

# Optimising Eye Care in Regulated Care Settings

A resource for Care Homes

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## Sight Testing in Care Homes

Routine sight testing is important, particularly for elderly and frail individuals. Seeing well can have a profound impact upon quality of life.

Evidence shows that the risk of falls increases with poor vision and that taking action to improve vision (e.g. spectacles or cataract surgery) can reduce the likelihood of a fall. There is also evidence linking poor vision to dementia.

Some eye conditions that are common in older people do not cause symptoms in the early stages, only affecting vision later when treatment is much more difficult.

### **Early detection is key to preventing sight loss.**

People who reside in care homes may be able to attend their usual high street optician, either independently or with help from friends, family, or carers. If they are unable to attend an optical practice, they will be eligible for an NHS funded domiciliary sight test. Some high street opticians offer a domiciliary service in addition to their usual practice appointments. Dedicated domiciliary providers are also available.

**This document is aimed at care home managers and staff, to help explain NHS sight testing, what to expect from opticians who visit your facility and how you can raise concerns, should they arise.**

### Fundamentals for NHS Sight Tests

Residents may be reminded that a routine examination is due by their previous optician, or they may experience a change in vision that indicates a sight test is needed. Either way, it is for residents or their advocates to initiate the request for an NHS sight test from an optician of their choice.

Residents with reduced capacity may need assistance from their family or legal advocate to initiate a request for a sight test and help in selection of an optician. The care home may assist.

Typically, NHS sight tests are conducted annually for people over 70 years of age. Sometimes shorter or longer intervals may be considered appropriate depending on individual circumstances. Testing sight for someone under 12 months since their last test requires specific justification.

Opticians providing domiciliary care are expected to adhere to the [Optical Confederation's Code of Conduct](#). If you feel the conduct of an optician providing NHS sight testing contravenes this code then you should report your concerns to Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB on this email: [england.lancsat-optometry@nhs.net](mailto:england.lancsat-optometry@nhs.net).

### Selected points from the Code of Conduct

- The first duty of opticians is to the patient, their eye health, vision, and well-being.
- Opticians must not offer incentives to care home staff (e.g. free / discounted eyewear).
- People must be treated as individuals and their privacy and dignity always protected.
- Opticians should understand and be mindful of the Equality Act and the Mental Capacity Act.
- If the patient lacks capacity, opticians should leave information in confidence summarising the outcome of the sight test with the patient's relative, primary carer, or the care home.

Some care homes have a domiciliary optician who provides eye care services on a regular basis. As explained above, it should not be assumed that all residents want their eye care services provided by a single provider.

### Suggested protocols

The following recommendations are offered to care homes to ensure a good sight testing process.

- For help in identifying a choice of domiciliary opticians serving your locality, please email the Lancashire & South Cumbria optical delivery team using: [england.lancsat-optometry@nhs.net](mailto:england.lancsat-optometry@nhs.net)

### **When a domiciliary optician makes contact to advise sight testing is due:**

- Request a list of resident names be sent via secure email.
- Ensure the named residents still reside in the home.
- Check with residents, their family, or legal advocate that a sight test is due, and that they want to proceed with a booking.
- The optician may send a poster to publicise the date they will be attending.
- Other residents may request a sight test and this can be communicated to the optician.
- Confirm the list of residents expecting a sight test one day prior to the visit.
- When all sight tests have been completed the domiciliary optician must either:
  - ❖ For residents with full capacity: provide a copy of the spectacle prescription.
  - ❖ For residents with reduced capacity: leave written information in confidence summarising the outcome of the sight test with the care home or other advocate.

### **Delivering and fitting glasses**

- When new glasses are delivered to the care home, the optician or their assistant should ensure the frames fit correctly and that the resident's vision is satisfactory.
- Occasionally, people may have difficulty with their new glasses. The optician should be informed so that any issues can be addressed. A further sight test may be necessary.

**When a new resident moves into the care home:**

- Ensure an annual health check-up reminder is diarised in the resident's care record.
- Check their care plan for details of the resident's current optician and eye health history.
- Establish and record:
  - ❖ When the resident's next sight test is due.
  - ❖ Who is the resident's preferred optician and if a domiciliary service is needed.
- The care home can assist in selection of an optician if there is no existing preference.
- Where residents lack capacity to make decisions regarding eyecare it is important to involve their family or legal advocate.

**If care home staff have concerns regarding a resident's vision:**

- Sudden and profound changes in eyesight may require medical assessment.
- Otherwise, check the care plan for details of eye health history and the current optician.
- Facilitate a sight test booking, considering alternative providers if necessary.

