: How confident, if at all, are you that you would be able to find information in the situations listed below? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All UK adults (n=2250)*

Those who lack confidence about how to find information on how to complain about an optician are more likely to be:

- Female (27% compared to 24% of men);
- Younger (26% of those aged 18–29 compared to 19% of those aged 75+);
- Not confident in opticians (43% compared to 25% who are confident);
- Not satisfied with their overall experience of opticians (55% compared to 24%);
- Not satisfied with their eye test (55% compared to 24%);

Northern Irish adults are more likely to be confident on this point (58%), compared to UK adults overall (68%).

Younger adults are less confident than older adults in finding information to check the qualifications of an optician (43% of those aged 18–29 are not confident, compared to 17% of those aged 75+). There are no significant differences in confidence by nation for finding information to check the qualifications of an optician.

Past experience at the opticians also has an effect on public confidence in being able to source information on where to check the qualifications of opticians. Those who

were not satisfied with their overall experience of the opticians are more likely to say that they are not confident about being able to source this information than those who were satisfied (53% compared to 30%). The same is true of those who were not satisfied with their eye test (57% compared to 30% of those who were satisfied).

### iii) Perceptions of qualifications and standards

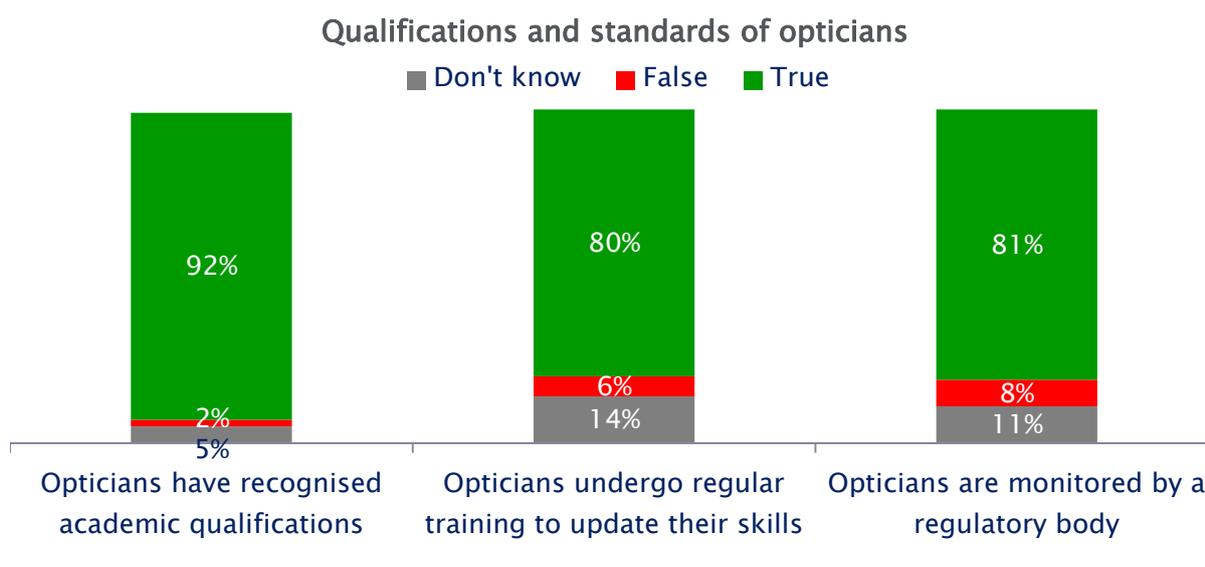
*This section covers UK adults' perceptions about opticians' qualifications and the standards they are subject to.*

#### Key findings

- Most UK adults think each of the three statements tested are true: that opticians have recognised academic qualifications (92%); that opticians undergo regular training to update their skills (80%); and that opticians are monitored by a regulatory body (81%).
- Despite a majority thinking that each statement is true, however, there is greater uncertainty regarding the training and regulation of opticians compared to their academic qualifications.

#### *Knowledge of qualifications and standards*

Nine in ten UK adults say that opticians have recognised academic qualifications (92%), and four in five say that opticians undergo regular training to update their skills (80%), or that opticians are monitored by a regulatory body (81%).



*Q30: I am now going to read you a series of statements – please tell me which of these you believe to be true, and which you believe to be false. [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All UK adults (n=2250)*

Scottish and Northern Irish adults (97% and 98% respectively) are more likely than UK adults overall (92%) to say that opticians have recognised academic qualifications.

Women are more likely than men to say that opticians undergo regular training to update their skills (84% compared to 76%); and that opticians are monitored by a regulatory body (84% compared to 77%).

In addition, BME adults are more likely than white adults to disbelieve the statements 'opticians have recognised qualifications' (10% compared to 6%); and 'opticians are monitored by a regulatory body' (13% compared to 7%).

Adults who say that they have confidence in opticians are more likely to agree with each of the statements, including that:

- Opticians have recognised academic qualifications (94% compared to 71% of those not confident).
- Opticians undergo regular training (82% compared to 45% of those who are not confident).
- Opticians are monitored by a regulatory body (84% compared to 39% of those who are not confident).

Those who were satisfied with their last experience at the opticians, who were satisfied with their last eye test and who were satisfied with purchasing corrective appliances are more likely to say that each of statements tested are true.

## iv) Perceptions of regulation

*This section covers UK adults' perceptions of which healthcare professions are regulated, confidence in optical regulation, and responsibilities of a regulator.*

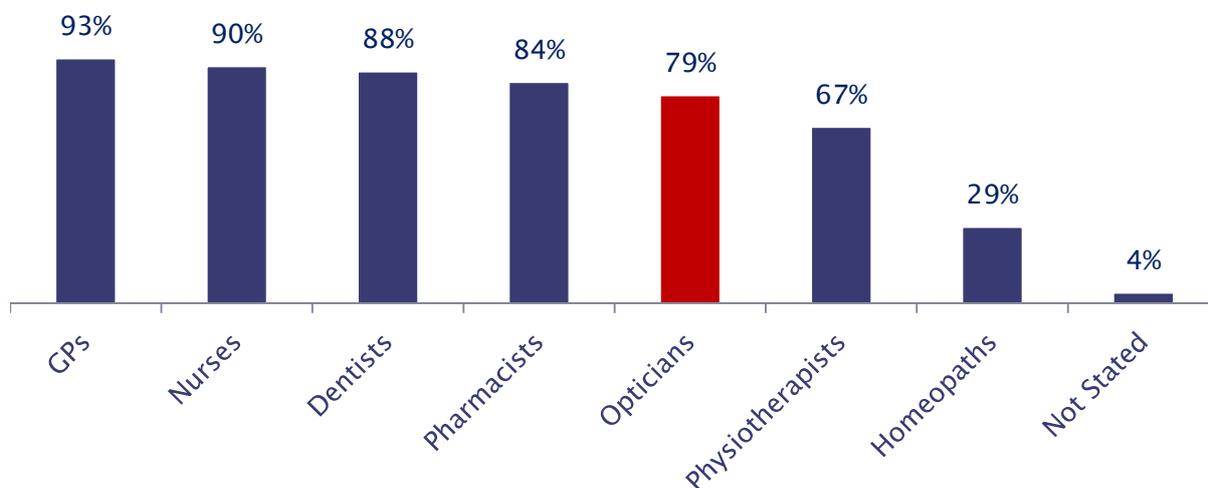
### Key findings

- Most UK adults say that opticians are regulated (79%), however UK adults are less certain that opticians are regulated compared to GPs (93%), nurses (90%), dentists (88%) or pharmacists (84%).
- A majority of UK adults perceive the optical profession to be effectively regulated, however 7% are not confident, and 8% say that they don't know.
- More than one in ten (12%) adults mention the General Optical Council unprompted as the organisation which is responsible for regulating opticians.

### *Perceptions of regulation*

Four in five (79%) UK adults think that opticians are regulated. However, fewer people think that opticians are regulated than GPs (93%), nurses (90%), dentists (88%) or pharmacists (84%). On the other hand, a lesser proportion think that physiotherapists are regulated (67%) than opticians. Despite homeopathy not being a regulated profession, three in ten (29%) UK adults incorrectly assume that this is a regulated profession.

### Perceptions of regulation



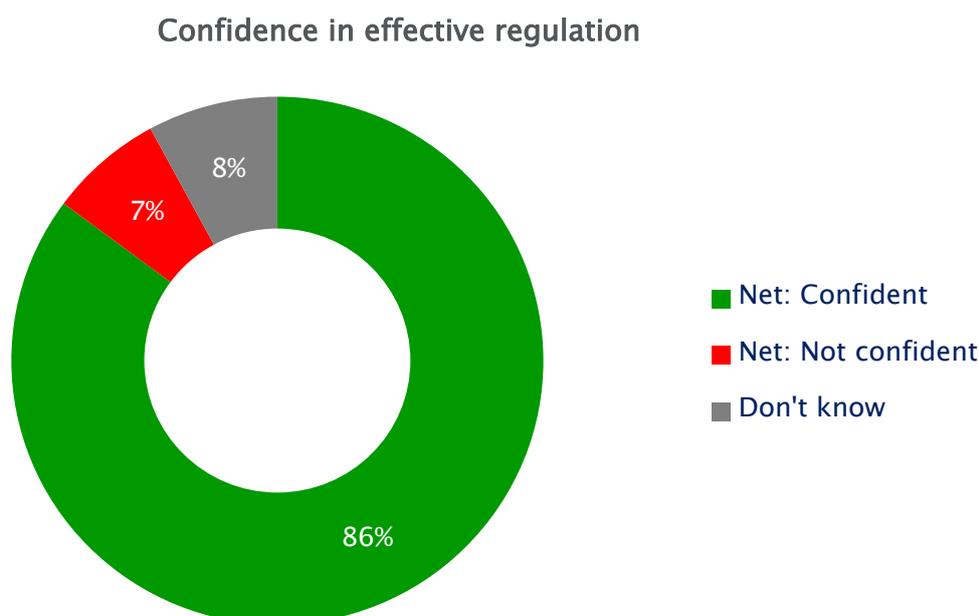
*Q3: Which, if any, of the following healthcare professions do you think are regulated? By regulated we mean there is an independent body that monitors behaviour, actions and conduct among the profession and can take action if these rules are not met. [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All UK adults (n=2250)*

Those who think opticians are regulated are more likely to be women (82% compared to 76%), and from older age groups (73% of those aged 18–29 compared to 84% of those aged 75+). There are no significant differences by nation.

In addition, there is a relationship between usage of opticians and perceptions of regulation. Patients are more likely to say that they think opticians are regulated than non-patients (83% who last attended the opticians 2 years ago or more recently compared to 71% of those who attended more than 2 but less than 5 years ago, 72% of those who attended 5 years or more ago, and 62% of those who have never attended). Furthermore, those who use corrective appliances are more likely to think that opticians are regulated than those who do not (82% of those who have glasses with a prescription, 82% of those who have contact lenses and 81% of those who have reading glasses without a prescription compared to 73% of those who do not use any appliances).

### Confidence in effective regulation

In terms of confidence in the regulation of the optical profession, more than four in five (86%) UK adults say that they are confident that it is regulated effectively.



*Q31: The optical profession is subject to independent regulation. How confident are you, if at all, that the regulation of the optical profession works effectively? [Closed response, answer options read out]  
Base: All UK adults (n=2250)*

Scottish adults are more likely than UK adults overall to say that they are very confident that the profession is regulated effectively (40% compared to 32%). Those from social grade A are the most likely not to be confident that the profession is regulated effectively (11% compared to 7% overall). BME adults are more likely to say that they are not confident that the profession is regulated effectively than white adults (12% compared to 6%).

Furthermore, patients are more confident (88% of those who last visited the opticians 2 years ago or more recently are confident) than those who have visited the optician less frequently (78% of those who have visited the opticians more than two but less

than five years ago; 83% of those who last visited 5 years or more ago and 75% of those who have never been).

Lack of confidence in regulation is higher amongst those who have had a previous negative experience, although as negative experiences are uncommon and the base sizes are small, these findings should be treated as indicative. Those who were dissatisfied with their last visit to the opticians (n=85), their eye test (n=42) or their purchase of corrective appliances (n=44) are more likely to lack confidence in effective regulation (42%, 60% and 36% respectively) compared to those who were satisfied (4%, 5% and 5% respectively).

### *Responsibilities of the regulator*

Survey participants were given a list of potential responsibilities of the optical regulatory body; the majority of UK adults agree that each of these would be part of the regulator's remit. A large majority of UK adults say that the body that regulates the optical profession is responsible for keeping a register of opticians who are allowed to practice (89%), and ensuring that the profession is properly trained (88%). Fewer, but still a sizeable majority, associate the regulator with providing consumer information on what to expect from an optician (71%) and with raising public awareness of eye health (70%). In addition, awareness that the body that regulates the optical profession is responsible for setting standards for the businesses where opticians work (75%) and for individual opticians (74%) is also lower than the other statements tested.

