

## Who works in eye health?

**Ophthalmologists:** Ophthalmology is the branch of medicine that deals with problems that affect the structure and/or the function of the eyeball. Ophthalmologists specialise in eye and vision care and also perform operations on eyes. They are based in hospitals and are regulated by the [GMC](#).

**Orthoptists:** Orthoptists are experts in diagnosing and treating problems with eye movement and how the eyes work together which is called 'binocular vision'. These problems can be caused by issues with the muscles around the eyes, or defects in the nerves that enable the brain to communicate with the eyes. Orthoptists are usually based in hospitals and are regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council ([HCPC](#)).

**Optometrists:** An optometrist examines eyes, tests sight and prescribes spectacles or contact lenses for those who need them. Optometrists also fit spectacles and contact lenses, give advice on visual problems and can detect any eye diseases or abnormalities, referring the patient to a medical practitioner if necessary.

Optometrists may also share the care of patients who have chronic ophthalmic conditions with a medical practitioner. Once qualified, optometrists can undertake further training to specialise in certain eye conditions that are treated with drugs. Optometrists can be hospital based but they usually work privately or for high street optician stores. They are regulated by the [GOC](#).



**Dispensing Opticians:** A dispensing optician advises on, fits and supplies the most appropriate spectacles after taking account of each patient's individual needs.

They also play an important role in advising and supplying low vision aids to those who are partially sighted. Dispensing opticians can be based in hospitals but they usually work privately or for high street optician stores. They are regulated by [GOC](#).

**ECLOs:** Eye Clinic Liaison Officers, or similar 'early intervention support staff', work closely with medical and nursing staff in the eye clinic, and with the sensory team in social services. They are generally based in hospitals. ECLOs provide those recently diagnosed with an eye condition with the practical and emotional support to help them understand their diagnosis, deal with their sight loss and maintain their independence.

**ROVs:** Rehabilitation Officers Visual Impairment. These individuals identify, deliver and evaluate professional rehabilitation interventions to visually impaired people to enhance their skills and confidence to maximise their independence. They also assess and provide support plans to help people at risk from harm, or from becoming too dependent on others, due to their sight loss. ROVs act as advocates for visually impaired people and help promote accessible services, equality, social integration and understanding of the impact of sight loss. They are local authority based and the Rehab Workers' Professional Network ([RWPN](#)) promotes and maintains proper professional standards and conduct for members of the profession.