

VW

OCTOBER 2019
Vision Now magazine



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2019

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Alignment to Biofinity[®] quality management standards.

Optimised the moulding process for excellent accuracy and repeatability.

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Here at CooperVision, we're always looking at ways to make our contact lenses even better. Which is why we've invested over £160M on advances to the **clariti**[®] 1 day manufacturing platform. It's why we introduced a redesigned edge for enhanced comfort.¹ It's why we've optimised the moulding process. It's why we apply the same strict quality management standards of Biofinity[®] to every **clariti**[®] 1 day lens we make. And it's why **clariti**[®] 1 day is now better than ever.

Look again at clariti[®] 1 day.

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1. Sphere only. CooperVision data on file, (2015). Non dispensing, double masked, randomised study n=20. Improved comfort on insertion.
2. Brennan, N.A. Beyond Flux: Total Corneal Oxygen Consumption as an Index of Corneal Oxygenation During Contact Lens Wear. Optom Vis Sci 2005.
*clariti[®] 1 day has a UV blocker that supports ocular health. UV-absorbing contact lenses are not substitutes for protective UV-absorbing eyewear, such as UV-absorbing goggles or sunglasses, because they do not completely cover the eye and surrounding area. Patients should continue to use UV-absorbing eyewear as directed. © 2019 CooperVision.



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Inside



Vision Now magazine is published by Peekay Publishing Ltd for The PK National Eyecare Group Ltd, the UK's largest purchasing group for independent opticians.



News

- 4 GOC launches FTP triage pilot
- 7 Initiative to tackle illegal CL sales
- 9 Eco accolade for CooperVision site
- 11 Marchon rolls out lens technology
- 13 20 years of TMA celebrated
- 14 NEHW call to action on lifestyle
- 14 **An independent view**
Vive la difference
- 19 **Developing thoughts**
Quietly beavering away
- 21 **NEG Business Club**
Should I go high end?
- 25 **Finance matters**
OPS: taking the direct approach
- 28 **Style spotlight**
Vintage passion and perseverance
- 30 **Suppliers' directory**

Editor's comment



For many practices, the positive press usually garnered by National Eye Health Week (NEHW) probably couldn't come soon enough – running as it did merely weeks after the profession received a roasting on national TV courtesy of the Channel 4 consumer advice show, Supers shoppers. In case you missed it, the show basically suggested that optometrists 'tricked' patients into buying expensive glasses in what an 'expert' described as a "quasi-clinical environment".

The optical bodies' PR machines sprang into action, with ABDO writing to the show's producers urging them to "right the wrongs", the College of Optometrists complaining to Ofcom, and the AOP rather more mildly calling the programme "unhelpful". A Which? report released the same month shone a slightly more positive light on the profession, by highlighting the shoddiness of self-prescribed spectacles bought cheaply online. But, as always, it's hard to quantify the reputational damage inflicted.

If you took part in NEHW, utilising the free resources available, hopefully this provided a small antidote to any negative publicity spawned by Supers shoppers. The independent sector doesn't have a massive PR machine, so all you can do sometimes is concentrate on your own business, your own community and your own patients. This is where the newly-launched NEG Business Club can really support you. If you haven't already joined the free element of the service then you have everything to gain – not least in enhancing your reputation as a truly 'Superindependent'.

Nicky Collinson

Editor

The Editor welcomes letters, articles and other contributions for publication in the magazine and reserves the right to amend them. Any such contribution, whether it bears the author's name, initials or pseudonym, is accepted on the understanding that its author is responsible for the opinions expressed in it and that its publication does not imply that such opinions are those of The PK National Eyecare Group Ltd. Articles submitted for publication should be original, unpublished work and are accepted on the basis that they will not be published in any other journal. Acceptance of material for publication is not a guarantee that it will be included in any particular issue. Copyright © 2019 for Peekay Publishing Ltd. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying and recording, without the written permission of the publishers. Such written permission should also be obtained before any part of this publication is stored in a retrieval system of any nature.

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1 General Optical Council

The General Optical Council (GOC) has launched a four-month pilot of an enhanced triage process that will give it greater discretion to close cases at an earlier stage, where there is no ongoing risk to the public. Triage is the process the GOC uses to decide whether a new complaint, or referral about a GOC registrant, should be subject to a formal fitness to practise (FTP) investigation. The triage decision-making process is underpinned by Acceptance Criteria, an assessment tool launched in 2018 and updated in July 2019, to determine which complaints or referrals may constitute an allegation of impaired FTP or fitness to train. If a complaint or referral does not meet the Acceptance Criteria, the GOC will not open an FTP investigation.

During the pilot, in cases where it is unclear whether the complaint or referral raises a FTP concern, the GOC will conduct additional enquiries before a decision is made to open a formal investigation. GOC director of casework and resolutions, Dionne Spence, said: "Last year, our case examiners closed 84 per cent of the fitness to practise investigations that they considered. It is therefore clear to us that we need to enhance the initial assessment activity we undertake at triage stage." The pilot will run until 31 December 2019 and will include further consultation with stakeholders.

4 100% Optical



New awards will celebrate eyewear

2 Alcon

Dr Carla Mack has been named as the new global head of professional affairs at Alcon, leading professional affairs within the company's Global Vision Care Franchise. Andy Pawson, Alcon president and general manager of the Global Vision Care Franchise, said: "Carla's unique experience will bring strong leadership and support to our professional affairs teams across the franchise, allowing us to better connect our innovation and portfolio of vision care products to the needs of the customers we serve."



Dr Carla Mack

Prior to joining Alcon in 2014, Dr Mack held roles in global medical affairs and global professional marketing at Bausch + Lomb, was a professor at the Ohio State University (OSU) College of Optometry, and was clinic

director of the OSU Campus Optometry Services. While at OSU, she examined thousands of patients and taught courses in glaucoma management, specialty contact lenses and practice management.

3 Pennine Optical



Revlon Eyewear model 1639

New styles for autumn/winter 2019 have been added to the Revlon Eyewear collection, available exclusively in the UK and Ireland from Pennine Optical, part of the Lenstec Optical Group (LOG). Model 1639 (pictured) is a high quality mottled acetate and metal combination featuring rose gold sides and cat-eye shaping for a retro look. This style is available in three high fashion colours and in a size 53/17/140.

The Revlon collection is aimed at women aged around 35 and over and includes a number of unique Revlon hallmark colours that are both vibrant and fashionable. "Although the collection is still relatively young it's going from strength to strength and offers true feminine detail, comfort and elegant fashion," said Nigel Castle, LOG managing director.

100% Optical, taking place at ExCeL London from 25-27 January, will see the launch of the Love Eyewear Awards following Love Eyewear Week from 20-26 January. The awards will celebrate eyewear designers, manufacturers and retailers, with 12 categories including New Designer 2020, Best Independent Retailer and Most Engaging Practice Window. They will also support in-practice sales and raise awareness and 'love' of the eyewear.