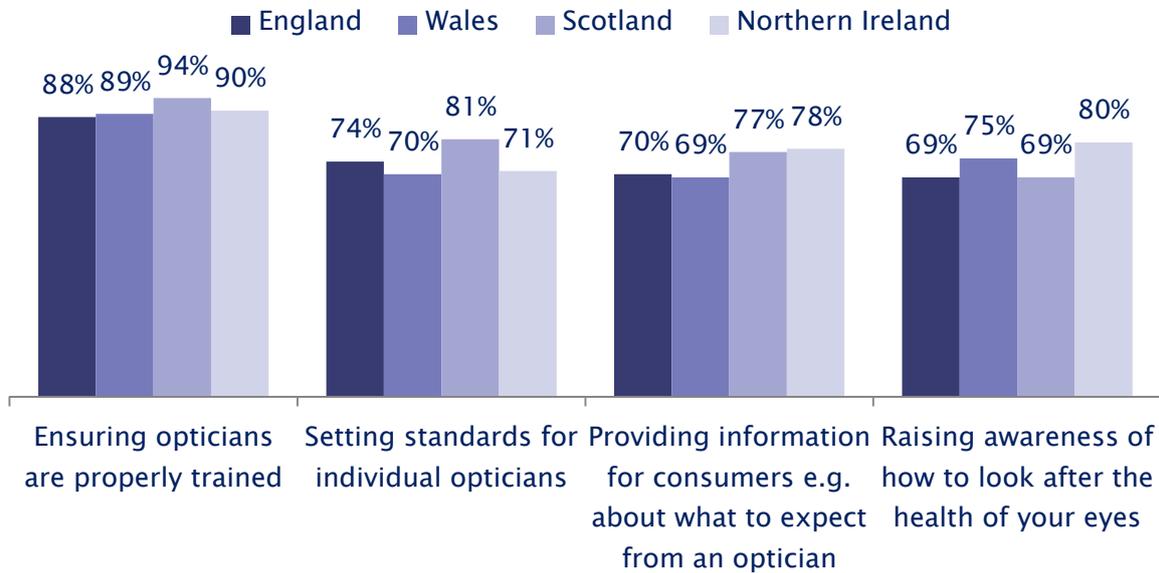
### Responsibilities of a regulator



*Q32: Which, if any, of the following things do you think that the body that regulates the optical profession is responsible for? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All UK adults (n=2250)*

In addition, there are also some national differences in terms of associating some of the responsibilities tested with being within the regulator’s remit. English adults are significantly less likely to associate some responsibilities tested with the regulator’s remit than those from some of the other nations.

**Responsibilities of a regulator: By nation – showing all where there are some statistically significant differences**

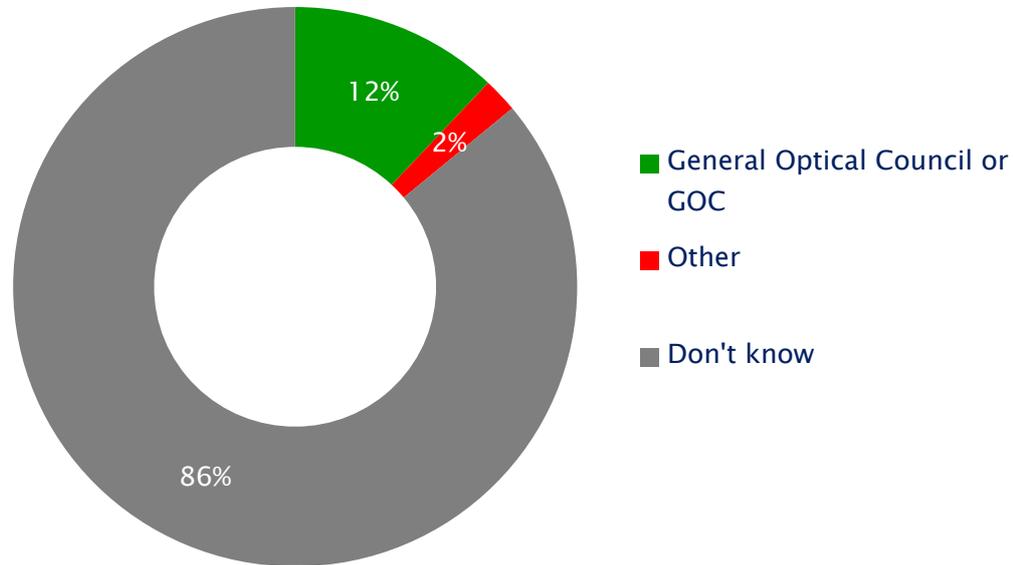


*Q32: Which, if any, of the following things do you think that the body that regulates the optical profession is responsible for? [Closed response, answer options read out] Base: All English adults (n=1901); All Welsh adults (n=100); All Scottish adults (n=154); All Northern Irish adults (n=95)*

***Awareness of the General Optical Council***

More than one in ten (12%) UK adults can name the General Optical Council as the organisation which regulates the optical profession without being prompted.

### Awareness of the General Optical Council

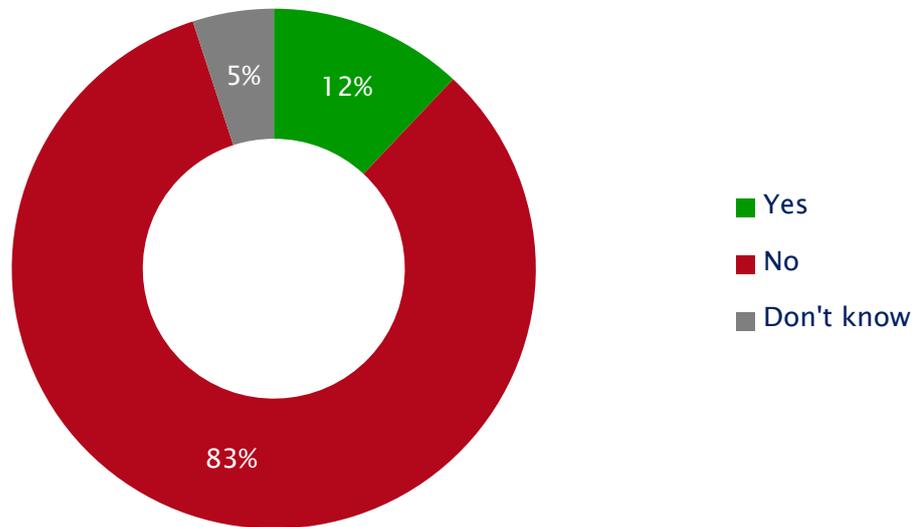


*Q33: And can you name the organisation which regulates the optical profession? [Open response, pre-coded list] Base: All UK adults (n=2250)*

Unprompted, men are more likely to be able to name the regulator of the optical profession as the General Optical Council (17%) than women (7%). Londoners are also more likely to be able to name the General Optical Council (20%) compared to those from England overall (12%). There are no significant differences overall by nation. BME adults (17%) are more likely to correctly identify the General Optical Council as the organisation responsible for the regulation of opticians than white adults (11%).

When prompted, a further one in ten (12%) of those who were not able to name the General Optical Council as the regulator unprompted say that they had heard of the General Optical Council prior to the interview.

Awareness of the General Optical Council prior to the research



*Q34: The General Optical Council, or the GOC, are the body which regulates the optical profession. Had you heard of the GOC prior to this conversation, or not? [Closed response, answer options read out]  
Base: All not spontaneously aware of the GOC (n=1985)*

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

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**Overall confidence in and satisfaction with opticians is high**, and the two metrics are closely related, with those who report higher levels of confidence also tending to be more satisfied. However, this research also indicates that there is limited understanding among the public about the role performed by opticians in promoting eye health as well as improving vision, and therefore the expectations against which satisfaction is being judged may be limited. It will be important to **monitor these core metrics over time** to pick up any changes in public perceptions. This is particularly true in the light of the ongoing debate around quality and standards of care provided by healthcare professionals.

However, it is notable that public belief in the effectiveness of **regulation does not necessarily drive confidence in the care received from opticians**. Indeed, regulation appears to be less important in contributing to public confidence in standards of care, compared to the qualifications of the healthcare professional, the quality of treatment and the quality of communications. **Past experience of opticians is closely related to confidence** – those who report high levels of satisfaction with their overall experience of the opticians are more likely to say that they have confidence in the standards of care provided by opticians than those who are not satisfied. While **very few say that they were not satisfied with their experience** overall, or with their purchasing experience, consideration of how the professions can **guard against barriers to satisfaction** may be valuable. In particular, low levels of satisfaction are driven by perceived bad quality service or products, bad advice on treatment options, and feeling pressured into spending.

**Encouraging more people to visit an optician regularly** could help to ensure improved eye health and wider health outcomes for the public. A significant minority last visited the optician more than two years ago, or have never visited, and these metrics should continue to be an area of focus for the sector going forward.

Moreover, given the link between satisfaction and past experience, encouraging more people to visit an optician regularly may also contribute towards the broader objective of **driving confidence in the professions**. Specifically, the professions may wish to consider what can be done to boost the proportion of the public visiting an optician

at least every two years, as is recommended. In addition, it will be important to continue to **monitor whether the proportion of people buying their products through non-traditional channels** such as the internet is increasing. If so, this will increase the need to consider the impact of purchasing products in a harder to regulate environment on patient safety, as well as whether this results in them going longer without an eye test.

In this context, it will be important to consider **how best to target key demographic groups** – including men, younger people, and BME groups – who are less likely to have visited an optician two years ago or more recently, and more likely to say that you should only visit an optician if there is something wrong with your vision or eyes. It may also be worth considering those groups who are at risk through a family history of medical conditions affecting the eyes – including those with a family history of diabetes, of whom 10% have never been to the optician, as well as those with family histories of glaucoma, macular degeneration, and cataracts. It may therefore be worth considering a further examination of the barriers to visiting regularly among these groups.

Further, it will be important to consider **how to raise awareness of the wider role of the optical professions beyond the provision of sight tests and dispensing of corrective appliances**. In particular, if the professions are looking to integrate further with primary care, low awareness of the role of opticians – and the corresponding association of opticians with the ‘high street’ – may be a barrier to this. There is low awareness of the role opticians can play in the treatment of acute eye health issues, as well as in the detection of health problems both within and beyond the eye. Looking ahead, **the optical sector may wish to consider how this can be increased**, and future tracking should continue to **monitor this key metric** to track progress against this objective.

Given the close relationship between perceptions of standards of care and complaints, it may be beneficial for the sector to **focus on standards as a way of maintaining confidence at its current high levels, as well as ensuring that levels of complaints do not rise**. While the regulator of the optical professions is most closely associated with complaints, a large proportion of the public also see standards as part of the regulator’s role. Positive messaging around **the standards of care that the**

**public can expect to receive from optometrists and dispensing opticians, and the breadth of the role of the optical professions,** may therefore have a significant impact on how frequently the public visit the optician, as well as driving a broader understanding of the role of opticians as healthcare professionals.

In addition, the General Optical Council may also wish to further consider its role in **providing consumer information** on what to expect from an optician and **raising public awareness of eye health**. Although these are areas which the General Optical Council has not traditionally focussed on, a majority of the public associate both of these with the role of a regulator of the professions. That said, in considering this it should be noted that, of the responsibilities tested, these are currently the least commonly associated with the role of a regulator.



