AOI 2018 CHILDREN’S EYE-CARE & CATARACT SURVEY REPORT

Report for Cork East Constituency

CHILDREN’S EYE-CARE

Good vision is essential for children to participate and benefit from education. The early years of visual development are key to ensuring that children do not have developmental problems that will restrict their ability to achieve their potential. Children’s eyesight develops from birth and as children grow so quickly, so can their eyesight change rapidly.

While a small number of children do develop serious conditions that require medical intervention and supervision, the majority who develop issues with their sight can be managed with a regular eye examination and the prescribing of spectacles. However, early identification and management of children at risk of lazy eye (amblyopia) and squint (strabismus) is compromised by the volume of children who simply need spectacles waiting on the current waiting lists for service. In addition, the HSE has made a decision to abolish the 6th Class vision screening and has not yet put in place a national policy to replace this.

- According to the survey children in your constituency are waiting up to 24 months to access the Community Ophthalmic Physician (COP); when a majority of these cases could be dealt with by Optometrists enabling children with more serious problems to be seen sooner and more frequently by the COP.
- In your constituency the 6th Class screening has been abolished; and at the moment there is no alternative in place.

CATARACT SURGERY

Cataract surgery is a life-changing procedure that can restore the sight of elderly people giving them back their independence and reducing the cost of preventable sight loss on the exchequer, families and carers. After surgery all patients need a post-op review to make sure that the eye is healthy and vision acceptable. The majority of people who have cataract surgery do not have complications. In the award-winning Sligo Cataract Scheme these people were examined in the community by Optometrists at the same time as their appointment to get new glasses, which is also needed after cataract surgery. Combining these two appointments in the community saves money – and allows people who need to see the Doctor in the hospital quicker access (as the waiting list is not blocked by people who are essentially healthy).

- According to the survey, people in your constituency who are referred to the Hospital Eye Service due to cataract wait on average 48 months between being referred due to reduced vision and having the surgery to restore sight.
- People in your constituency who can afford to pay for private care wait on average 3 months for the same operation.

Sight for life, vision for the future

A greater role for Optometrists in public eye-care can greatly improve public eye health in Ireland and place it on a sustainable footing into the future including to:

Solve unacceptable waiting lists
Increase early detection
Improve patient outcomes
Improve access
Reduce costs
Put in place a model to respond to an aging and increasing population.

Survey completed by members of the Association of Optometrists Ireland (via email) April 2018.

CALL TO ACTION for TDs and Senators:

Call on the Minister for Health to –

- Roll out a national scheme to allow children who do not need medical or surgical management to be examined in the community by Optometrists.
- Roll out the award-winning Sligo Cataract Scheme across the country with Optometrists and Hospital Eye Departments working together.

Association of Optometrists Ireland,
Kevin Culliton Rooms,
13 Greenmount House,
Harold’s Cross Road,
Dublin, D6W K461.
T: (01) 4538850 E: info@aoi.ie
W: www.aoi.ie
What is an optometrist; and who are the Association of Optometrists Ireland (AOI)?

Sight for life, vision for the future

Formerly known as an ‘optician’ or ‘ophthalmic optician’

- optical practices in Ireland with AOI members working on behalf of the public.

“Optometrist” is a protected title in Irish law.

Founded in 1905, the AOI has been driving standards in Irish eye-care for over a century.

352

“The Association of Optometrists Ireland, Kevin Culliton Rooms, 13 Greenmount House, Harolds Cross Road, Dublin, D6W K461. T: (01) 4538850 E: info@aoi.ie W: www.aoi.ie

For more information contact the Association of Optometrists Ireland

Association of Optometrists Ireland, Kevin Culliton Rooms, 13 Greenmount House, Harolds Cross Road, Dublin, D6W K461. T: (01) 4538850 E: info@aoi.ie W: www.aoi.ie