Entries for all award categories will be reviewed and shortlisted by a jury of

eyewear bloggers and stylists. The shortlist will then be open to a public vote, with winners announced at the Love Eyewear Awards event on Saturday 25 January. Nathan Garnett, 100% Optical's show director, said: "As the biggest gathering of people in optics in the UK, 100% Optical in January 2020 could not be better timed to kick off what will be a landmark year for the industry. The new Love Eyewear Awards, Love Eyewear Week and improved Future Practice Hub are just some of the exciting elements of show that gets better and busier every year."



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5 AIO/BCLA



AIO chairman, Christian French

The Association for Independent Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians (AIO) and the British Contact Lens Association (BCLA) have launched a new initiative to support the work of the General Optical Council (GOC) in stopping illegal contact lens practice. Christian French, AIO chairman, said: "It has been a long-standing source of annoyance and frustration for our members to see the illegal sale of contact lenses taking place in outlets close to their practices as well as online. Whilst some have been proactive in reporting such instances, others have probably been unaware that the GOC has an effective investigation team in place.

"Joining up with BCLA and providing the GOC with feedback to help maximise the effectiveness of their action will be warmly welcomed by members. At the end of the day, it is all about protecting the public as well as representing members' interests," added Christian. Cheryl Donnelly, BCLA chief executive, said: "Whilst our members have reported illegal practice to the GOC for some years, we are pleased to be working with the AIO to help provide impetus and impact to the work of the GOC investigation team." Dionne Spence, GOC director of casework and resolutions, said she welcomed the initiative from the AIO and BCLA and looked forward to working with them.

8 Optical Confederation

The Optical Confederation (OC) has published updated Guidance on Safeguarding, Mental Capacity, Deprivation of Liberties and the Prevent Strategy – Protecting Children and Adults at Risk. The document, available on the OC website, also incorporates newer terminology, i.e.

6 Mid-Optic

Mid-Optic has become the exclusive UK distributor of new Adore Hand Sanitizer, designed specifically for contact lens wearers. Richard Hardy, Mid-Optic sales and marketing director, said: "Adore Hand Sanitizer has innovative packaging which is easy to open and easy to use. Less than half the size of a credit card, but just as thin, Adore contains antibacterial agents that have been clinically evaluated for contact lenses. Its unique Ph neutral hypoallergenic formula means it is kind to eyes and safe for contact lens surfaces."

Adore Hand Sanitizer is described as being suitable for many patient lifestyle situations including travelling, playing sport, work, reading and flying. The compact size of the pack is ideal for storing in handbags, jacket or trouser pockets, gym bags and holdalls.



Easy-to-use, handy sanitiser

Each pack contains seven applications, and a counter display unit of 50 packs is available.

7 Eyespace



Aspinal of London model L500 (C3)

Eyespace and Aspinal of London have extended their licensing partnership with the launch of an exclusive designer collection of frames for men and women. Taking inspiration from Aspinal of London's refined leather goods archive, the premiere eyewear collection includes 44 styles, each presented in multiple colourways: 26 women's designs and 18 styles for men.

Inspired by the colour palette of the sunwear collection, dark glossy tones, vibrant hues, pops of colour within tortoiseshells and trend-led reds, nudes and golds run through the new releases. Aspinal of London iconography, including shield-shaped cutwork tips and pin details as well as the signature lion's head motif, also feature. The launch is supported with a suite of point-of-sale materials, designed to showcase the frames.

the term 'vulnerable adult' has been replaced with 'adult at risk'.

OC chair, Fiona Anderson, said: "The good thing about the Optical Confederation guidance is that it provides everything optical practices and practitioners need in

five easy steps and one easily accessible package. We commend it to all practices and practitioners to ensure that, as healthcare professionals, we play our full part in keeping children, adults at risk and our colleagues safe."

www.opticalconfederation.org.uk

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Titanium



Frame style shown: **SI-60194**

9 Charmant



Esprit ECollection model ET33412

Esprit ECollection frames, from Charmant, are 100 per cent recyclable and 100 per cent biodegradable thanks to a special cellulose made from organic sources: cotton-seed and wood fibres and bio-plasticisers. These raw materials are mixed, coloured and crafted into acetate sheets in Italy by one of the world's most acclaimed manufacturers in this field. The result is a lustrous, high-quality natural acetate that is compatible with polycarbonate lenses and kind to the planet.

From the new collection, model ET33412 (pictured) is a striking panto style for women. Each ECollection frame is presented in an eco-friendly Esprit case made of recycled paper. Through the brand's collaboration with the NGO WeForest, it is helping to replenish forests and make a vital contribution to the global environment. So for every ECollection frame sold by 31 July 2020, Esprit will plant a tree.

10 ABDO

The deputy chief executive (CE) of the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO), Barry Duncan, resigned from his position last month. A dispensing optician and former president of the Association, Barry had been on the staff of ABDO since 2011. ABDO general secretary, Tony Garrett, commented: "Barry has played a major part in the development of the Association in recent years – particularly the reorganisation of our structure into regions with regional leads – and developing a network of local leads.

"In addition his pioneering work on the development of a minor eye conditions



Barry Duncan

services programme for contact lens opticians is a major achievement, which will grow in the years to come. I wish Barry every success in his future career," added Tony. ABDO said it had no immediate plans to appoint a replacement deputy CE.

12 CooperVision

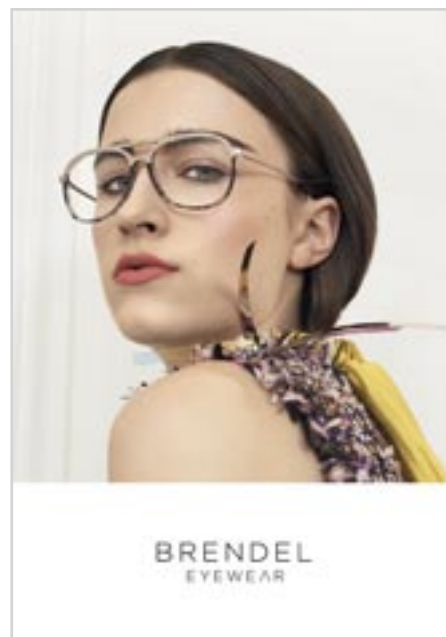


Eco packaging operations in Southampton

CooperVision's UK facility is one of two newly-constructed sites in Europe to have been awarded certifications for their sustainable design and operation. The company's new Southampton secondary packaging and distribution facility, through which millions of CooperVision contact lenses pass each day, has earned a BREEAM Excellent rating. Located in the Mountpark development, the site incorporates high-efficiency LED lighting as well as lots of natural light. The facility also encourages electric car use with integrated charge points.

The company's new distribution centre in Madrid, Spain has earned LEED Certification. This warehouse, which stores millions of contact lenses for daily shipments across Iberia, was constructed with intelligent LED and natural lighting plus on-site solar power generation to meet a portion of its energy needs. It also recycles 100 per cent of cardboard, plastic, and wood pallets, and is located near public transit options.