## APPENDIX 1: COGNITIVE TESTING

	Question tested	Recommendation and outcome
1	<p>[ASK ALL] How confident or otherwise are you of receiving a high standard of care from each of the following healthcare professions? [READ SCALE, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]</p> <p>Please give your answer on a scale of: Very confident / Fairly confident / Not very confident / Not at all confident / Don't know [DO NOT READ]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. GPs</li><li>ii. Dentists</li><li>iii. Opticians</li><li>iv. Pharmacists</li></ul>	<p>Some respondents found a numeric scale easier to remember, however others preferred this scale.</p> <p>As such, the scale was kept consistent in the final questionnaire.</p>

<p>2</p>	<p>[ASK ALL] When you go to see a healthcare professional, how important is each of the following in giving you confidence in the standard of care they provide? [READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]</p> <p>Please give your answer on a scale of: Very important / Fairly important / Fairly unimportant / Very unimportant / Don't know [DO NOT READ]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The health professional communicates well with you</li> <li>ii. The health professional is qualified</li> <li>iii. The health professional is monitored by a regulatory body</li> <li>iv. The health professional updates their skills and knowledge regularly</li> <li>v. You don't feel rushed</li> <li>vi. You are satisfied with the quality of advice</li> <li>vii. You are satisfied with the quality of treatment</li> <li>viii. You feel your views are listened to</li> <li>ix. You are involved in decisions about your treatment/care</li> </ul>	<p>Respondents were disengaged with this question as a result of the long list.</p> <p>However, all answer options were important to the GOC, and as such, the question was kept consistent.</p>
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3	<p>[ASK ALL] And which of the following is most important to you in giving you confidence in the standard of care they provide? [READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. The health professional communicates well with you</li><li>ii. The health professional is qualified</li><li>iii. The health professional is monitored by a regulatory body</li><li>iv. You don't feel rushed</li><li>v. You are satisfied with the quality of advice</li><li>vi. You are satisfied with the quality of treatment</li><li>vii. You are involved in decisions about your treatment</li><li>viii. None of the above [DO NOT READ]</li></ul>	<p>Respondents were disengaged with this question as a result of the long list.</p> <p>This question was removed from the final questionnaire.</p>
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4 [ASK ALL] Which, if any, of the following healthcare professions do you think are regulated? By regulated we mean there is an independent body that monitors behaviour, actions and conduct among the profession and can take action if these rules are not met. [READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]

Yes / No/ Don't know [DO NOT READ OUT]

- i. GPs
- ii. Pharmacists
- iii. Nurses
- iv. Physiotherapists
- v. Dentists
- vi. Opticians
- vii. Osteopaths Homeopaths

5	<p>[ASK ALL] If you woke up tomorrow morning with an eye problem, such as slightly blurred vision, where would you go or who would you speak to first? [IF NECESSARY] Please choose one option only. [DO NOT READ OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. GP</li> <li>ii. A&amp;E</li> <li>iii. Walk in clinic</li> <li>iv. Optician</li> <li>v. Eye hospital</li> <li>vi. Pharmacist</li> <li>vii. Other (SPECIFY)</li> <li>viii. Don't know</li> </ul>	
6	<p>[ASK ALL] When was the last time you visited an optician, if ever? [SINGLE RESPONSE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. [OPEN NUMERIC, MM/YY]</li> <li>ii. Have never been to the opticians</li> </ul>	

7	<p>[ASK ALL WHO HAVE EVER BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN, CODE i AT Q6] And how often do you visit an optician on average? [DO NOT READ]</p> <p>i. [OPEN NUMERIC, MM/YY] ii. It varies</p>	<p>The respondent who had visited the optician longer than two years ago found it difficult to estimate an average.</p> <p>The question was edited to ask about the time before the last visit, allowing an interval between visits to be calculated.</p>
8	<p>[ASK ALL] To the best of your knowledge, is going to the opticians something that you should do regularly or something that you should do only when there is a problem with your vision or eyes? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS]</p> <p>i. Regularly ii. Only if there is something wrong with vision or eyes</p>	
9	<p>[ASK ALL WHO SAY YOU SHOULD GO REGULARLY, CODE i at Q8] You said you should go regularly to an optician – how often is it recommended that you go? [IF NEEDED] If you don't know, please have a guess. [OPEN NUMERIC]</p> <p>i. [OPEN NUMERIC, MM/YY] ii. Don't know [DO NOT READ]</p>	

10 [ASK ALL WHO HAVE BEEN TO THE OPTICIANS 2+ YEARS AGO OR HAVE NEVER BEEN TO THE OPTICIANS AT Q6] You mentioned that you last went to the optician [INSERT ANSWER FROM Q1A]. What were your reasons for not going to the optician in the last two years? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS, MULTICODE]

- i. I have had no problems with my vision
- ii. I have had no symptoms that have meant that I would need to go to the opticians
- iii. I have not had the time
- iv. It is too expensive
- v. I forgot
- vi. It is not a high priority for me
- vii. I do not want to be prescribed products, e.g. glasses
- viii. I have previously had a bad experience at the opticians
- ix. I don't know how often I should go
- x. Other (SPECIFY)
- xi. Don't know

11	<p>[ASK ALL WHO HAVE EVER BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN , CODE i AT Q6] The last time you went to an opticians, did you go to an independent optician, or was it one of a chain of opticians? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS, PROBE THOSE WHO VISITED A CHAIN AS TO WHETHER IT WAS A SUPERMARKET OPTICIAN OR OTHER CHAIN, SINGLE RESPONSE]</p> <p>i. Independent  ii. Chain optician (e.g. Specsavers, Boots, Vision Express, David Clulow)  iii. Supermarket optician (e.g. Asda, Tesco)  iv. Don't know</p>	
12	<p>[ASK ALL WHO HAVE EVER BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN , CODE i AT Q6] And what was the reason for your last visit to the opticians? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE, MULTICODE]</p> <p>i. To check vision  ii. For a contact lens check-up  iii. To detect any eye health problems  iv. To get a new prescription for corrective products (e.g. glasses or contact lenses)  v. To purchase new glasses or contact lenses  vi. To see if there is any damage to my eyes  vii. Treatment for an urgent problem with eyes or sight  viii. OTHER (SPECIFY)  ix. Don't know</p>	

13	[ASK ALL WHO HAVE BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN, CODE i AT Q6] How satisfied or otherwise were you with your overall experience of the opticians? [READ SCALE, SINGLE RESPONSE]
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i. Very satisfied

ii. Fairly satisfied

iii. Not very satisfied

iv. Not at all satisfied

v. I did not visit the opticians for an eye test [DO NOT READ]

vi. Don't know [DO NOT READ]

14 [ASK ALL WHO WERE VERY/FAIRLY SATISFIED, CODE OPTIONS i OR ii AT Q13]  
And what was the main reason why you were satisfied with your overall  
experience of the opticians? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. Polite / friendly
- ii. Good communication
- iii. Reasonable pricing / good value for money
- iv. Did not feel pressured into spending
- v. Did not feel rushed
- vi. Optician was/seemed qualified
- vii. Optician was/seemed trustworthy
- viii. Good advice on treatment options
- ix. Felt involved in decisions about treatment your care
- x. Felt views were listened to
- xi. Other (SPECIFY)
- xii. Don't know [DO NOT READ]

15 [ASK ALL WHO WERE NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL SATISFIED, CODE OPTIONS iii OR iv AT Q13] And what was the main reason why you were dissatisfied with your overall experience of the opticians? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. Rude / unfriendly
- ii. Bad communication
- iii. Expensive / high pricing
- iv. Felt pressured into spending
- v. Felt rushed
- vi. Optician was not/did not seem qualified
- vii. Optician was not / did not seem trustworthy
- viii. Bad / no advice on treatment options
- ix. Did not feel Felt involved in decisions about your care treatment
- x. Did not feel views were listened to
- xi. Other (SPECIFY)
- xii. Don't know [DO NOT READ]

16	<p>[ASK ALL WHO HAVE BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN, CODE i AT Q6] How satisfied or otherwise were you with your eye test specifically – by which I mean the appointment to check your eyes, rather than the experience of selecting and purchasing products? [READ SCALE, SINGLE RESPONSE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Very satisfied</li><li>ii. Fairly satisfied</li><li>iii. Not very satisfied</li><li>iv. Not at all satisfied</li><li>v. I did not visit the opticians for an eye test [DO NOT READ]</li><li>vi. Don't know [DO NOT READ]</li></ul>	<p>The word “appointment” confused one respondent, as they thought we were asking about the experience of booking an appointment.</p> <p>The question text was edited to read “How satisfied or otherwise were you with your eye test specifically – by which I mean when the optician examined your eyes, rather than the experience of booking an appointment or selecting and purchasing products?”</p>
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17 [ASK ALL WHO HAVE EVER BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN, CODE i AT Q6] Thinking about how you felt the last time you went to the optician, please rate your experience on each of the following factors. Please give your answer on a scale of 0-10, where 0=performed very badly and 10=performed very well. [READ OPTIONS AND CODE TO SCALE, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]

0 = performed very badly / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10 = performed very well

- i. Clear communication by the optician
- ii. Enough time allowed for the appointment by the optician
- iii. Quality of advice
- iv. Quality of treatment
- v. Personal involvement in decisions about your treatment
- vi. No pressure to spend money

18	<p>[ASK ALL WHO HAVE EVER BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN , CODE i AT Q6] Do you currently have a prescription for products for your eyesight, e.g. glasses or contact lenses? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Yes</li> <li>ii. No</li> <li>iii. Don't know</li> </ul>	<p>Respondents were confused by what “prescription” means in the context of glasses or contact lenses.</p> <p>Additional information was added to the question to be read if necessary: “By prescription we mean the results of an eye test that you have taken, which is used to create glasses or contact lenses to give you best vision as possible.”</p>
19	<p>[ASK ALL] Do you currently use any products to improve your eyesight? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS, MULTICODE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Glasses with a prescription</li> <li>ii. Reading glasses without a prescription (also known as ready readers)</li> <li>iii. Contact lenses</li> <li>iv. None of these</li> <li>v. Don't know</li> </ul>	<p>People thought about over-the-counter products such as eye drops when we mentioned “products”.</p> <p>The question text was edited to read: “Do you currently use any products such as glasses or contact lenses to improve your eyesight?”</p>
20	<p>[ASK ALL WHO CODE i, ii, or iii at Q19] And when did you last purchase those products? [SINGLE RESPONSE, DO NOT READ OUT]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. [OPEN NUMERIC, MM/YY]</li> <li>ii. Never</li> </ul>	

21	<p>[ASK ALL WHO CODE i, ii or iii at Q 19] Where did you purchase these products from? [READ OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The opticians you had your eye test in</li> <li>ii. A different opticians than the one you had your eye test in</li> <li>iii. A supermarket or high street store that does not offer eye tests</li> <li>iv. The internet</li> <li>v. Other (specify) [DO NOT READ]</li> <li>vi. Don't know [DO NOT READ]</li> </ul>	
22	<p>[ASK ALL WHO CODE i, ii or iii at Q19] What is the main reason that you purchased your products from there? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE OPTIONS i-vi, SINGLE RESPONSE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Convenience</li> <li>ii. Previous positive buying experience</li> <li>iii. Relationship with optician</li> <li>iv. Pricing</li> <li>v. Range of products</li> <li>vi. Recommended by a friend or family member</li> <li>vii. Other (SPECIFY)</li> <li>viii. Don't know</li> </ul>	

23	<p>[ASK ALL WHO CODE i, ii or iii at Q19] How satisfied or otherwise were you with your experience of buying your glasses or contact lenses? [READ SCALE, SINGLE RESPONSE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Very satisfied</li> <li>ii. Fairly satisfied</li> <li>iii. Not very satisfied</li> <li>iv. Not at all satisfied</li> <li>v. Don't know [DO NOT READ]</li> </ul>	
24	<p>[ASK ALL WHO WERE SATISFIED, CODE OPTIONS i OR ii AT Q23] And what was the main reason why you were satisfied with the experience? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Polite / good communication</li> <li>ii. Reasonable pricing / good value for money</li> <li>iii. Good range of products</li> <li>iv. Not pressured to purchase</li> <li>v. Good advice on purchases</li> <li>vi. Other (SPECIFY)</li> <li>vii. Don't know</li> </ul>	

25	<p>[ASK ALL WHO WERE DISSATISFIED, CODE OPTIONS iii OR iv AT Q23] And what was the main reason why you were dissatisfied with the experience? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Rude / uncommunicative</li> <li>ii. Expensive / high pricing</li> <li>iii. Limited range of products</li> <li>iv. Pressure to purchase</li> <li>v. Bad / no advice on purchases</li> <li>vi. Other (SPECIFY)</li> <li>vii. Don't know</li> </ul>	
26	<p>[ASK ALL BEEN TO AN OPTICIANS, CODE i AT Q6] Have you ever complained or considered complaining about an experience with an optician? [IF NECESSARY PROBE CONSIDERED VS ACUALLY COMPLAINED] [DO NOT READ OPTIONS, SINGLE CODE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Yes - complained</li> <li>ii. Yes - considered complaining</li> <li>iii. No</li> <li>iv. Don't know</li> <li>v. Prefer not to say</li> </ul>	

27 [ASK ALL WHO CODE i AT Q10 AND ALL WHO CODE i or ii AT Q26] Thinking about the most recent time you complained or considered complaining, who did you complain or consider complaining to? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS, MULTICODE]

- i. The opticians where the treatment was carried out
- ii. The head office of the chain of opticians I visited
- iii. The General Optical Council
- iv. The Optical Consumer Complaints Service
- v. The NHS
- vi. A Health Ombudsman
- vii. Trading Standards
- viii. The Care Quality Commission
- ix. Other (SPECIFY)
- x. I wasn't sure who to complain to
- xi. Don't know