## Sight Testing Arrangements for Care Homes

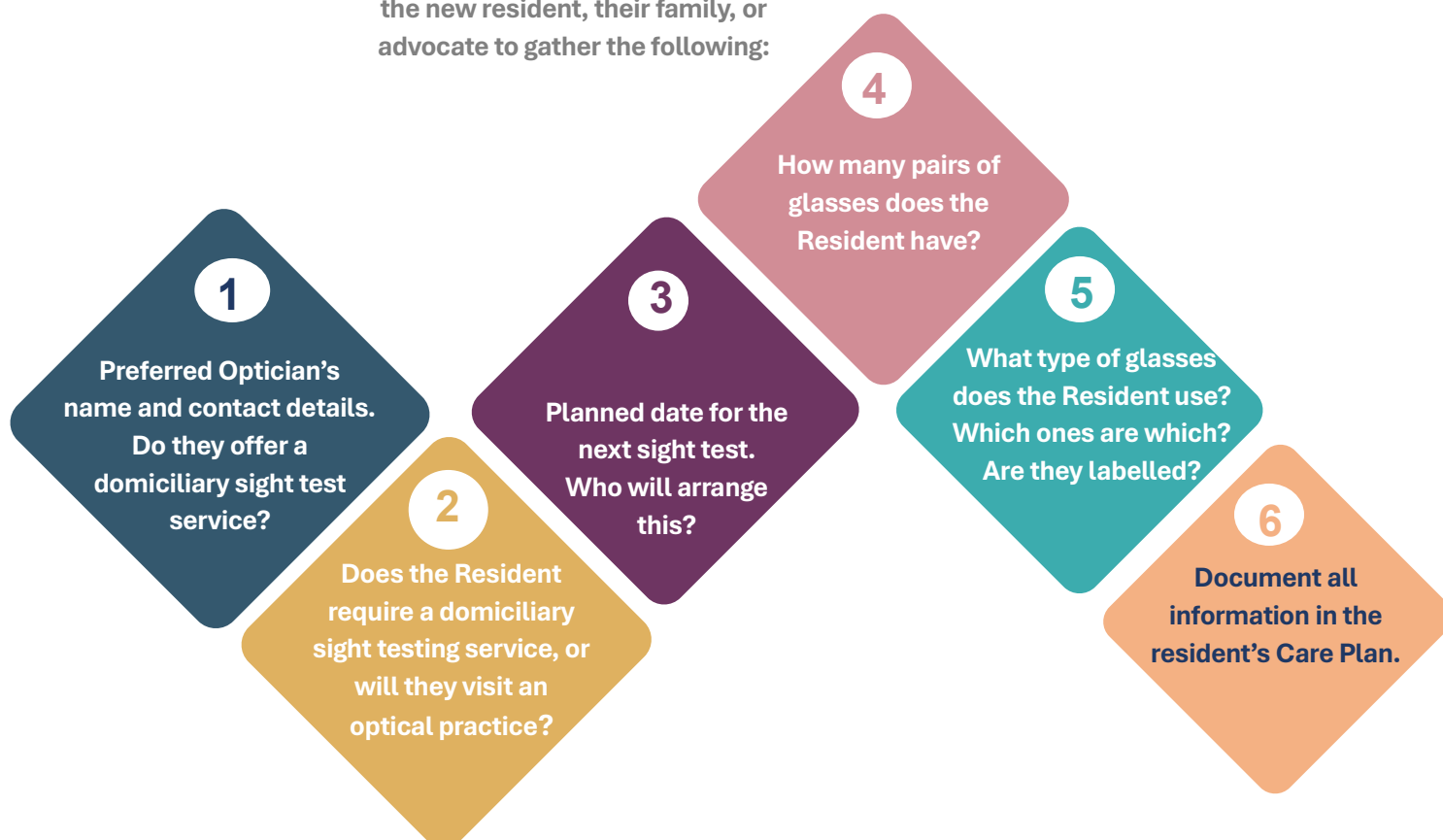
**Follow the steps below to support a successful visit from a domiciliary optical service (optician) to your care home.**

STEP ONE		STEP TWO		STEP THREE		STEP FOUR	
Optician	Care Home	Optician	Care Home	Optician	Care Home	Optician	Care Home
Domiciliary Opticians planning to visit a Care Home are asked to compile a list of residents due for sight testing and to send this to the Care Home at least two weeks in advance.	<p>When a patient list is received from an Optician, check the names of residents against the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do they still reside at the care home?</li> <li>• Ask the resident, their family, or advocate if they <i>wish</i> to have a sight test. Record the response in the resident's record.</li> <li>• Do any new residents wish to have a sight test with this Optician?</li> </ul> <p>Once the list has been checked and amended, it must be sent back to the Optician via secure mail.</p>	<p>Once the patient list has been returned, send a poster to the Care Home to share details of the planned visit.</p> <p>Other Residents may respond to the poster and request a sight test.</p> <p>Requests for a sight test can also be made by the resident's family or advocate, where appropriate.</p>	<p>One day before the sight testing visit, check the list for any changes.</p> <p>Changes should be sent to the Optician, including additional requests.</p> <p>On the day of the visit, <u>only</u> residents who are named on the list should be seen by the Optician.</p>	<p>The Optician must provide a written copy of the spectacle prescription for each resident who has a sight test.</p> <p>For residents with reduced capacity, it is good practice to leave written information summarising the outcome of the sight test with the care home.</p>	<p>The spectacle prescription must either be given to the resident or filed within their care plan.</p> <p>Request a written outcome summary for residents with reduced capacity and share this with the family or advocate.</p> <p>New spectacles may be ordered at the request of the resident, their family or advocate, as appropriate.</p>	<p>When new spectacles are delivered the Optician must ensure they fit properly, and that vision is satisfactory.</p>	<p>Request notice of the planned date for delivery and fitting of spectacles.</p> <p>If any resident has difficulty with their new glasses, contact the relevant Optician to request assistance.</p> <p>Inform the resident's family or advocate, if appropriate.</p>