11 International Eyewear



Sporty pilot model 903125

New releases to the Eschenbach Optik Titanflex, Brendel and Humphrey's collections from International Eyewear have now arrived so practices can update their stock for the autumn. The latest Brendel eyewear styles encapsulate feminine diversity in high quality designs. 'Sensitive minimalism' is the theme for the season, reflecting the trend in a range of expressive feminine shapes.

Classic, clean and stylish, the five new Brendel releases highlight simple silhouettes, a soft colour palette and avant-garde detailing. The focus is on minimalist design with maximum effect. Highlight model 903125 (pictured) showcases a sporty pilot shape in a feminine colour range of Transparent Rose and Grey Marble. Sophisticated accents of a fine laser pattern on the upper eye rim and sides adds luxury appeal.



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13 **Marchon**



Dragon sunglasses with Lumalens technology

Dragon Eyewear has rolled out its proprietary Lumalens lens technology into its performance sunglasses. Already used throughout Dragon's snow goggle collection, Dragon's Lumalens sun collection features a variety of base tints in brown, grey, rose, and G15 green, available with mirror coating options. Each base tint optimises colour and enhances optics in a specific environment, with options for offshore, inshore, field and trail-based activities.

Additionally, all Dragon Eyewear injected sunglasses and ophthalmic frames are produced using a bio-based plastic made from castor bean oil. "As a leader in the performance and lifestyle eyewear category, the expansion of our exclusive Lumalens technology into our sunwear collection allows us to take another major step forward to enhance our offering across multiple categories," said Lauren Makofske, global brand director of Dragon Alliance.

16 **FMO/BIHIMA**

The Federation of Manufacturing Opticians (FMO) is in discussions with the British Irish Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (BIHIMA) to see how the two organisations might collaborate in the future. Paul SurrIDGE, previously CEO of the SightCare Group and now chairman of the BIHIMA, said: "There are many parallels between optics and audiology and having spent almost 20 years in the former at SightCare, I recognise that more can be done to promote the optical/hearing care agenda.

14 **Norville**



Elegant Mai-Zee model MZ070 C1

Three new designs with vibrant colours have been introduced to Norville's Mai-Zee collection. The slight cat-eye model MZ069 is available in blue and brown with two eye sizes of 50-16-135 and 52-16-140. Model MZ070 C1 (pictured) is an elegant emerald green frame with a rather unusual tortoiseshell effect on the sides. This frame is a combination of plastic and metal. Finally, model MZ071 C2 features a marble effect in beige and dark purple with brand markings on the sides.

15 **Johnson & Johnson Vision**



Rebranded MPS

Johnson & Johnson Vision UK has rebranded its Complete multi-purpose disinfecting solution (MPDS) as Acuvue RevitaLens. "We are excited to make RevitaLens multi-purpose disinfecting solution an Acuvue brand because it is an important part of the eyecare routine for contact lens wearers," said Dr Kamlesh Chauhan, director, professional education and development at Johnson & Johnson Vision UK. The solution is compatible with the full Acuvue range of reusable contact lenses, and "uses dual-disinfecting technology to deliver peroxide quality broad spectrum disinfection, while being clinically shown to help deliver all-day comfort", said the company.

The two manufacturing organisations have a lot to contribute to the debate.

"Optrafair is an excellent event and the FMO has innovative plans for its future. We'll be keen to see how those plans evolve and if BIHIMA members and audiologists could be encouraged to attend in greater numbers," Paul added. Incoming FMO chair, Stuart Burn, commented: "The two professions, optics and hearing, have similar goals and we are keen to explore how the two manufacturing organisations could collaborate to raise awareness of sight loss and hearing loss in the future. The FMO is currently reviewing its



Stuart Burn

programme of activity and working with BIHIMA on joint projects seems an obvious fit."

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17 Louis Stone Optical



Touching base with future optometrists

City University welcomed Louis Stone Optical through its doors last month to showcase its popular optical equipment to all students studying optometry. Not only did Louis Stone exhibit products like Oculus trial frames, Volk lenses, flippers and City rules, but it held a free raffle for one lucky student to win a £50 Louis Stone voucher. At the time of going to press, the winner was due to be revealed via social media @louisstoneoptic, the company's 11.7K follower strong Instagram account, and via email. More than 140 entries were received, an all-time high. Download the latest Louis Stone catalogue at www.louisstone.co.uk

18 Dunelm Optical



Ascari Eyewear 062 Totally Teal (C1)

New release model 062 from Dunelm's Italian inspired Ascari Eyewear range is described as "a perfect fit for stylish women with a small or narrow face". The frame is slim in shape but bold on style, and is available in three colour options: Totally Teal (C1), Plum (C2) and Classic Black (C3). Made from quality tri-laminate acetate, Ascari 062 features a double pin design detail. The styles are available now with free glazing and stock single vision prescription when ordered all-in glazed.

20 Stepper

The new SI-97164 from Stepper is "a star performer", offering eye-catching glamour and comfort. "There are no less than 26 exquisite stones in this very desirable model that shines amongst other, less ornate rimless mounts," commented Stepper UK managing director, Peter Reeve. Crafted from titanium and studded with gems, the adjustable SI-97164 weighs just 5.6g and features hypoallergenic properties. Slim bejewelled sides are enhanced with slimline hinges, also constructed from strong but light titanium. There is a broad palette of colours to choose from to complement most skin tones.



Glamorous model SI-97164

19 Silhouette



Cosmic 20th anniversary TMA styles

Silhouette is celebrating 20 years of its award-winning Titan Minimal Art (TMA) model with a special limited-edition collection of ophthalmic frames. This continues a year of commemorative collections following the launch of its micro-sunglasses range at the start of 2019.

Continuing the revolution Silhouette's TMA set in motion 20 years ago, the four new statement models take their inspiration from the original sketches of the very first collection. There are two ladies' models and two unisex models in oversized geometric shapes. Pictured are models 1589 in Spheric Violet (left) and 2917 in Sunray Gold.

21 De Rigo



Model SPLA29 – Lewis 08 with clip-on

The newly-launched Police X Lewis Hamilton collection from De Rigo combines classic and retro-inspired shapes with contemporary trends in sync with the racing driver's image. The Lewis Hamilton Panther logo adorns all of the models in the collection, which comprises of seven sunglasses and three prescription models.

Materials edge towards sustainability with bio-acetate and high-performing options such as titanium and rubber. All models in the collection are accompanied by an elegant personalised case: black leather with a gold velvet interior for sportive mask style SPLA28, and gold-hued velvet with a black interior for all other models.

22 Eye Health UK

During National Eye Health Week last month, the charity Eye Health UK called on all practices to include lifestyle advice on prescriptions to help reduce the numbers of people in the UK living with avoidable sight loss. David Cartwright, chairman of Eye Health UK, said: "Reaching out to people with lifestyle advice that encourages them to make simple changes to their diet, smoking habits and activity levels will play a critical role in saving people's sight in the future."

An Eye Health study, conducted by OnePoll amongst 2,000 UK adults in August 2019, showed that only 15 per cent of people thought exercise affected eye health. This was despite evidence showing that being physically active could reduce the risk of visual impairment by 58 per cent (Beaver Dam Eye Study, *Ophthalmology* 2014 June; 121(6): 1220-1228). "Lifestyle advice on optical prescriptions and eye examination summaries would not only increase public awareness of the link between lifestyle habits and eye health but also signpost people towards the support they need to make lifestyle changes and improve their general well-being," the charity said.