28	<p>[ASK ALL] How confident, if at all, are you that you would be able to find information in the following situations: [READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]</p> <p>Please give your answer on a scale of: Very confident / Fairly confident / Not very confident / Not at all confident / Don't know [DO NOT READ]</p> <p>I. To check the qualifications of an optician II. About how to complain about an optician</p>	
29	<p>[ASK ALL] To what extent, if at all, do you associate each of the following things with opticians? [READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]</p> <p>Please give your answer on a scale of: To a great extent / To some extent / To no extent / Don't know [DO NOT READ]</p> <p>i. Providing sight tests ii. Detecting any eye health problems iii. Detecting other health problems not directly in the eyes iv. Getting a prescription for corrective products (e.g. glasses or contact lenses) v. Selling fashionable glasses frames and sunglasses vi. Detecting damage to my eyes</p>	<p>Respondents associated all the options with the industry, indicating that the quality of the data may not be particularly high.</p> <p>The question was changed so that the options were not read out to respondents, ensuring that genuine associations were recorded, rather than those prompted by the response options.</p>

30	<p>[ASK ALL] I am now going to read you a series of statements – please tell me which of these you believe to be true, and which you believe to be false. [READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]</p> <p>True / False / Don't know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Opticians have recognised academic qualifications</li> <li>ii. Opticians undergo regular training to update their skills</li> <li>iii. Opticians are monitored by a regulatory body</li> </ul>	
31	<p>[ASK ALL] The optical profession is subject to independent regulation. How confident are you, if at all, that the regulation of the optical profession works effectively? [READ OPTIONS, FIX, SINGLE RESPONSE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Very confident</li> <li>ii. Fairly confident</li> <li>iii. Not very confident</li> <li>iv. Not at all confident</li> <li>v. Don't know [DO NOT READ</li> </ul>	

32	<p>[ASK ALL] Which, if any, of the following things do you think that the body that regulates the optical profession is responsible for? [RANDOMISE, READ OUT, MULTIPLE CHOICE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Setting standards for individual opticians</li> <li>ii. Providing consumer information</li> <li>iii. Checking the qualifications of opticians</li> <li>iv. Keeping a register of opticians who are allowed to practice</li> <li>v. Ensuring that opticians' training is up to date</li> <li>vi. Investigating complaints against opticians regarding the standard of care</li> <li>vii. Investigating complaints against opticians regarding sales practices</li> <li>viii. Taking disciplinary action if opticians do not meet the required standards</li> </ul>	<p>Respondents tended to say that the body that regulates the optical profession is responsible for all these things.</p> <p>It was important to the GOC that this question was asked in this way, so no changes were made to the question structure.</p>
33	<p>[ASK ALL] And can you name the organisation which regulates the optical profession? [DO NOT READ OUT]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. General Optical Council or GOC</li> <li>ii. Other (SPECIFY)</li> <li>iii. Don't know</li> </ul>	

34 [ASK ALL WHO ARE NOT AWARE OF THE GOC UNPROMPTED, WHO CODE ii OR iii AT Q33] The General Optical Council, or the GOC, are the body which regulates the optical profession. Which, if any, of the following statements best describes your awareness of the GOC prior to hearing this information?  
[READ OPTIONS, FIX, SINGLE RESPONSE]

i. Definitely heard of them before  
ii. Think I have heard of them before  
iii. Have not heard of them before  
iv. Don't know [DO NOT READ]

Respondents could not name the organisation which regulates the optical profession in the previous question. This question did not make sense to them, as they had already told us that they did not know the organisation that regulates the optical profession.

It was important to the GOC that this question was asked, so it was included in the final questionnaire.



## APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH MATERIALS

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### i) Quantitative questionnaire

#### INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is XXXX and I am calling from ComRes, an independent research organisation. We are conducting a short survey with the general public to ask for your views on and experiences of healthcare. This survey will take no more than 15 minutes of your time.

[IF ASKED WHO COMMISSIONED THE SURVEY] I can tell you who commissioned this survey at the end of the interview. This is to ensure that your responses are not influenced by this information.

#### QUESTIONS

1. [ASK ALL] How confident or otherwise are you of receiving a high standard of care from each of the following healthcare professions?

[READ SCALE, READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]  
[SINGLE GRID]

Please give your answer on a scale of: *Very confident / Fairly confident / Not very confident / Not at all confident / Don't know [DO NOT READ]*

- i. GPs
- ii. Dentists
- iii. Opticians
- iv. Pharmacists

2. [ASK ALL] When you go to see a healthcare professional, how important or otherwise is each of the following in giving you confidence in the standard of care they provide?

[READ SCALE, READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]  
[SINGLE GRID]

Please give your answer on a scale of: *Very important / Fairly important / Not very important / Not at all important / Don't know [DO NOT READ]*

- i. The health professional communicates well with you
  - ii. The health professional is qualified
  - iii. The health professional is monitored by a regulatory body
  - iv. The health professional updates their skills and knowledge regularly
  - v. You don't feel rushed
  - vi. You are satisfied with the quality of advice
  - vii. You are satisfied with the quality of treatment
  - viii. You feel your views are listened to
  - ix. You are involved in decisions about your care
3. [ASK ALL] Which, if any, of the following healthcare professions do you think are regulated? By regulated we mean there is an independent body that monitors behaviour, actions and conduct among the profession and can take action if these rules are not met.

[READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE OPTIONS] [MULTI RESPONSE]

- i. GPs
- ii. Pharmacists
- iii. Nurses
- iv. Physiotherapists
- v. Dentists
- vi. Opticians
- vii. Homeopaths

4. [ASK ALL] If you woke up tomorrow morning with an eye problem, such as something in your eye, a red eye or blurred vision, where would you go or who would you speak to first? [IF NECESSARY] *Please mention one option only.*

[DO NOT READ OPTIONS] [SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. GP
- ii. A&E
- iii. Walk in clinic
- iv. Optician
- v. Eye hospital

- vi. Pharmacist
- vii. Other (SPECIFY)
- viii. Don't know

5. [ASK ALL] **When was the last time you visited an optician, if ever?**

[DO NOT READ OPTIONS] [SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. [OPEN NUMERIC, MM/YY, PROBE FOR MONTH – IF NO RECALL RECORD MONTH AS 00]
- ii. Have never been to the opticians

6. [ASK ALL WHO HAVE EVER BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN, CODE i AT Q6] **And thinking about the time before that, when was the previous time you visited an optician, if ever?**

[DO NOT READ OPTIONS] [SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. [OPEN NUMERIC, MM/YY, PROBE FOR MONTH – IF NO RECALL RECORD MONTH AS 00]
- ii. Have never been to the opticians

7. [ASK ALL] **To the best of your knowledge, is going to the opticians something that you should do regularly or something that you should do only when there is a problem with your vision or eyes?**

[DO NOT READ OPTIONS] [SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. Regularly
- ii. Only if there is something wrong with vision or eyes

8. [ASK ALL WHO SAY YOU SHOULD GO REGULARLY, CODE i at Q8] **You said you should go regularly to an optician. To the best of your knowledge, how often is it recommended that you go? [IF NEEDED] If you don't know, please have a guess.**

[DO NOT READ OPTIONS] [SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. [OPEN NUMERIC, MM/YY]
- ii. Don't know [DO NOT READ]

9. [ASK ALL WHO HAVE BEEN TO THE OPTICIANS 2+ YEARS AGO OR HAVE NEVER BEEN TO THE OPTICIANS AT Q6] **You mentioned that you last went to the optician [INSERT ANSWER FROM Q6A]. What were your reasons for not going to the optician in the last two years? Please mention all that apply.**

[DO NOT READ OPTIONS] [MULTI RESPONSE]

- i. No problems with my vision
- ii. No problems with eye health (unrelated to sight)
- iii. Not had the time
- iv. Too expensive
- v. Forgot
- vi. Not a high priority
- vii. Do not want to be prescribed products, e.g. glasses
- viii. Have previously had a bad experience at the opticians
- ix. Don't know how often should go
- x. Unable to get an appointment
- xi. Other (SPECIFY)
- xii. Don't know

10. [ASK ALL WHO HAVE EVER BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN, CODE i AT Q6] **The last time you went to an optician, did you go to an independent optician, or was it one of a chain of opticians?**

[DO NOT READ OPTIONS, PROBE THOSE WHO VISITED A CHAIN AS TO WHETHER IT WAS A SUPERMARKET OPTICIAN OR OTHER CHAIN] [SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. Independent
- ii. Chain optician (e.g. Specsavers, Boots, Vision Express, David Clulow)
- iii. Supermarket optician (e.g. Asda, Tesco)
- iv. Don't know

11. [ASK ALL WHO HAVE EVER BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN, CODE i AT Q6] **And what were the main reasons for your last visit to the opticians? Please mention all that apply.**

[DO NOT READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE] [MULTI RESPONSE]

- i. To check vision
- ii. For a contact lens check-up
- iii. To detect any eye health problems
- iv. To get a new prescription for corrective products (e.g. glasses or contact lenses)
- v. To purchase new glasses or contact lenses
- vi. To see if there is any damage to my eyes
- vii. Advice / treatment for an urgent problem with eyes or sight
- viii. OTHER (SPECIFY)
- ix. Don't know

12. [ASK ALL WHO HAVE BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN, CODE i AT Q6] **How satisfied or otherwise were you with your overall experience of the opticians?**

[READ SCALE] [SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. **Very satisfied**
- ii. **Fairly satisfied**
- iii. **Not very satisfied**
- iv. **Not at all satisfied**
- v. I did not visit the opticians for an eye test [DO NOT READ]
- vi. Don't know [DO NOT READ]

13. [ASK ALL WHO WERE VERY/FAIRLY SATISFIED, CODE OPTIONS i OR ii AT Q13] **What was the *main* reason why you were satisfied with your overall experience of the opticians? And for which *other* reasons were you satisfied?** [DO NOT READ OPTIONS]

- a) **Main reason** [SINGLE RESPONSE]
- b) **Other reasons** [MULTI RESPONSE]

- i. Polite / friendly
- ii. Good communication
- iii. Reasonable pricing / good value for money
- iv. Did not feel pressured into spending

- v. Did not feel rushed
- vi. Optician was/seemed qualified
- vii. Optician was/seemed trustworthy
- viii. Good advice on treatment options
- ix. Good quality examination / issue corrected
- x. Felt involved in decisions about your care
- xi. Felt views were listened to
- xii. Other (SPECIFY)
- xiii. Don't know

14. [ASK ALL WHO WERE NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL SATISFIED, CODE OPTIONS iii OR iv AT Q13] **And what was the *main* reason why you were not satisfied with your overall experience of the opticians? And for which *other* reasons were you not satisfied?** [DO NOT READ OPTIONS]

- a) **Main reason** [SINGLE RESPONSE]
- b) **Other reasons** [MULTI RESPONSE]

- i. Rude / unfriendly
- ii. Bad communication
- iii. Expensive / high pricing
- iv. Felt pressured into spending
- v. Felt rushed
- vi. Optician was not/did not seem qualified
- vii. Optician was not / did not seem trustworthy
- viii. Bad / no advice on treatment options
- ix. Issue not resolved
- x. Did not feel involved in decisions about your care
- xi. Did not feel views were listened to
- xii. Other (SPECIFY)
- xiii. Don't know [DO NOT READ]

15. [ASK ALL WHO HAVE EVER BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN, CODE i AT Q6] **Thinking about your experience the last time you went to the optician, to what extent, if at all, did you experience each of the following? Please give your answer on a scale of 0–10, where 0=not at all and 10=to a great extent.**

[READ SCALE, READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]  
[SINGLE GRID]

*0 = not at all / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10 = to a great extent / Don't know*  
*[DO NOT READ OUT]*

- i. The optician communicated well with you
- ii. You didn't feel rushed
- iii. You were satisfied with the quality of advice
- iv. You were satisfied with the quality of treatment
- v. You felt your views were listened to
- vi. You were involved in decisions about your care
- vii. You were not pressured to spend money

16. [ASK ALL WHO HAVE EVER BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN, CODE i AT Q6] **How satisfied or otherwise were you with your eye test specifically – by which I mean when the optician examined your eyes, rather than the experience of booking an appointment or selecting and purchasing products?**

[READ SCALE, SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. **Very satisfied**
- ii. **Fairly satisfied**
- iii. **Not very satisfied**
- iv. **Not at all satisfied**
- v. I did not visit the opticians for an eye test [DO NOT READ]
- vi. Don't know [DO NOT READ]