The AOI is the professional body representing individual optical professionals in Ireland. Founded in 1905, the Association has been the voice of the profession for over a century. AOI members carry out over a million eye-examinations each year - to medical card holders (GMS), to those entitled through the treatment benefit (PRSI) and to private patients. Continuing Professional Development is a key area that the AOI serves both its members and the public ensuring that the highest quality of care is delivered to the Irish public. As an organisation, the AOI has been at the forefront of efforts to modernise the delivery of eye-care in Ireland. For example, initiatives such as the Sligo Cataract Scheme; compulsory CPD for members prior to it being a statutory requirement; the AOI Certificates in Paediatrics, Retinal Health Screening, Anterior Segment Disease & Glaucoma; plus partnering with WOPEC* to facilitate the modern scope of practice of an optometrist. To qualify as an optometrist, you must first complete a 4 yr B.Sc. (Hons) Degree and then successfully complete the Professional Qualifying Examinations (or international equivalent) before you are entitled to apply for registration with CORU to practice and use the title of ‘optometrist’.

*Wales Optometry Postgraduate Education Centre

"Optometry - is a healthcare profession that is autonomous, educated, and regulated (licensed / registered), and optometrists are the primary healthcare practitioners of the eye and visual system who provide comprehensive eye and vision care, which includes refraction and dispensing, detection / diagnosis and management of disease in the eye, and the rehabilitation of conditions of the visual system.”

As defined by the WHO (World Health Organisation) / World Council of Optometry.

Pronounced: “op- tom- eh: trist”
AOI 2018
CHILDREN’S EYE-CARE & CATARACT SURVEY REPORT
Sight for life, vision for the future

Average wait for cataract surgery via public service
28 months

Shortest wait for cataract surgery – public service (Sligo-Leitrim)
15 months
As a result of the award winning Sligo Cataract Scheme

Average wait for cataract surgery when paid privately
3 months

Longest wait for cataract surgery – public service (Cork / Kerry)
up to 60 months (5yrs)

In 36 of the 40 constituencies the 6th class vision screening has been abandoned

Only in 9 of the 40 constituencies have arrangements been put in place to look after children aged over 8 with routine vision problems

For more information contact the Association of Optometrists Ireland
Association of Optometrists Ireland, Kevin Culliton Rooms, 13 Greenmount House, Harolds Cross Road, Dublin, D6W K461.
T: (01) 4538850 E: info@aoi.ie W: www.aoi.ie

Average wait for children via public service
15 months

Does your local HSE office authorise applications from children aged 12-16 who have their own medical card?

In 19 of the 40 constituencies children aged 12-16 fall between the cracks in the system.

The ‘school eye-care’ scheme finishes at age 12.
The ‘adult’ medical card scheme starts at 16 leaving a gap for 12-16 year olds.
It is up to local HSE offices to decide if these children will have entitlements.
A greater role for Optometrists in public eye-care can greatly improve public eye health in Ireland and place it on a sustainable footing into the future including to:

- Solve unacceptable waiting lists
- Increase early detection
- Improve patient outcomes
- Improve access
- Reduce costs
- Put in place a model to respond to an aging and increasing population.

**CHILDREN’S EYE-CARE**

- Children who are referred to HSE Eye Clinics must wait **24 months** before they have an eye examination which could be carried out immediately by Optometrists in the community.
- Has the children’s sixth class vision screening been abandoned in Cork East? **Yes.**
- Has the HSE put an arrangement in place to deal with children affected by this decision? **No alternative.**

**CATARACT SURGERY**

- For people with cataract they must wait **48 months** between referral due to reduced vision caused by cataract and having surgery to restore sight.
- Where someone can afford to pay for private care they wait **3 months** for the same operation.

**Questions posed to AOI members in relation to measures to relieve the pressure on an overburdened health service?**

Would you be willing to carry out eye examinations on children over 8 yrs old who have been discharged from the local community eye clinic, if an arrangement is / was in place?

- **Yes** 87%
- **Ad hoc scheme in place** 12%
- **No** 1%

If a version of the award winning *Sligo Cataract Scheme* was available to patients in your area, would you be willing to participate by providing post-operative review of uncomplicated patients and completing the hospital electronic patient record?

- **Yes** 97%
- **No** 3%