23 NEG Business Club

The NEG Business Club now offers weekly tutorial videos that can be watched any time during the week. One recent topic is recalls, so if you haven't signed up yet go to www.practicebuilding.co.uk/neg. Automatic free membership for NEG members includes: online members portal, Practice Building articles and blogs, benchmarking projects, a weekly live tutorial, and a weekly live Q&A. Take a tour of the site today.

AN INDEPENDENT VIEW

Vive la difference

One of the great benefits of being in independent practice is the total flexibility that comes with being your own boss. Multiples may enjoy the benefit of bulk buying power, and deep pockets for extensive advertising campaigns, but their practices (stores?) are defined by fixed business formulas that emanate from head office. Are all those practitioners comfortable giving away their clinical services for free or at a grossly discounted rate? They do not have the flexibility to adapt their clinical offering to the needs and demographics of the communities that they serve.

Most independents provide long-term eye health care for their patients, characterised by in-depth eye examinations delivered by the same practitioner time and again. But independents can also choose to differentiate what they offer patients to meet specific needs within their community, or by delivering specialist services. By way of example, many independents are offering dry eye clinics, or specialist binocular vision-focused vision therapy and sports vision services, whilst others specialise in eyecare for children or those with disabilities. The opportunity is to stand out in a crowded market from those who are more focused on formulaic refractions and spectacle sales.

The AIO introduced the Eye Promise quality mark to help the public, and important influencers, identify where to go for great quality eyecare – and the next few months will see this leveraged through a 'Find an Eye Promise Practice' feature online and considerable promotion on social media. Whilst it was always recognised that it would take time for the Eye Promise to become established as a nationally recognised brand of excellence, the social media and app-based world of today makes it possible to achieve this without the need for national television advertising budgets. We are leading the journey forwards. Vive la difference!

Association for
AIO
 Independent Optometrists
 and Dispensing Opticians



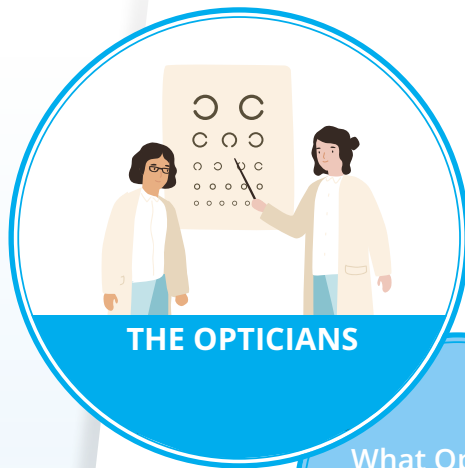
Alcon

A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON PRESBYOPIA

Independent researchers set out to find out more about the needs and experience of presbyopic patients, and those of the Opticians who prescribe their vision correction needs.



THE PATIENTS



THE OPTICIANS

VS

What patients believe Opticians are delivering

What service and support the patients perceive they are receiving and how this compares with their expectations

What Opticians believe they are delivering

What Opticians are actually delivering



Alcon
with guidance from



We asked 100 Opticians about their prescribing habits for emerging presbyopes
 We also sought to gain a clear understanding of their thinking. We also asked ov
 and whether they were s

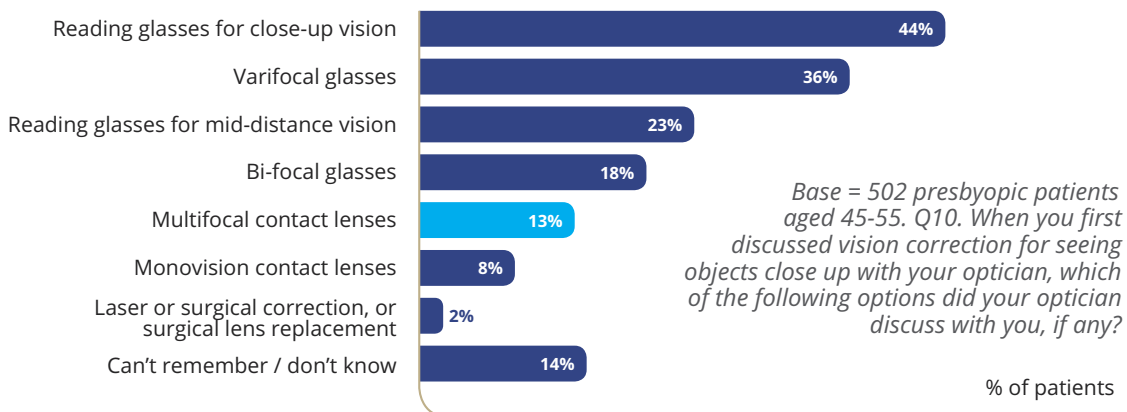
WHAT DO PRESBYOPES KNOW?

By asking a wide range of questions relating to their current vision correction, we were able to gain insights into what presbyopes use to correct their vision.

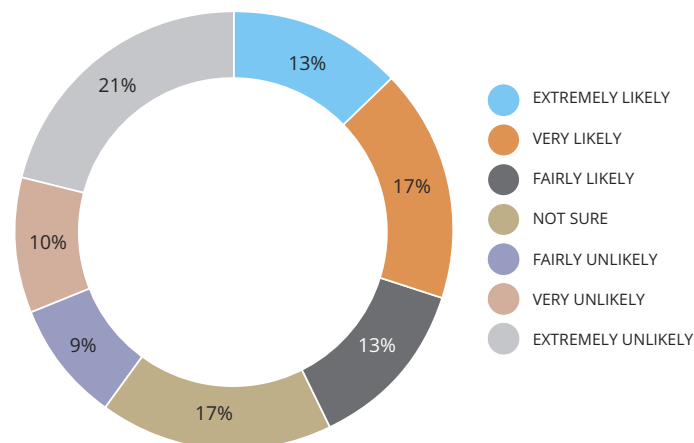


OUR RESEARCH SHOWS THAT PRESBYOPES ARE AWARE OF MANY OPTIONS FOR VISION CORRECTION, BUT THEIR AWARENESS OF MULTIFOCAL CONTACT LENSES (MFCLs) IS COMPARATIVELY LIMITED.

Only 13% of patients recall being offered multifocal contact lenses



43% of patients (who don't wear MFCLs as their main vision correction) would be likely to try them if offered.