17. [ASK ALL WHO HAVE EVER BEEN TO THE OPTICIAN, CODE i AT Q6] **Do you currently have a prescription for glasses or contact lenses? [IF NECESSARY] By prescription we mean the results of an eye test that you have taken, which is used to create glasses or contact lenses to give you best vision as possible.**

[DO NOT READ OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. Yes

- ii. No
- iii. Don't know

18. [ASK ALL] **Do you currently use any products such as glasses or contact lenses to improve your eyesight?**

[DO NOT READ OPTIONS, MULTI RESPONSE]

- i. Glasses with a prescription [INTERVIEWER TO PROBE IF RESPONDENTS MENTION GLASSES]
- ii. Contact lenses
- iii. Reading glasses without a prescription (also known as ready readers) [INTERVIEWER TO PROBE IF RESPONDENTS MENTION GLASSES]
- iv. None of these [EXCLUSIVE]
- v. Don't know [EXCLUSIVE]

19. [ASK ALL WHO CODE i, AND iii at Q19] **And which of these did you buy most recently?**

[DO NOT READ OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. Glasses with a prescription [INTERVIEWER TO PROBE IF RESPONDENTS MENTION GLASSES]
- ii. Contact lenses
- iii. Reading glasses without a prescription (also known as ready readers) [INTERVIEWER TO PROBE IF RESPONDENTS MENTION GLASSES]
- iv. Don't know

20. [ASK ALL WHO CODE i or ii at Q19] **And when did you last purchase those [USE WORD FROM Q19] glasses or contact lenses?**

[SINGLE RESPONSE, DO NOT READ OUT]

- i. [OPEN NUMERIC, MM/YY]
- ii. Never

21. [ASK ALL WHO CODE i or ii at Q19] **Where did you purchase [USE WORD FROM Q19] your glasses or contact lenses from?**

[READ SCALE, READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]  
[SINGLE GRID]

*Yes / No / Don't know [DO NOT READ OUT]*

- i. **The opticians you had your eye test in**
- ii. **A different opticians than the one you had your eye test in**
- iii. **A supermarket or high street store that does not offer eye tests**
- iv. **The internet**
- v. Other (specify) [DO NOT READ]
- vi. Don't know [DO NOT READ]

22. [ASK ALL WHO CODE i, ii or iii at Q19] **What is the main reason that you purchased your [USE WORD FROM Q19] glasses or contact lenses from there? [IF NECESSARY] Please mention only one reason**

[DO NOT READ OPTIONS] [SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. Convenience
- ii. Always bought them there
- iii. Previous positive buying experience
- iv. Relationship with optician
- v. Pricing
- vi. Range of products
- vii. Recommended by a friend or family member
- viii. Other (SPECIFY)
- ix. Don't know

23. [ASK ALL WHO CODE i, ii or iii at Q19] **How satisfied or otherwise were you with your experience of buying your glasses or contact lenses? Please rate your experience of buying these products, as opposed to rating the products themselves**  
[READ SCALE] [SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. **Very satisfied**

- ii. **Fairly satisfied**
- iii. **Not very satisfied**
- iv. **Not at all satisfied**
- v. **Don't know [DO NOT READ]**

24. [ASK ALL WHO WERE SATISFIED, CODE OPTIONS i OR ii AT Q23] **And what was the *main* reason why you were satisfied with the experience of buying your glasses or contact lenses? Please rate your experience of buying these products, as opposed to rating the products themselves. And for which *other* reasons were you satisfied? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS]**

- a) **Main reason [SINGLE RESPONSE]**
- b) **Other reasons [MULTI RESPONSE]**

- i. Polite / good communication
- ii. Helpful staff
- iii. Reasonable pricing / good value for money
- iv. Good range of products
- v. Not pressured to purchase
- vi. Good advice on purchases
- vii. Other (SPECIFY)
- viii. Don't know

25. [ASK ALL WHO WERE DISSATISFIED, CODE OPTIONS iii OR iv AT Q23] **And what was the *main* reason why you were dissatisfied with the experience of buying your glasses or contact lenses? Please rate your experience of buying these products, as opposed to rating the products themselves. And for which *other* reasons were you not satisfied? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS]**

- a) **Main reason [SINGLE RESPONSE]**
- b) **Other reasons [MULTI RESPONSE]**

- i. Rude / uncommunicative
- ii. Expensive / high pricing
- iii. Limited range of products
- iv. Pressure to purchase
- v. Bad / no advice on purchases

- vi. Other (SPECIFY)
- vii. Don't know

26. [ASK ALL WHO HAVE BEEN TO AN OPTICIANS, CODE i AT Q6] **Have you ever complained or considered complaining about an experience with an optician?**

[IF NECESSARY PROBE CONSIDERED VS ACUALLY COMPLAINED] [DO NOT READ OPTIONS] [SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. Yes – complained
- ii. Yes – considered complaining
- iii. No
- iv. Don't know
- v. Prefer not to say

27. [ASK ALL WHO CODE i or ii AT Q26] **Thinking about the most recent time you complained or considered complaining, who did you complain or consider complaining to? *Please mention all that apply.***

[DO NOT READ OPTIONS] [MULTI RESPONSE]

- i. The opticians where the treatment was carried out
- ii. The head office of the chain of opticians I visited
- iii. The General Optical Council
- iv. The Optical Consumer Complaints Service
- v. The NHS
- vi. A Health Ombudsman
- vii. Trading Standards
- viii. The Care Quality Commission
- ix. Other (SPECIFY)
- x. I wasn't sure who to complain to
- xi. Don't know

28. [ASK ALL] **How confident, if at all, are you that you would be able to find information in the situations listed below.**

[READ SCALE, READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]  
[SINGLE GRID]

Please give your answer on a scale of: *Very confident* / *Fairly confident* / *Not very confident* / *Not at all confident* / *Don't Know* [DO NOT READ]

- i. To check the qualifications of an optician
- ii. About how to complain about an optician

29. [ASK ALL] Thinking about the services provided by opticians, what is the *main* service you associate with opticians? And are there any *other* services you associate with opticians? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS]

- a) Main service [SINGLE RESPONSE]
- b) Other services [MULTI RESPONSE]

- i. Providing sight tests
- ii. Detecting any eye health problems
- iii. Detecting other health problems not directly in the eyes
- iv. Getting a prescription for corrective products (e.g. glasses or contact lenses)
- v. Selling fashionable glasses frames and sunglasses
- vi. Detecting damage to my eyes
- vii. Other [SPECIFY]

30. [ASK ALL] I am now going to read you a series of statements – please tell me which of these you believe to be true, and which you believe to be false.

[READ SCALE, READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]  
[SINGLE GRID]

*True* / *False* / *Don't know* [DO NOT PROBE]

- i. Opticians have recognised academic qualifications
- ii. Opticians undergo regular training to update their skills
- iii. Opticians are monitored by a regulatory body

31. [ASK ALL] The optical profession is subject to independent regulation. How confident are you, if at all, that the regulation of the optical profession works effectively?

[READ OPTIONS, FIX] [SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. Very confident
- ii. Fairly confident
- iii. Not very confident
- iv. Not at all confident
- v. Don't know [DO NOT READ]

32. [ASK ALL] Which, if any, of the following things do you think that the body that regulates the optical profession is responsible for?

[READ SCALE, READ OPTIONS, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW]  
[SINGLE GRID]

*Yes / No / Don't know [DO NOT READ OUT]*

- i. Setting standards for individual opticians
- ii. Setting standards for the businesses where businesses work
- iii. Providing information for consumers eg about what to expect from an optician
- iv. Raising awareness of how to look after the health of your eyes
- v. Ensuring opticians are properly trained
- vi. Keeping a register of opticians who are allowed to practice
- vii. Investigating complaints against opticians regarding the standard of care
- viii. Taking disciplinary action if opticians do not meet the required standards

33. [ASK ALL] And can you name the organisation which regulates the optical profession?

[DO NOT READ OUT] [SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. General Optical Council or GOC
- ii. Other (SPECIFY)
- iii. Don't know

34. [ASK ALL WHO ARE NOT AWARE OF THE GOC UNPROMPTED, WHO CODE ii OR iii AT Q33] **The General Optical Council, or the GOC, are the body which regulates the optical profession. Had you heard of the GOC prior to this conversation, or not?**

[READ OPTIONS, FIX] [SINGLE RESPONSE]

- i. **Yes**
- ii. **No**
- iii. Don't know [DO NOT READ]

### DEMOGRAPHICS

#### **A. GENDER. DO NOT READ OUT – JUST CODE**

- i. Male
- ii. Female

#### **B. AGE. What age range do you fall under?**

- i. 16 to 24
- ii. 25 to 34
- iii. 35 to 44
- iv. 45 to 54
- v. 55 to 64
- vi. 65 to 74
- vii. 75+
- viii. Prefer not say

#### **C. REGION. In which of the following regions do you live?**

- i. North East
- ii. North West
- iii. Yorkshire & Humber
- iv. East Midlands
- v. West Midlands
- vi. East of England
- vii. London

- viii. South East
- ix. South West
- x. Wales
- xi. Scotland
- xii. Northern Ireland

**D. ETHNICITY. What ethnicity best describes you?**

- i. White – English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British
- ii. White – Irish
- iii. White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- iv. White – other (SPECIFY)
- v. Mixed/Multiple – White and Black Caribbean
- vi. Mixed/Multiple – White and Black African
- vii. Mixed/Multiple – White and Asian
- viii. Mixed/Multiple – other (SPECIFY)
- ix. Asian or Asian British – Indian
- x. Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
- xi. Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
- xii. Asian or Asian British – Chinese
- xiii. Asian or Asian British – Other (SPECIFY)
- xiv. Black or Black British – Caribbean
- xv. Black or Black British – African
- xvi. Black or Black British – Other (SPECIFY)
- xvii. Other – Arab (SPECIFY)
- xviii. Any other (SPECIFY)
- xix. Prefer not to say

**E. EMPLOYMENT STATUS. Which of these best describes the working status of the chief income earner in your household?**

- i. Full time paid job
- ii. Part time paid job
- iii. Self employed
- iv. Student
- v. Unemployed (less than 6 months)
- vi. Unemployed (more than 6 months)

- vii. Home maker (Housewife)
- viii. Retired
- ix. Prefer not to say

**F. SEG. Which of the following categories does the chief income earner in the household fall into, or if retired, what category DID they fall into?**

- i. Higher managerial, administrative or professional in large company (over 250 employees)
- ii. Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional or Higher management in a company with less than 250 employees
- iii. Students, Supervisory or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional
- iv. Skilled manual workers
- v. Semi and unskilled manual workers
- vi. Unemployed or a pensioner who depends on the welfare state for their income ie. not a private pension
- vii. Prefer not to say

**G. EMPSECTOR. And does the chief income earner work in the public or private sector?**

- i. Public, i.e. government, local council, emergency services, armed services, etc
- ii. Private, i.e. a company set up to make a profit
- iii. Third sector, i.e. a charity or non-profit organisation (like a housing association)
- iv. Prefer not to say

**H. KIDSU8. How many children are there in the household aged 8 or under?**

[OPEN NUMERIC, 99 for DK/REF]

**I. KIDS8TO18. And aged 9 to 18?**

[OPEN NUMERIC, 99 for DK/REF]

*To conclude, I'd like to ask you a few questions about your medical status. I just want to remind you that any information you give is in complete confidence, and will not be associated with any of your identifying personal details.*

**J. Do you have a longstanding physical or mental condition or disability that has lasted or is likely to last 12 months, and which has a substantial adverse effect on your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?**

- i. Yes
- ii. No
- iii. Prefer not to say

**K. Which of the following best describes your sight?**

- i. 20:20 vision
- ii. Short sighted
- iii. Long sighted
- iv. Partially sighted
- v. Registered blind
- vi. Prefer not to say

**L. Do you personally suffer from any of the following? And how about any of your family members?**

**a) Personally**

**b) Family members**

- i. Glaucoma
- ii. Diabetes
- iii. Macular degeneration
- iv. Cataracts
- v. Astigmatism
- vi. Prefer not to say

## ii) Qualitative discussion guides

### *Focus group discussions: general public*

<u>Discussion Stage</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Total Time</u>
<p><b>Warm up</b> Upon arrival participants will be welcomed informally and offered refreshments. The moderator will spend up to ten minutes talking to participants, making them feel at ease, building group cohesion and assessing the group dynamic.</p> <p><b>Introduction</b> After seating the participants, the moderator will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank the participants for attending</li> <li>• Explain who we are</li> <li>• Explain what the objectives of the focus group are</li> <li>• Explain what the moderator's and note taker's roles are in the focus group</li> <li>• Explain what their role is in the focus group i.e. feel free to challenge/affirm anyone's point, informal discussion, all contributions welcome.</li> <li>• Explain who else is observing the focus group and why</li> <li>• Assure them that any information they give will remain anonymous</li> <li>• Run through housekeeping issues (familiarising attendees with recording equipment, fire drills, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b>Breaching</b> <i>The moderator will encourage participants to start thinking about the discussion topics in very broad terms.</i></p>	5 mins	5 mins
<b>TOPIC 1 – Public understanding of optical care in relation to other types of healthcare</b>	25	30