**A domiciliary optical provider should contact the Care Home to make arrangements for sight testing of residents. It is against the Code of Conduct for Domiciliary Providers to offer care home staff free eye tests or discounts on glasses. For support or to raise concerns contact the optical team at Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Integrated Care Board by email: [england.lancsat-optometry@nhs.net](mailto:england.lancsat-optometry@nhs.net)**

## Path One – Has an Optician

You will need to speak with either the new resident, their family, or advocate to gather the following:



**If the resident needs a domiciliary service but the current optician does not offer this option, move to Path Two**

### Concerns about Residents eyesight?

If you notice a sudden changes in a resident's eyesight, they may need medical assistance. Check their care plan for their eye health history and current optician details. Once you have this information, arrange a sight test or medical assessment.

## Path Two – No preferred Optician

You will need to speak with either the new resident, their family, or advocate to gather the following:



## Concerns with a Residents Vision

If you notice any sudden changes in a resident's eyesight, they may need medical assistance. You must check their care plan for their eye health history and current optician details. Once you have this information, please arrange a sight test.



## Resources and Useful Contacts

[Lancashire and South Cumbria Training Hub](#) – includes [bitesize training](#)

[Sight Advice South Lakes – Sight Loss Charity in South Lakeland](#)

[Royal College of Nursing – Eyes Right](#) publication

Health Education England - [Ophthalmic Common Clinical Competency Framework](#)

RNIB free [Learning Disability resources](#) - these include factsheets and top tip cards

RNIB free [Dementia information](#)

RNIB [Events and Courses](#)

[Accrington and District Blind Society](#)

[Galloways Sight Loss Charity, Preston](#)

Lancashire County Council Sensory Team

[Macular Society](#)

[N-Vision – Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Society for the Blind](#)

[Vision Support Barrow & District](#)



## Provider Self-Assessment Tool

Eye Health in Care Homes Provider Self-Assessment		
Standard		RAG Rating
<b>1.0 Admission</b>		
1.1	On admission, is the resident's usual optometrist recorded and contacted for routine appointments, where appropriate?	
1.2	On admission, is the resident's eye health history recorded (including current sight aids, medication etc.?)	
1.3	Are residents offered at least an annual eye check-up, either in the home or at a local optometrist?	
1.4	Does the resident have the correct spectacles?	
1.5	Are the resident's eye care needs documented in their care plan?	
1.6	Is the Mental Capacity Act and Best Interest's decision-making principles adhered to and clearly documented in relation the resident's eye health?	
<b>2.0 Workforce</b>		
2.1	Are staff trained and deemed competent to administer eye drops / ointment?	
2.2	Are staff trained and deemed competent to provide basic cleaning to the eye?	
2.3	Are staff made aware of common eye conditions, signs and symptoms requiring urgent attention and sources of support (i.e. optometrist, NHS 111, 2hr UCR, A&E)?	
<b>3.0 Environment</b>		
3.1	Has suitable lighting been fitted to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls?	
3.2	Please provide details:	
3.3	Has a risk assessment been undertaken to identify environmental safety hazards and risks reduced?	
3.3.1	Please provide details:	
3.4	Is flooring specifically suited to residents who may have Dementia +/- visual impairment?	
3.4.1	Please provide details:	
3.5	Are low vision aids available (i.e. mobile phone / tablets / magnifiers / audio books and music personalised to individual taste)?	
3.5.1	Please provide details:	
<b>4.0 Additional Support</b>		
4.1	Do staff know how to access emotional / psychological support for residents experiencing sight loss?	
4.2	Is support sourced from wider healthcare partners as required (i.e. Occupational Therapist)	
4.3	Is support sourced from the voluntary sector to support residents with reduced vision (i.e. RNIB / Age UK)?	
4.4	Do staff know how to escalate unmet resident needs (i.e. Care Sector Lead's / Safeguarding)	
4.5	Are up to date resources shared with staff in relation to optimising eye health (i.e. <a href="#">Eyes Right</a> )	

## Acknowledgements

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- Tom Mackley, Local Eye Health Network
- Sara Cook, Sight Advice South Lakes
- Angie Ashworth, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board
- Emma O’Kane, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board

The following services and organisations were consulted:

- Accrington Blind Society
- Galloways
- Lancashire County Council Sensory Team
- Macular Society
- N-Vision
- Royal National Institute for the Blind
- Vision Support Barrow & District