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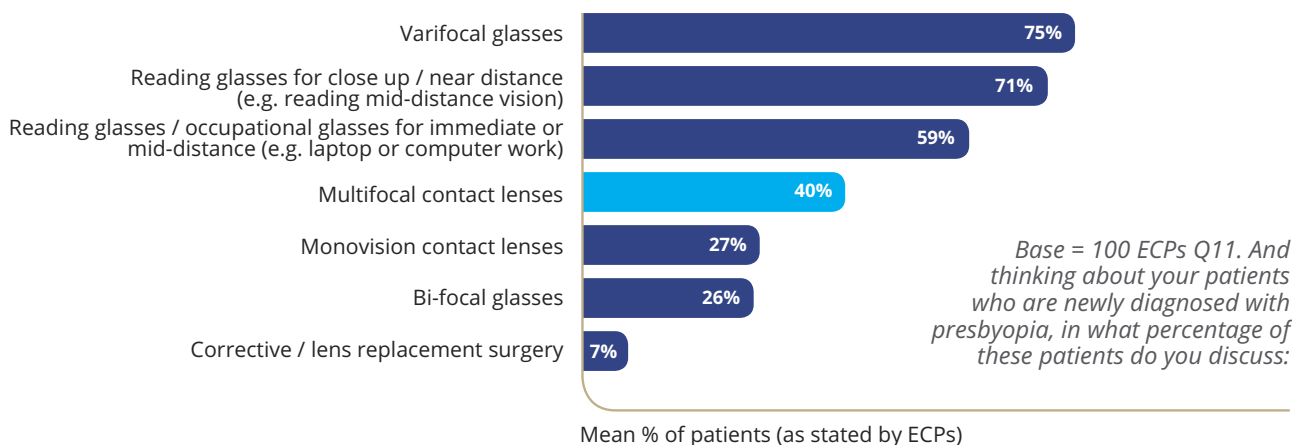
to get an insight into challenges they face, what action they take in response and when. Over 500 emerging presbyopes, aged 45-55, about their experiences of vision correction and how satisfied with what was provided.

ARE MFCLs A GOOD OPTION FOR MOST PATIENTS?

Opticians held a variety of views on whether MFCLs were appropriate for most presbyopes. A majority felt obliged to offer patients all the options for vision correction, but this isn't happening in all practices.



4 OUT OF 10 OPTICIANS AGREE THAT MFCLs ARE A GOOD OPTION FOR MOST PATIENTS BUT ON AVERAGE OPTICIANS ONLY HAVE ABOUT FIVE MINUTES TO DISCUSS THE OPTIONS.



AP IS
NING...
SAY,
DON'T
AR.

THE REALITY OF CONSULTATION TIMES

Opticians allocate on average **30 minutes** for a booked appointment, with a mean of 31 minutes for a consultation in independents and around **26 minutes** in large chains, for a patient with presbyopia.

JUST 7% OF OPTICIANS
BOOKED A LONGER APPOINTMENT
IN ANTICIPATION THAT A PATIENT
MIGHT BE A PRESBYOPE

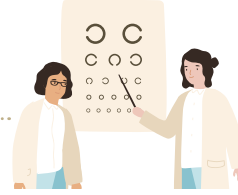
With appointments limited to around 30 minutes, and the majority of a consultation spent examining and assessing the patient's eyesight, appointments are very full and finding time to have additional conversations is tough.

The gap between patients and Opticians

The research shows a gap between the presbyopes' expectations and experience of what the correction can achieve in terms of clearer vision.



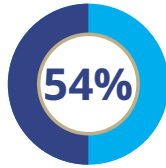
Only 13% of newly diagnosed patients recall conversations about multifocal contact lenses



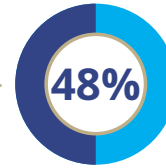
Opticians believe they tell 40% of newly diagnosed patients about MFCLs

but

At their first visit for presbyopia around half of patients recall being offered only one option; for most this is glasses.



Vs



Opticians believe they discuss vision correction options and allow the patient to choose between at least two options in 48% of newly diagnosed patients.

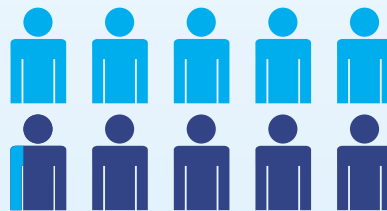
RECOMMENDATIONS

TO ADDRESS THIS REPRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR OPTICIANS TO DELIGHT THEIR PATIENTS FURTHER

A NEW TRAINING INITIATIVE

Routinely an Optician will pass a patient over to a colleague to dispense the glasses. Taking inspiration from this familiar routine, one solution could be to train these members of staff to become presbyopia experts and advise about multifocal contact lenses as well as providing the patient with the support they need when wearing and caring for them.

We have designed and refined a protocol to be trialled with selected practices over the coming months.



54%

of presbyopes were positive about this idea.

To find out more about the Whitepaper and receive a full copy, please contact your Alcon® Representative

Alcon

Research conducted by Synergy Healthcare Research 2019. **Quantitative online surveys with:** 502 presbyopic patients. All required vision correction for both distance and close-up vision and had an eye test in last 12 months. If not currently wearing correction for close-up vision, they had to have discussed this requirement with their optician. All 45 to 55 years old. 100 Opticians from multiples and independent practices. Significance testing (at the 95% confidence level) was applied where appropriate. The online surveys were preceded by qualitative research: 2 group discussions with presbyopic patients and 10 in depth interviews with Optometrists; recruitment criteria were as for the online survey. All percentages in this report have been rounded to the nearest whole number. 14153 © 2019 Alcon. GB-VC-1900026



Developing thoughts



There's a lot more to NEG membership than discounts and simplified accounts, writes Phil Mullins this month

Quietly beavering away

How many of us remember Monty Python's Life of Brian sketch: "What did the Romans ever do for us?" – apart from the aqueduct, sanitation, roads, medicine, education, irrigation, public baths, law and order, public health and of course don't forget the wine. It is a funny couple of minutes of the film but does show that the Romans did, in fact, make life a lot easier – but in areas that sat in the background making a daily difference without being noticed. In some ways, this is a bit like NEG. I'm not saying we have done anything spectacular like the Romans; as far as I'm aware we haven't invaded a country yet, killed hundreds of villagers or stabbed our leader in the back. However, we do sit there quietly making a difference to practices daily.

Most of you will have probably joined NEG for the discounts that we offer with our preferred suppliers, which not only save you money, but eliminates the need to keep pushing for better terms or to maintain the terms you have. But it doesn't stop there: one of the biggest advantages of spending through NEG is the single statement you receive each month leading to a single payment. This simple, streamlined process saves you both time and effort and means you don't have to spend time making multiple payments and entering lots of invoices onto your practice management system.

But it's not just preferred suppliers you can add to your NEG account. You can put just about anything through the account and although there is a small management fee, many of our members have said over the years that they don't employ an accounts clerk because NEG eliminates so much paperwork, they don't need one. So, if you'd like to add an additional supplier to your account, please let our accounts team know and they can make the arrangements. And we don't just stop at the purchasing side to supporting your practice.

EVER-WIDENING SUPPORT

Over the years, we have introduced all sorts of different options to support our members across the country. The most obvious is, of course, Optinet, which has been supplying optical practice management software for more than 30 years. **Optinet** originally started as an ordering system, but developed into a comprehensive practice management tool. The introduction of Optinet integration with the soon-to-be launched eGOS electronic NHS form submission system will offer you a paperless practice, which we believe can save you even more time and money across your entire business.