<p><i>This section is an initial discussion, designed to understand where the public perceive opticians to fit in relation to other types of healthcare, and reasons for these perceptions.</i></p> <p>[Conversation starter] <b>We're here today to talk about healthcare. As we go on, it will become clearer why we are here, but first of all I want to get a sense of what type of contact with different types of healthcare you have had recently. You don't have to go into too much detail, but could you tell me a little bit about whether you've had any healthcare appointments in the last few months?</b></p> <p>[Moderator to list spontaneous references on flip chart]</p> <p>[PROMPT] When we invited you along today, we asked you about different types of healthcare appointments that you may have had within the last 2 years. Can any of you remember what we asked you about? Had you had any of these?</p> <p><i>Moderator note: they were dental check-up, hygienist check-up, blood test, eye test, cholesterol test, medical vaccination.</i></p> <p><b>I've got a number of different cards here with a variety of different types of healthcare professionals on them. What I'd like you to do is work in pairs for the next five minutes, and put the cards into groups of similar types of professionals. There is no right or wrong way of doing this, so please go ahead and put them into the groups that make most sense to you.</b></p> <p><i>Cards to include: Nurse / Midwife / Dentist / Pharmacist / Paramedic / Optician / Surgeon / Physiotherapist / Chiropractor / Doctor / Osteopath / Social worker / Art therapist / Chiropodist / Dietician / Hearing aid dispenser</i></p> <p>How have you grouped yours? What made you group these together?</p> <p>[PROBE] severity of health issues they deal with / perceptions behind qualifications needed to practice / occupational vs. medical health services / type of service provided / the cost at point of use, etc.</p> <p><b>What name would you give to the people who are treated by these professionals? Is there one term that applies to all, or do they differ depending on what kind of service they are getting?</b></p>		
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<p>How about if you went to the doctor? What would someone who goes to see a doctor be called? How about someone who sees a dentist? What about an optician? [PROBE] Patient vs. customer vs. user</p>		
<p><b>TOPIC 2 – Perceptions of the optical profession</b></p> <p><i>This section aims to understand perceptions and misconceptions of, and understand personal experience of the optical profession.</i></p> <p><b>Now we’ve looked at different types of healthcare provider, I want to talk specifically about opticians. Thinking about opticians, what words and phrases come to mind initially?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Moderator to list on flipchart] What has made you think of these things? [PROBE]: personal experience, advertising, high street perceptions, etc.</li> <li>• If you had to explain to someone – for example, someone who doesn’t know what an optician is – how would you describe what they do? [PROBE] perform sight tests / check for symptoms non-sight related conditions / prescribe glasses or contact lenses / fit glasses</li> <li>• Do you think that all opticians are the same, or are there different types of optician? What makes you say this?</li> <li>• When you think of staff in opticians, do you think that they are all the same, or do you think that there are different ‘types’ of opticians staff? [PROBE] qualifications / experience / regulation, etc.</li> <li>• To what extent, if at all, would it affect your perception of opticians if some staff members are <b>not</b> regulated? What, if anything, would the implications of this be for you? [PROBE] perceptions of opticians / visits to the optician / trust / reputation, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>When we recruited you we asked if you had been to the opticians in the last two years, and I think most of you hadn’t, is that right? [NOTE:</b></p>	<p>45</p>	<p>70</p>

<p><i>this group to have been recruited as general public, none should have had a sight test in last 2 years ]</i></p> <p><b>What are the reasons behind you not going to the optician?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [PROBE] Feel no problems with eye health or sight / scared of or dislike the opticians / unsure how to make an appointment or where services available / concerned about cost etc. / length of time it takes / availability of transport / cost of travel / having to purchase a product after the test</li> </ul> <p><b>I want to explore what you think a visit to the opticians might consist of. What do you think a sight test might be like?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [PROBE] length of time / cost / invasive / unnecessary / uncomfortable</li> <li>• What do you think the benefits of a sight test might be?</li> <li>• Have you, or anyone you know had a bad experience at the optician? What was bad about it? How, if at all, has this affected your decision not to go to the optician?</li> </ul> <p><b>If you decided to go to the opticians, how would you choose which one to go to? What would you look for when making your decision?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [PROBE] Recommendations from others / research online / advertising / how easy it is to book etc</li> <li>• Would you feel confident making a choice about which optician to go to? Why?</li> <li>• What <b>type</b> of optician would you go to? [PROBE] multiple, e.g. Specsavers, Boots, vs. independents</li> <li>• What would influence your decision about going to a multiple / independent?</li> <li>• [PROBE] price / trust in brand / value for money / customer care</li> </ul> <p><b>If you had a problem with your eyes or were concerned about your sight who, if anyone, would you go to? For example, what if you woke up tomorrow with blurred vision, or something in your eye?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [PROBE] GP surgery / A&amp;E / walk-in centre / opticians / friends or family etc</li> </ul>		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why would you approach these people/places?</li> <li>• If you wanted to get information about eye health or sight, rather than having a problem would you go to the same people? Why?</li> </ul> <p><b>For those of you with children, or caring responsibilities for older family members, does any of this change when you are thinking about their eye health or sight?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you choose an optician based on different reasons? <i>If yes:</i> How would your criteria be different?</li> <li>• If they had a problem with their eye health or you were concerned about their sight would you go to the same people/places? <i>If no:</i> Why not?</li> </ul> <p><b>Have any of you had a bad experience when going to the optician? If so, would you mind sharing your story?</b> [<i>NB this could include some experiences which participants may feel are too sensitive to discuss in a group – Moderator to reassure of anonymity &amp; move on</i>]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was it that made this a bad experience? [PROBE] cost / professionalism of optician / quality of the tests / other factors?</li> <li>• <i>If say quality of the tests:</i> In what way did you feel the quality of the tests were not good enough? How could you tell?</li> <li>• Was there anything about the information, advice and guidance you received that affected your experience?</li> <li>• What about the level of care you received – how, if at all, did that affect your experience? [PROBE] involvement in decision-making / communications / patient care / comfort / trust / pressure to buy products, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>In this circumstance (or imaging this has happened if you have not had a bad experience at the optician yourself) – what did/would you do? Why?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [PROBE] Make a complaint at the time / complain to a Head Office (if relevant )/ find an ombudsman or regulator etc</li> <li>• <i>If would not say anything:</i> What are the reasons why you wouldn't say anything or make any complaints in these circumstances?</li> </ul>		
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<p>Thinking of healthcare in general, are you aware of any organisations in charge of making sure they provide a good service? <i>If yes: Which organisations are you thinking of?</i></p> <p>Are you aware of an organisation that regulates opticians? If so, who do you think that might be?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How important or otherwise is it that opticians are regulated? Why?</li> </ul> <p>How interested or otherwise are you in finding out information about an organisation that regulates opticians? Where would you like to find out information about this organisation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What, if any, would you say are the sources of information that you trust on information about health?</li> <li>• What, if any, channels (e.g. email, leaflet) would be most appropriate for receiving information on this organisation?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>TOPIC 3 – Perceptions of eye health</b></p> <p><i>This section aims to understand the context in which opticians operate, and health concerns associated with eyes.</i></p> <p><b>I want to talk a little bit about eye health now. Within the context of your overall health, where does eye health fit in?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How important is your sight compared to your other senses and abilities?</li> <li>• What if anything are your concerns about your eye health either now or in the future?</li> <li>• Are there any particular groups that you think are most vulnerable in terms of eye health? (e.g. children, old people, those with a family history of optical problems, particular ethnic groups)</li> <li>• How do you think these ‘at-risk’ groups can be reached by professionals who want to highlight the importance of eye health to them?</li> </ul>	15	90

<p>To close our conversation today, I would like you to tell what you have found most interesting about eye health. What's the one thing that you have found most interesting this evening?</p> <p>THANK AND CLOSE</p> <p>FEEDBACK FORMS AND DISTRIBUTE INCENTIVES</p>		
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*Focus group discussions: patients*

<u>Discussion Stage</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Total Time</u>
<p><b>Warm up</b></p> <p>Upon arrival participants will be welcomed informally and offered refreshments. The moderator will spend up to ten minutes talking to participants, making them feel at ease, building group cohesion and assessing the group dynamic.</p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>After seating the participants, the moderator will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank the participants for attending</li> <li>• Explain who we are</li> <li>• Explain what the objectives of the focus group are</li> <li>• Explain what the moderator's and note taker's roles are in the focus group</li> <li>• Explain what their role is in the focus group i.e. feel free to challenge/affirm anyone's point, informal discussion, all contributions welcome.</li> <li>• Explain who else is observing the focus group and why</li> <li>• Assure them that any information they give will remain anonymous</li> <li>• Run through housekeeping issues (familiarising attendees with recording equipment, fire drills, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b>Breaching</b></p> <p><i>The moderator will encourage participants to start thinking about the discussion topics in very broad terms.</i></p>	<p>5 mins</p>	<p>5 mins</p>

<p><b>TOPIC 1 - Public understanding of optical care in relation to other types of healthcare</b></p> <p><i>This section is an initial discussion, designed to understand where the public perceive opticians to fit in relation to other types of healthcare, and reasons for these perceptions.</i></p> <p>[Conversation starter] <b>We're here today to talk about healthcare. As we go on, it will become clearer why we are here, but first of all I want to get a sense of what type of contact with different types of healthcare you have had recently. You don't have to go into too much detail, but could you tell me a little bit about whether you've had any healthcare appointments in the last few months?</b></p> <p>[Moderator to list spontaneous references on flip chart]</p> <p>[PROMPT] When we invited you along today, we asked you about different types of healthcare appointments that you may have had within the last 2 years. Can any of you remember what we asked you about? Had you had any of these?</p> <p><i>Moderator note: they were dental check-up, hygienist check-up, blood test, eye test, cholesterol test, medical vaccination.</i></p> <p><b>I've got a number of different cards here with a variety of different types of healthcare professionals on them. What I'd like you to do is work in pairs for the next five minutes, and put the cards into groups of similar types of professionals. There is no right or wrong way of doing this, so please go ahead and put them into the groups that make most sense to you.</b></p> <p><i>Cards to include: Nurse / Midwife / Dentist / Pharmacist / Paramedic / Optician / Surgeon / Physiotherapist / Chiropractor / Doctor / Osteopath / Social worker / Art therapist / Chiropodist / Dietician / Hearing aid dispenser</i></p> <p><b>How have you grouped yours? What made you group these together?</b></p>	25	30

<p>[PROBE] severity of health issues they deal with / perceptions behind qualifications needed to practice / occupational vs. medical health services / type of service provided / the cost at point of use, etc.</p> <p><b>What name would you give to the people who are treated by these professionals? Is there one term that applies to all, or do they differ depending on what kind of service they are getting?</b></p> <p>How about if you went to the doctor? What would someone who goes to see a doctor be called? How about someone who sees a dentist? What about an optician? [PROBE] Patient vs. customer vs. user</p>		
<p><b>TOPIC 2 – Perceptions of the optical profession</b></p> <p><i>This section aims to understand perceptions and misconceptions of, and understand personal experience of the optical profession.</i></p> <p><b>Now we’ve looked at different types of healthcare provider, I want to talk specifically about opticians. Thinking about opticians, what words and phrases come to mind initially?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Moderator to list on flipchart] What has made you think of these things? [PROBE]: personal experience, advertising, high street perceptions, etc.</li> <li>• If you had to explain to someone – for example, someone who doesn’t know what an optician is – how would you describe what they do? [PROBE] perform sight tests / check for symptoms non-sight related conditions / prescribe glasses or contact lenses / fit glasses</li> <li>• Do you think that all opticians are the same, or are there different types of optician? What makes you say this?</li> <li>• When you think of staff in opticians, do you think that they are all the same, or do you think that there are different ‘types’ of opticians staff? [PROBE] qualifications / experience / regulation, etc.</li> <li>• To what extent, if at all, would it affect your perception of opticians if some staff members are <b>not</b> regulated? What, if</li> </ul>	45	70