In recent years, we have introduced several business services that again help support your business. One of the most popular with members is the human resources (HR) and health and safety (H&S) support offered to members by **Xact**. This offers all members free access to the Xact website, where you can find all things HR and H&S, with information about best practice, changes in legislation and now templates for documents that you will need.

Xact has already saved members thousands of pounds as support and advice is complimentary and information is easily accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And remember, for a small annual fee you can access telephone support from Xact, providing an expert at the end of the telephone to help you when you really do need that extra help.

Another option that is growing in popularity is the **Optical Payment Services (OPS)** direct debit collection service. With the ever-increasing need to encourage patient loyalty and control cashflow, OPS is a very simple, cost-effective way of doing just this. Turn to page 25 in this issue to find out



The NEG Business Club is the latest tool in our armoury

more about OPS and how it can benefit you in practice.

The biggest introduction for 2019 has been the launch of the **NEG Business Club**, run on our behalf by Andy Clark and the Practice Building team. It offers all members free access to all kinds of knowledge bases and tools, including the Profitable Optometry Project and videos that cover a different subject each week – all designed to help you plan your business. In addition to the free element, you can upgrade for a small monthly fee. This opens up the club to a whole raft of support, information and business tools that can help you to grow your business and become even more successful.

As you can see, there is so much more to your NEG membership than discounts and efficient accounting. We aren't in the public eye and we don't spend our time shouting about what we offer, we simply sit in the background supporting your business. Add to this the communication we offer with *Vision Now*, Newsflash, Twitter, LinkedIn and the emails we send to members, we are constantly striving to support your independence, saving you time, money and effort – because we are only successful when you are successful.

For more information about our services, please visit www.nationaleyecare.co.uk



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Should I go high end?

In this month's NEG Business Club focus, Andy Clark illustrates when – and when not to – take your practice 'high end'



Make sure you can 'deliver the goods' to high end customers

"Hi Andy, I've got an independent practice. I've been in the same site for 10 years, and we're going quieter. How do I get more people to walk through my door?"

"What's changed recently?"

"Well the book used to be full for a week ahead or longer, but it's pretty gappy now, even though we send out loads of recall letters. The good news is that when people do come and buy new specs, they are spending much more than they used to, I just need a lot more of them!"

"How come they are spending so much more?"

"Well I went high end a couple of years ago."

"Why did you do that?"

"Everybody says that it's the only way for an independent to survive. We all know that you can't compete with the green machine so you have to go high end."

The next time someone tells you that you should move your practice up-market, ask yourself why they think it's a good idea to risk alienating your current database. Might the move be in their best interest more than in yours?

"So what exactly did you do?"

"Well I got an Optomap and an OCT and we're doing lots of scans, and now everyone gets the very best possible lenses, and we have a great selection of designer frames. That's why our ATV [average transaction value] is so good. I just can't imagine why more people aren't coming."

"It sounds like a great idea, in the right place. How much has your turnover increased by?"

"The sales are similar to before, but there's never much money in the bank now."

"What has happened to your gross profit?"

"I don't really know. We've not had last year's accounts back yet."

High end is a very different business model when you consider the profit and loss account. You have to protect your bottom line by carefully planning your gross profit margin, setting a budget for expensive frame stocks and making sure the increased fixed costs for equipment, shop fit and marketing to attract new patients, are all covered. Then measure and review it at least every three months.

"How do you promote this new offering?"

"The same as we have always done, we mainly rely on recall and word of mouth."

"There's no doubt that word of mouth is extremely powerful. What do you think people are saying when they tell their friends about you right now?"

"That they had a great eye examination and got a fantastic pair of glasses."

"What do you think they are saying about how much they paid?"

"Erm. I like to think that they are happy with it."

If you ever consider making significant changes to your value proposition, it is essential that you get detailed

feedback from your patients before you do so, to determine if it's a good idea. And after you make the change, ask them what they are now telling their friends. If you don't, the first sign that you made a mistake is when your recall seems to stop working two years later.

"Is there a chance that the people who live and work around you simply can't afford the very best in eyecare and eyewear?"

"Well it's true that this isn't exactly a wealthy area. But there are these villages a few miles away that are full of big houses and expensive cars. How do I get those people to come to me?"

"Do many of them visit your street for any other reason? Is the car park full of their cars?"

"Well, no."

"What marketing are you doing to attract these new people?"

"I tried a leaflet drop but it didn't work, and we do a bit on Facebook."

"Where do these village dwellers go when they need an optician?"

"They probably drive into town. There's a couple of really smart practices there."

The only way to attract the people who don't walk past your door is with attractive ongoing marketing. If you don't want to do that, you must build a practice for the people who live nearby and know of you.

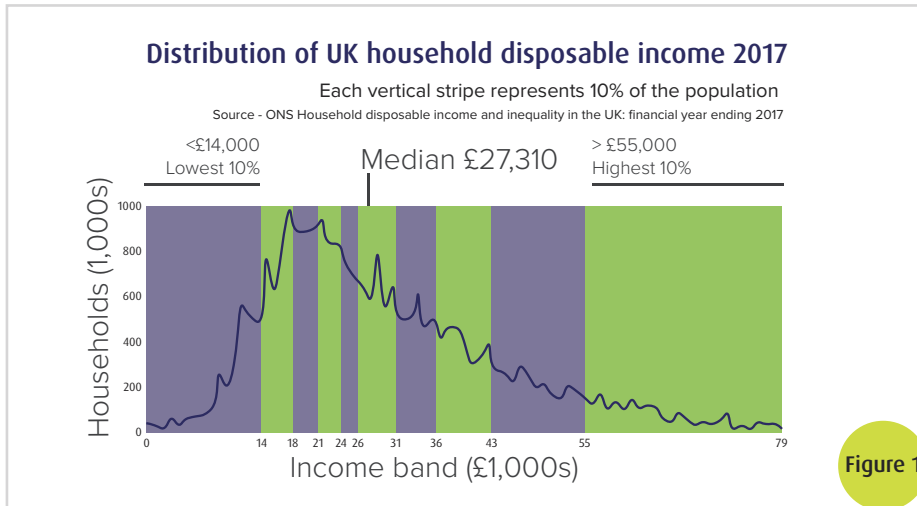
"If recall is less effective, is there a chance that the people who used to come to you

This month's featured topic
**MAKE YOUR PRACTICE
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are going elsewhere now? And if they are, why do you think they have moved on and where do you think they are going?"

"I suppose there might be, but if people don't want to pay for the best, well they can just go across the road. I'm not going to try to keep them!"

Everyone wants the best, but few can afford it or justify the expense when there are alternatives that to an untrained eye appear to be just as good for a lower price. It's why so many people drink Prosecco even though they would like to be drinking Bollinger.

We ran an investigation comparing the ATV in the practices that we work with to the average household disposable income (income after taxes) in their area, using data from the Office of National Statistics; and discovered that regardless of where the practices were situated their ATV was about 1.50 times a day's household disposable income (**Figure 1**).