<p>anything, would the implications of this be for you? [PROBE] perceptions of opticians / visits to the optician / trust / reputation, etc.</p> <p><b>When we recruited you we asked if you had been to the opticians in the last two years, and I think most of you have, is that right? [NOTE: this group to have been recruited as patients, all should have had a sight test in last 2 years ]</b></p> <p><b>Thinking about the last time you went to the opticians, when was that? What was the reason for your visit?</b></p> <p><b>When you decided to go to the opticians, how did you choose which one to go to? What did you look for when making your decision?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [PROBE] Recommendations from others / research online / advertising / how easy it is to book etc</li> <li>• Did you feel confident making a choice about which optician to go to? Why?</li> <li>• What <b>type</b> of optician did you go to? [PROBE] multiple, e.g. Specsavers, Boots, vs. independents</li> <li>• What made you choose a multiple / independent?</li> <li>• [PROBE] price / trust in brand / value for money / customer care / previous experience</li> </ul> <p><b>Were you happy with your experience at the opticians during this last visit? Why/why not?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [PROBE] cost / professionalism of optician / quality of the tests / other factors?</li> <li>• Can you tell me about your pre-consultation experience, i.e. before you had your consultation or sight test? [PROBE] information received / advice given / guidance about what the sight test will involve</li> <li>• How, if at all, did the information / advice / guidance you received affect your experience of visiting the optician?</li> <li>• Can you tell me about your consultation or sight test? [PROBE] conversation before sight test / decision-making process</li> </ul>		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did the way the consultation or sight test was conducted make you feel? [PROBE] cared for / at ease / trust in the optician / confidence in the optician</li> <li>• Finally, can you tell me a little bit about after your consultation or sight test – what happened next? [PROBE] advice or information given / follow up appointment / cost and payment / overall satisfaction with the services</li> </ul> <p><b>Following your visit to the opticians – did you purchase any corrective products, such as glasses or contact lenses?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>If yes:</i> Did you purchase these from the same place that you had your sight test? Why?</li> <li>• What was your buying experience like? What was the advice that you were given?</li> <li>• <i>If bought online:</i> I'm interested in those of you who, after your consultation or sight test, went and bought your products online. Can you tell me a little bit about what your experience is like, and why you decided to buy your products online?</li> </ul> <p><b>If you had a problem with your eyes or were concerned about your sight who, if anyone, would you go to? For example, what if you woke up tomorrow with blurred vision, or something in your eye?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [PROBE] GP surgery / A&amp;E / walk-in centre / opticians / friends or family etc</li> <li>• Why would you approach these people/places?</li> <li>• If you wanted to get information about eye health or sight, rather than having a problem would you go to the same people? Why?</li> </ul> <p><b>For those of you with children, or caring responsibilities for older family members, does any of this change when you are thinking about their eye health or sight?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you choose an optician based on different reasons? <i>If yes:</i> How would your criteria be different?</li> <li>• If they had a problem with their eye health or you were concerned about their sight would you go to the same people/places? <i>If no:</i> Why not?</li> </ul>		
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<p><b>Have any of you had a bad experience when going to the optician? If so, would you mind sharing your story? [NB this could include some experiences which participants may feel are too sensitive to discuss in a group – Moderator to reassure of anonymity &amp; move on]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was it that made this a bad experience? [PROBE] cost / professionalism of optician / quality of the tests / other factors?</li> <li>• Was there anything about the information, advice and guidance you received that affected your experience?</li> <li>• What about the level of care you received – how, if at all, did that affect your experience? [PROBE] involvement in decision-making / communications / patient care / comfort / trust / pressure to buy products, etc.</li> <li>• <i>If say quality of the tests:</i> In what way did you feel the quality of the tests were not good enough? How could you tell?</li> </ul> <p><b>In this circumstance (or imagining this has happened if you have not had a bad experience at the optician yourself) – what, if anything, did/would you do? Why?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [PROBE] Make a complaint at the time / complain to a Head Office (if relevant )/ find an ombudsman or regulator etc.</li> <li>• <i>If would not say anything:</i> What are the reasons why you wouldn't say anything or make any complaints in these circumstances?</li> </ul> <p><b>Thinking of healthcare in general, are you aware of any organisations in charge of making sure they provide a good service? If yes: Which organisations are you thinking of?</b></p> <p><b>Are you aware of an organisation that regulates opticians? If so, who do you think that might be?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How important or otherwise is it that opticians are regulated? Why?</li> </ul> <p><b>How interested or otherwise are you in finding out information about an organisation that regulates opticians? Where would you like to find out information about this organisation?</b></p>		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What, if any, would you say are the sources of information that you trust on information about health?</li> <li>• What, if any, channels (e.g. email, leaflet) would be most appropriate for receiving information on this organisation?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>TOPIC 3 – Perceptions of eye health</b></p> <p><i>This section aims to understand the context in which opticians operate, and health concerns associated with eyes.</i></p> <p><b>I want to talk a little bit about eye health now. Within the context of your overall health, where does eye health fit in?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How important is your sight compared to your other senses and abilities?</li> <li>• What if anything are your concerns about your eye health either now or in the future?</li> <li>• Are there any particular groups that you think are most vulnerable in terms of eye health? (e.g. children, old people, those with a family history of optical problems, particular ethnic groups)</li> <li>• How do you think these ‘at-risk’ groups can be reached by professionals who want to highlight the importance of eye health to them?</li> </ul> <p><b>To close our conversation today, I would like you to tell what you have found most interesting about eye health. What’s the one thing that you have found most interesting this evening?</b></p> <p>THANK AND CLOSE</p> <p>FEEDBACK FORMS AND DISTRIBUTE INCENTIVES</p>	15	90

*In-depth interviews: 75+*

**TOPIC 1 – Understanding experience of the optical profession**

*The purpose of this section is to understand where the participant perceives the optical profession to fit in relation to other types of healthcare, and reasons for these perceptions.*

We're here today to talk about healthcare. As we go on, it will become clearer why we are here, but first of all I want to get a sense of what type of contact with different types of healthcare you have had recently.

1) You don't have to go into too much detail, but could you tell me a little bit about whether you've had any healthcare appointments in the last few months?

- [PROBE] Dental check-up, hygienist check-up, blood test, eye test, cholesterol test, medical vaccination.

2) Thinking about all the different type of professionals who work in healthcare, are there some that you trust more than others? Which ones? Why?

3) What name would you give to the people who are treated by these different healthcare professionals? Is there one term that applies to all, or do they differ depending on what kind of service they are getting?

- How about if you went to the doctor? What would someone who goes to see a doctor be called? How about someone who sees a dentist? What about an optician? [PROBE] Patient vs. customer vs. user

4) Now we've thought about different types of healthcare provider, I want to talk specifically about opticians. Thinking about opticians, what words and phrases come to mind initially?

- [Moderator note spontaneous responses] What has made you think of these things? [PROBE]: personal experience, advertising, high street perceptions, etc.
- If you had to explain to someone – for example, someone who doesn't know what an optician is – how would you describe what they do? [PROBE] perform sight tests / check for symptoms non-sight related conditions / prescribe glasses or contact lenses / fit glasses
- Do you think that all opticians are the same, or are there different types of optician? What makes you say this?
- When you think of staff in opticians, do you think that they are all the same, or do you think that there are different 'types' of opticians staff? [PROBE] qualifications / experience / regulation, etc.

- How important or otherwise is it that opticians are regulated? Why?
- To what extent, if at all, would it affect your perception of opticians if some staff members are **not** regulated? What, if anything, would the implications of this be for you? [PROBE] perceptions of opticians / visits to the optician / trust / reputation, etc.

**5) Thinking about the last time you went to the opticians, when was that? What was the reason for your visit?**

**6) When you decided to go to the opticians, how did you choose which one to go to? What did you look for when making your decision?**

- [PROBE] Recommendations from others / research online / advertising / how easy it is to book etc
- Do you feel confident making a choice about which optician to go to?
- What **type** of optician did you go to? [PROBE] multiple, e.g. Specsavers, Boots, vs. independents
- What made you choose a multiple / independent?
- [PROBE] price / trust in brand / value for money / customer care / previous experience
- *If have a long-term relationship with their provider:* how long have you been seeing this optician? How satisfied are you with the services provided by this optician? Have you ever changed opticians? Why?

**7) Were you happy with your experience at the opticians during this last visit? Why/why not?**

- [PROBE] cost / professionalism of optician / quality of the tests / other factors?
- Can you tell me about your pre-consultation experience, i.e. before you had your consultation or sight test? [PROBE] information received / advice given / guidance about what the sight test will involve
- How, if at all, did the information / advice / guidance you received affect your experience of visiting the optician?
- Can you tell me about your consultation or sight test? [PROBE] conversation before sight test / decision-making process
- How did the way the consultation or sight test was conducted make you feel? [PROBE] cared for / at ease / trust in the optician / confidence in the optician

- Finally, can you tell me a little bit about after your consultation or sight test – what happened next? [PROBE] advice or information given / follow up appointment / cost and payment / overall satisfaction with the services
- 8) **If you had a new problem or a change in an existing problem with your eyes or were concerned about a change in your sight who, if anyone, would you go to? For example, what if you woke up tomorrow with blurred vision, or something in your eye?**
- [PROBE] GP surgery / A&E / walk-in centre / opticians / friends or family etc
  - Why would you approach these people/places?
- 9) **If you wanted to get information about eye health or sight, rather than having a problem would you go to the same people? Why?**

## TOPIC 2 – Perceptions of eye health & context of ageing

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*This section aims to understand the context in which the optical profession operates, and health concerns associated with eyes, particularly in the context of ageing.*

- 10) **I want to talk a little bit about eye health now. Within the context of your overall health, where does eye health fit in?**
- How important is your sight compared to your other senses and abilities?
  - Does having reduced sight impact in your life in any ways or not? How?
- 11) **Are there any particular groups that you think are most vulnerable in terms of eye health?** [PROBE] Children, old people, those with a family history of optical problems, particular ethnic groups
- How do you think these ‘at-risk’ groups can be reached by professionals who want to highlight the importance of eye health to them?
  - Thinking about your own sight, is there anything you would like to have known about eye health earlier? Is there anything you would have changed as a result of this information?

**12) Do you have any particular concerns about your eye health either now or in the future?**

- *If yes:* What are your key concerns?
- Have these changed at all in recent years? *If yes:* How?
- When did your concerns start to change? Why?
- Are you more or less concerned about particular issues?
- Are you concerned about different issues than you were previously?

**13) Which, if any, of any of the following eye conditions are you aware of? If yes, how did you hear about them? What do you know about them?**

- Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)
- Glaucoma
- Cataract
- Diabetic retinopathy
- Dry eyes

**14) Are there any things about the way you currently receive eye care from an optician which you would like to change?**

- [PROBE] Would you prefer to be seen at home or where you live? *If yes* Why?
- [PROBE] Would you prefer to be able to go at the same time as friends or family? *If yes* Why?
- [PROBE] Would you like information to be presented in a different format? *If yes* How?
- [PROBE] How often you receive a sight test? *If yes* Why?

**15) If you were unhappy about the quality of care you received from an optician what, if anything, would you do?**

- [PROBE] Make a complaint at the time / complain to a Head Office (if relevant )/ find an ombudsman or regulator etc
- *If would not say anything.* What are the reasons why you wouldn't say anything or make any complaints in these circumstances?

16) How far, if at all, would you say that the services provided by opticians are good value? Why?

17) What costs would you normally expect to pay when you visit the optician for a sight test? Are these acceptable or unacceptable?

18) Thinking of healthcare in general, are you aware of any organisations in charge of making sure they provide a good service? *If yes:* Which organisations are you thinking of?

19) Are you aware of an organisation that regulates opticians? *If yes:* Who do you think that might be?

Thank you for taking the time to speak to me today. Was there anything else you wanted to cover, or any points you feel I might have missed?

### *In-depth interviews: low income patients*

#### TOPIC 1 – Understanding experience of the optical profession

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*The purpose of this section is to understand where the participant perceives the optical profession to fit in relation to other types of healthcare, and reasons for these perceptions.*

We're here today to talk about healthcare. As we go on, it will become clearer why we are here, but first of all I want to get a sense of what type of contact with different types of healthcare you have had recently.

1) You don't have to go into too much detail, but could you tell me a little bit about whether you've had any healthcare appointments in the last few months?

- [PROBE] Dental check-up, hygienist check-up, blood test, eye test, cholesterol test, medical vaccination.

2) Thinking about all the different type of professionals who work in healthcare, are there some that you trust more than others? Which ones? Why?