$\text{£ATV} = (\text{Income}/260) \times 1.5$

The top 10 per cent of the wealthy households in the UK have a disposable income of £55,000 or more, so these are the people who will be comfortable spending more than £317 when they purchase new specs (**Figure 2**). These are the people who are most attracted to a high end offering. Seventy per cent of UK households have a disposable income of less than £36,000 and therefore would probably spend less than £200.

Few people will comfortably spend a week's income on a pair of specs – and if they do, they will try to make them last a long time and will be keen to reglaze the frame when they need a different prescription.

"How up-to-date is your shop fit?"

"Err, It's 10 years old. In fact we really need one but it's so expensive. How much do you think it matters?"

"Usually a high end practice has to have a matching high end retail environment."

"Well once you get me a few more patients through the door I might be able to afford it!"

"Hmm. How have you upgraded your customer experience?"

"Oh we don't need to do that. I've got great staff, we're very friendly and caring."

I'm sure most practices have great staff, but delivering great customer

service is not the same as delivering a high end customer experience. If you fancy delivering a premium experience and would like to know what to do, take a walk down New Bond Street, the Via Dei Condotti or Rue Saint-Honoré to see how Dior deliver Dior and how Prada deliver Prada. This is the type of experience that will be expected by high end customers. Then eat in a Michelin star restaurant and stay in a Ritz Carlton Hotel and ask yourself what they would do if they did optics?

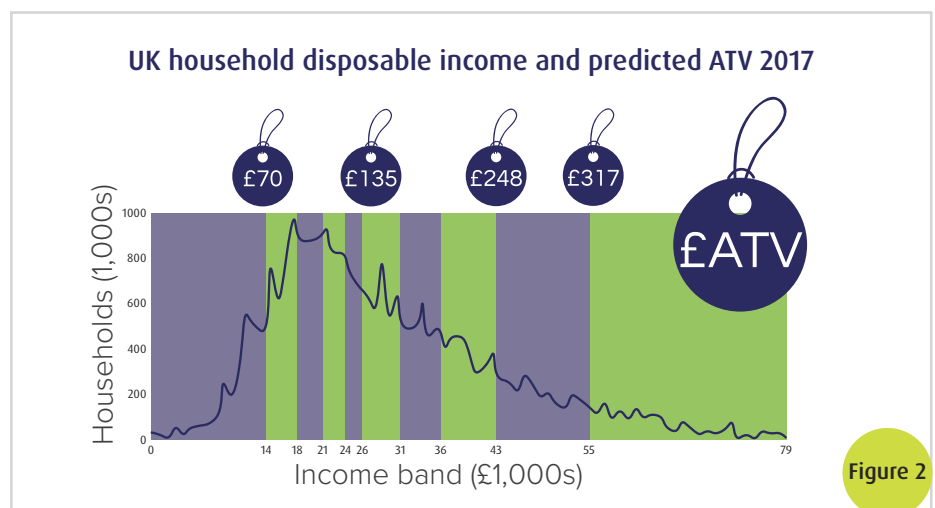
"But everyone says that you can't compete with the big green giant."

"Actually that's not what 'everyone' says, and those who do say so should stop it, because it's just not true."

Don't forget why you are great at what you do. You can't compete with multiples just by matching low prices and promoting special offers, and you would be crazy to try. But independent practices can – and do – compete with them by offering more value for an affordable price. More friendly service, more quality, more individuality, more choice, more connection, more time, more you.

If you would like to take a detailed look at your town, this month's featured project in the NEG Business Club is Practice Profiles* and it will help you pin down exactly how you should be positioning your price points and offerings.

**Only available to free members until the end of November.*



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Take the direct approach

OPS provides NEG members with a direct approach to cashing in monthly payments whilst building patient loyalty



Optical Payment Services (OPS) is an exclusive service for NEG members. It offers a cost-effective way to collect monthly payments from your patients, by direct debit. Regardless of whether you already collect direct debits or use standing orders, OPS can save you money with its easy-to-use, paperless service. In this article, find out how OPS can help you to manage your cashflow and increase patient loyalty.

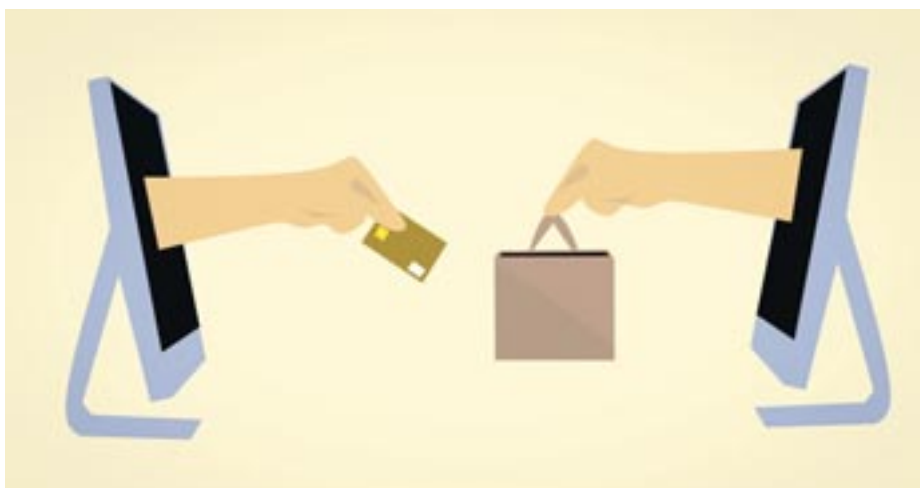
WHAT IS DIRECT DEBIT?

Although we all use direct debit (DD) every day, sometime it's good to go back and review the basics. A DD is an instruction from a customer or business (the payer) to their bank, authorising a third party organisation (the payee) to regularly collect money directly from the payer's bank account at intervals within a specified timescale. This authorisation is provided in a paper or electronic DD mandate form.

The payee may vary the amounts collected via DD, but only with advance notice of the amount and date the DD will be collected. DD is the only payment method that allows organisations to 'pull' payments from bank accounts, rather than rely on customers to push payments to you. DDs offer a more reliable and lower cost method of collecting payments compared to card payments, for example. The DD guarantee is the only payment type that offers customers protection in the event of a loss due to error or fraud.

DD COLLECTION SERVICES

DD allows organisations to automatically collect regular payments from customers and, therefore, dramatically reduces the risk of late payments, administration and resources required. The benefits of making payment collection by DD are there for organisations, both small and large, and is why so many organisations have turned to DDs.



Direct debit is a simple solution for both patient and practice

A major issue, however, is that typically businesses turning over less than £3m a year, or those that have been established for less than three years, find it difficult to gain sponsorship from their bank to enter the BACS scheme. This is where OPS can help. OPS is an NEG service, powered by Bottomline, that enables members both big and small to collect DD payments from their patients, all without the need to get sponsorship from the bank.

WHO ARE BOTTOMLINE?