- 3) **What name would you give to the people who are treated by these different healthcare professionals? Is there one term that applies to all, or do they differ depending on what kind of service they are getting?**
- How about if you went to the doctor? What would someone who goes to see a doctor be called? How about someone who sees a dentist? What about an optician? [PROBE] Patient vs. customer vs. user
- 4) **Thinking about all these different types of healthcare, are there any that you feel are difficult to access because of the costs associated with them?**
- [PROBE] paying for a prescription/ visiting a dentist/ visiting an opticians etc
- 5) **Now we've thought about different types of healthcare provider, I want to talk specifically about opticians. Thinking about opticians, what words and phrases come to mind initially?**
- [Moderator note spontaneous responses] What has made you think of these things? [PROBE]: personal experience, advertising, high street perceptions, etc.
  - If you had to explain to someone – for example, someone who doesn't know what an optician is – how would you describe what they do? [PROBE] perform sight tests / check for symptoms non-sight related conditions / prescribe glasses or contact lenses / fit glasses
  - Do you think that all opticians are the same, or are there different types of optician? What makes you say this?
  - When you think of staff in opticians, do you think that they are all the same, or do you think that there are different 'types' of opticians staff? [PROBE] qualifications / experience / regulation, etc.
  - How important or otherwise is it that opticians are regulated? Why?
  - To what extent, if at all, would it affect your perception of opticians if some staff members are **not** regulated? What, if anything, would the implications of this be for you? [PROBE] perceptions of opticians / visits to the optician / trust / reputation, etc.
- 6) **Thinking about the last time you went to the opticians, when was that? What was the reason for your visit?**

- *If have not been to the opticians recently* [PROBE]: Feel no problems with eye health or sight / scared of or dislike the opticians / unsure how to make an appointment or where services available / concerned about cost etc. / length of time it takes / availability of transport / cost of travel / having to purchase a product after the test

**7) When you decided to go to the opticians, how did you choose which one to go to? What did you look for when making your decision?**

- [PROBE] Recommendations from others / research online / advertising / how easy it is to book / cost etc
- Do you feel confident making a choice about which optician to go to?
- What **type** of optician did you go to? [PROBE] multiple, e.g. Specsavers, Boots, vs. independents
- What made you choose a multiple / independent?
- [PROBE] price / trust in brand / value for money / customer care / previous experience

**8) Following your visit to the opticians – did you purchase any corrective products, such as glasses or contact lenses?**

- *If yes:* Did you purchase these from the same place that you had your sight test? Why?
- What was your buying experience like? What was the advice that you were given?
- *If bought online:* Can you tell me a little bit about what your experience is like, and why you decided to buy your products online?

**9) Were you happy with your experience at the opticians during this last visit? Why/why not?**

- [PROBE] cost / professionalism of optician / quality of the tests / other factors?
- Can you tell me about your pre-consultation experience, i.e. before you had your consultation or sight test? [PROBE] information received / advice given / guidance about what the sight test will involve
- How, if at all, did the information / advice / guidance you received affect your experience of visiting the optician?
- Can you tell me about your consultation or sight test? [PROBE] conversation before sight test / decision-making process

- How did the way the consultation or sight test was conducted make you feel? [PROBE] cared for / at ease / trust in the optician / confidence in the optician
- Finally, can you tell me a little bit about after your consultation or sight test – what happened next? [PROBE] advice or information given / follow up appointment / cost and payment / overall satisfaction with the services

10)

11) If you had a problem with your eyes or were concerned about your sight who, if anyone, would you go to? For example, what if you woke up tomorrow with blurred vision, or something in your eye?

- [PROBE] GP surgery / A&E / walk-in centre / opticians / friends or family etc
- Why would you approach these people/places?

12) If you wanted to get information about eye health or sight, rather than having a problem would you go to the same people? Why?

## TOPIC 2 – Perceptions of eye health & in context of low incomes

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*This section aims to understand the context in which the optical profession operates, and health concerns associated with eyes, particularly in the context of living on a low income.*

13) I want to talk a little bit about eye health now. Within the context of your overall health, where does eye health fit in?

- [PROBE] How important is your sight compared to your other senses and abilities?
- [PROBE] What if anything are your concerns about your eye health either now or in the future?
- [PROBE] Are there any particular groups that you think are most vulnerable in terms of eye health? (e.g. children, old people, those with a family history of optical problems, particular ethnic groups)

14) How far if at all, would you say that the services provided by opticians are good value? Why?

15) What costs would you normally expect to pay when you visit the optician for a sight test? Are these acceptable or unacceptable?

16) Are you aware of any ways in which you may be eligible for help with the cost of a sight test or other costs associated with eye health?

- *If yes:* What are these sources of help with the costs of eye care? Have you used them yourself? Why?

17) Are there any things about the way you currently receive eye care from an optician which you would like to change?

18) If you were unhappy about the quality of care you received from an optician what, if anything, would you do?

- [PROBE] Make a complaint at the time / complain to a Head Office (if relevant )/ find an ombudsman or regulator etc
- *If would not say anything:* What are the reasons why you wouldn't say anything or make any complaints in these circumstances?

19) Thinking of healthcare in general, are you aware of any organisations in charge of making sure they provide a good service? *If yes:* Which organisations are you thinking of?

20) Are you aware of an organisation that regulates opticians? *If yes:* Who do you think that might be?

Thank you for taking the time to speak to me today. Was there anything else you wanted to cover, or any points you feel I might have missed?

*In-depth interviews: parents of children aged under 8*

## TOPIC 1 – Understanding experience of the optical profession

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*The purpose of this section is to understand where the participant perceives the optical profession to fit in relation to other types of healthcare, and reasons for these perceptions.*

We're here today to talk about healthcare. As we go on, it will become clearer why we are here, but first of all I want to get a sense of what type of contact with different types of healthcare you have had recently.

- 1) You don't have to go into too much detail, but could you tell me a little bit about whether you've had any healthcare appointments in the last few months?
  - [PROBE] Dental check-up, hygienist check-up, blood test, eye test, cholesterol test, medical vaccination.
- 2) Thinking about all the different type of professionals who work in healthcare, are there some that you trust more than others? Which ones? Why?
- 3) What name would you give to the people who are treated by these different healthcare professionals? Is there one term that applies to all, or do they differ depending on what kind of service they are getting?
  - How about if you went to the doctor? What would someone who goes to see a doctor be called? How about someone who sees a dentist? What about an optician? [PROBE] Patient vs. customer vs. user
- 4) Now we've thought about different types of healthcare provider, I want to talk specifically about opticians. Thinking about opticians, what words and phrases come to mind initially?
  - [Moderator note spontaneous responses] What has made you think of these things? [PROBE]: personal experience, advertising, high street perceptions, etc.
  - If you had to explain to someone – for example, someone who doesn't know what an optician is – how would you describe what they do? [PROBE] perform sight tests / check for symptoms non-sight related conditions / prescribe glasses or contact lenses / fit glasses

- Do you think that all opticians are the same, or are there different types of optician? What makes you say this?
- When you think of staff in opticians, do you think that they are all the same, or do you think that there are different 'types' of opticians staff? [PROBE] qualifications / experience / regulation, etc.
- How important or otherwise is it that opticians are regulated? Why?
- To what extent, if at all, would it affect your perception of opticians if some staff members are **not** regulated? What, if anything, would the implications of this be for you? [PROBE] perceptions of opticians / visits to the optician / trust / reputation, etc.

**5) Thinking about the last time you went to the opticians, when was that? What was the reason for your visit?**

- *If have not been to the opticians recently* [PROBE]: Feel no problems with eye health or sight / scared of or dislike the opticians / unsure how to make an appointment or where services available / concerned about cost etc. / length of time it takes / availability of transport / cost of travel / having to purchase a product after the test

**6) When you decided to go to the opticians, how did you choose which one to go to? What did you look for when making your decision?**

- [PROBE] Recommendations from others / research online / advertising / how easy it is to book etc
- Did you feel confident making a choice about which optician to go to?
- What **type** of optician did you go to? [PROBE] multiple, e.g. Specsavers, Boots, vs. independents
- What made you choose a multiple / independent?
- [PROBE] price / trust in brand / value for money / customer care / previous experience

**7) Were you happy with your experience at the opticians during this last visit? Why/why not?**

- [PROBE] cost / professionalism of optician / quality of the tests / other factors?

- Can you tell me about your pre-consultation experience, i.e. before you had your consultation or sight test? [PROBE] information received / advice given / guidance about what the sight test will involve
- How, if at all, did the information / advice / guidance you received affect your experience of visiting the optician?
- Can you tell me about your consultation or sight test? [PROBE] conversation before sight test / decision-making process
- How did the way the consultation or sight test was conducted make you feel? [PROBE] cared for / at ease / trust in the optician / confidence in the optician
- Finally, can you tell me a little bit about after your consultation or sight test – what happened next? [PROBE] advice or information given / follow up appointment / cost and payment / overall satisfaction with the services

**8) If you had a problem with your eyes or were concerned about your sight who, if anyone, would you go to? For example, what if you woke up tomorrow with blurred vision, or something in your eye?**

- [PROBE] GP surgery / A&E / walk-in centre / opticians / friends or family etc
- Why would you approach these people/places?

**9) If you wanted to get information about eye health or sight, rather than having a problem would you go to the same people? Why?**

## **TOPIC 2 – Perceptions of eye health & views as parents**

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*This section aims to understand the context in which the optical profession operate, and health concerns associated with eyes, particularly in the context of caring for children.*

**10) I want to talk a little bit about eye health now. Within the context of your overall health, where does eye health fit in?**

- How important is your sight compared to your other senses and abilities?
- What if anything are your concerns about your eye health either now or in the future?

- Are there any particular groups that you think are most vulnerable in terms of eye health? (e.g. children, old people, those with a family history of optical problems, particular ethnic groups)

**11) *If don't say children:* Thinking about children's sight and eye health, do you think that there are any particular issues for children?**

- Do these issues change by the age of the child? [PROBE] under 5s / under 8s / under 13s / teenagers

**12) Has your child ever had a sight test?**

- *If no* – [Moderator to explore reasons for no sight test & any barriers or misperceptions]
- *If yes* – Did you take them for a sight test or did they receive it at school? How often does your child usually receive a sight test?

- *If at school:* Were you informed beforehand that your child would be tested? Were you present during the test? How did the way the consultation or sight test was conducted make your child feel? [PROBE] cared for / at ease / trust in the optician / confidence in the optician

- *If parent took child:* Can you tell me about the pre-consultation experience, i.e. before your child had your consultation or sight test? [PROBE] information received / advice given / guidance about what the sight test will involve

- How, if at all, did the information / advice / guidance you received affect your child's experience of visiting the optician?

- How did the way the consultation or sight test was conducted make you and your child feel? [PROBE] cared for / at ease / trust in the optician / confidence in the optician

- Finally, can you tell me a little bit about after the consultation or sight test – what happened next? [PROBE] advice or information given / follow up appointment / cost and payment / overall satisfaction with the services

**13) If you had a choice, would you prefer to take your children for a sight test yourself or for them to receive it at school? Why? Does this vary at all by the age of the child?**

- Are you aware of any differences between sight checks carried out in schools and those carried out elsewhere? *If yes:* In what way or ways are they different?

**14) As a parent, does any of the decision-making around sight checks and eye care change when you are thinking about the eye health or sight of your children?**

- Do you think that eye health is a more important an issue for children than adults, less important, or about the same?
- Would you choose an optician for your child based on different reasons to the ones we discussed previously for yourself? *If yes:* How would your criteria be different?
- If your child had a problem with their eye health or you were concerned about their sight would you go to the same people/places for information? *If no:* Why not? Is this different for treatment and information?

**15) To what extent, if at all, are you aware of the eye condition often called lazy eye (amblyopia)? *If aware:* how did you hear about them? What do you know about them?**

**16) Are there any things about the way you or your child currently receive eye care from an optician which you would like to change?**

- [PROBE] Would you like information to be presented in a different format? *If yes*  
How?
- [PROBE] To what extent do you think that opticians meet the needs of children?  
Why?
- Are they 'child-friendly'?

**17) How far, if at all, would you say that the services provided by opticians are good value? Why?**

**18) What costs would you normally expect to pay when you visit the optician for a sight test? Are these acceptable or unacceptable?**

**19) If you were unhappy about the quality of care you or your child received from an optician what, if anything, would you do?**

- [PROBE] Make a complaint at the time / complain to a Head Office (if relevant )/ find an ombudsman or regulator etc
- *If would not say anything.* What are the reasons why you wouldn't say anything or make any complaints in these circumstances?

20) Thinking of healthcare in general, are you aware of any organisations in charge of making sure they provide a good service? *If yes:* Which organisations are you thinking of?

21) Are you aware of an organisation that regulates opticians? *If yes:* Who do you think that might be?

Thank you for taking the time to speak to me today. Was there anything else you wanted to cover, or any points you feel I might have missed?