Bottomline is the leading DD payment bureau, approved by BACS and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Its customers range in size from the smallest to the largest, from charities to public sector organisations. It offers a simple, compliant and secure DD processing solution to manage the collection of recurring payments from your patients. Outsourcing the collection of vital DD to Bottomline's cloud-based solution via OPS removes risk and the complexity of remaining compliant, whilst enabling collections to be made in full, on time, every time.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT BOTTOMLINE

"The help required on transferring all the current direct debits to Bottomline was

seamless with the help of the integration team. The service provided with longer term arrangements being set up, has brought savings and ease of use to our direct debit team. The support has been exceptional not just with telephoning the support line, but also through the log in portal which is development at its best,"
SLLCapital

"We've used Bottomline for over 10 years now and have always found their system to be seamless and faultless. I've often called their friendly and helpful client services team for assistance and direction and they have been simply spot on with everything. The efficient processing of our payments is a critical factor in running our business and Bottomline's handling of this process has been second-to-none,"
thebestof

HOW DOES OPS WORK?

It couldn't be easier to use OPS to collect your DD payments. Once signed up with OPS, you use the secure web portal to sign up your patients on your payment scheme, be that for contact lenses, professional fees or ongoing dry eye treatment. OPS will then email your patient all the relevant information, including the DD guarantee, so

HUMPHREY'S
eyewear

ensuring your compliance with the BACS requirements.

Payments are taken monthly and sent directly into your bank account. The portal is then updated with all your payments, so you can see at a glance who has paid and how much anyone has paid, either for that month or over a longer set period. If for any reason a payment should fail, in addition to seeing it in the portal, you will receive an email, giving you the chance to contact the patient and resolve the issue.

In addition to standard monthly payments, OPS enables you to offer adhoc payments. This means that if your DD patient buys an additional product, for example a monthly contact lens patient buys some daily wear contact lenses for their holiday, you can add that payment to the next monthly payment as a one-off transaction. This adds convenience to both you and your patient.

OPS offer two options. Firstly, if you don't currently collect DDs, you can sign up under the OPS service user number, so you don't need sponsorship from your bank. This makes it easy for everyone to benefit from DDs. The second option is if you already collect DD and therefore have your own service user number. This can be transferred to OPS, so you can benefit from the paperless option and the savings compared to the standard bank offering. Either way, you benefit from the simplicity of the system and the savings that can be made.

MAKING IT EVEN MORE FLEXIBLE

To make the whole process even easier, OPS is fully integrated into Optinet Flex practice management software. This enables you to set up the DD payments from the patient's record, so eliminating double entry and the errors that this can cause. When the monthly payments are received, Flex allocates the payments to each patient, enabling you to see what payment the patient has set up and how much they have paid.

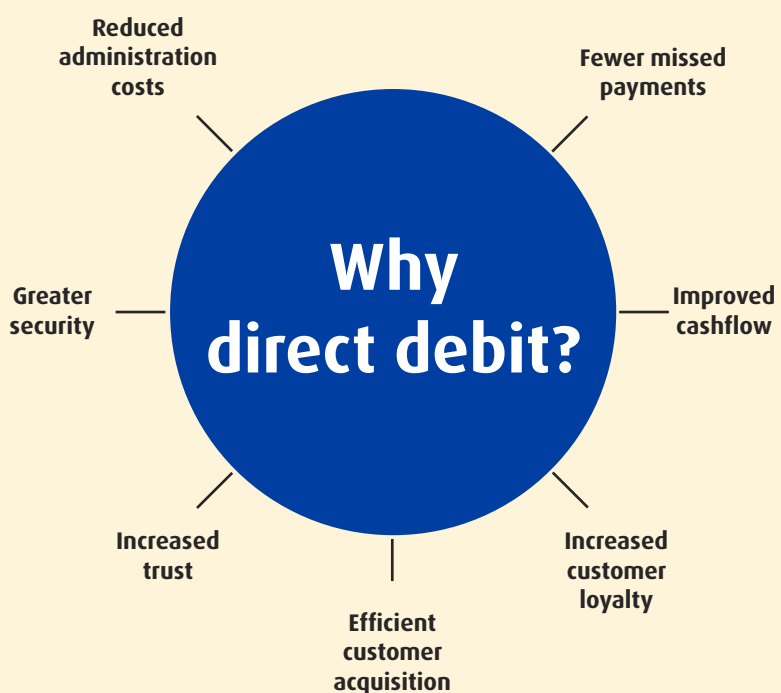
For more information about OPS, and the difference it can make to your practice, please call 0344 8266700.

Regulated services are provided by Bottomline Payment Services Limited, an authorised payment institution regulated in the United Kingdom by the Financial Conduct Authority (reference number 616279) for the provision of payment services.

DIRECT DEBIT STATISTICS

- There are around eight DDs for every UK adult
- 9/10 British adults have at least one DD
- 6.4 billion DD and BACS credits were processed in 2018
- The DD industry is worth more than £5 trillion
- There was an eight per cent growth in DD transactions from August to November 2018

Put simply: DD is the easiest, most convenient and secure way of collecting payments



WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF OPTICAL PAYMENT SERVICES?

- Automated DD collection process
- Simple to set up and low cost to administer
- Trusted, reliable and proven outsourced option
- Backed up by an expert UK BACS team
- Increased visibility of cash
- Better control over cashflow with a more stable stream of income
- Remain fully compliant with BACS scheme rules
- Adopt paperless DD

Vintage passion and perseverance



By Joan Grady

Enthusiastic interest in vintage eyewear highlights its adaptability to contemporary trends – while retaining classic spirit and vision. Opticians, students, writers, designers, and those who just love vintage, explore where they can discover eyewear with history and character. Eyewear – as well as fashion and accessories with a story to tell – attracts attention worldwide, and captivates opticians, designers and customers.

Geert Ceulemans at Theo in Belgium believes that people retain a strong desire for vintage because of the authenticity. “Today, many brands reinvent retro eyewear or transmogrify it into a modern interpretation,” says Geert. “Occasionally it’s beautiful, but it’s just not the same. It misses the amazing way real vintage stuff feels and smells; try 30-year-old acetate or timeworn buffalo horn. And the shapes, they are pure and unadulterated by whatever came later. Not a modernised ‘take on’, but the real thing.”



Claire Goldsmith, Oliver Goldsmith MD



Parisian designer Emmanuelle Khanh wearing her signature design

In London, managing director Claire Goldsmith at Oliver Goldsmith, notes: “The OG archives spans 60 years, and I think the reason people continue to desire vintage is that these styles suit so many faces. There is just something about retro eyewear that transcends age, gender or face shape. The true classics – aviators, panto, wayfarer and cat-eye – just seem to work. These style classics will always be in fashion – in some form or another – because retro styling is timeless. Maybe it’s nostalgia, but I think people feel they have made a solid investment when purchasing a retro classic.”

CREATING ARCHIVES

French designer, Emmanuelle Khanh, was among the early pioneers who had a truly visionary perspective on the potential of eyewear as a fashion accessory. Emmanuelle started designing eyewear in the early 1970s and her striking, bold, innovative shapes and colourations are as much in demand nowadays as they were almost 50 years ago.

Certain eyewear designs achieve an iconic status almost from the moment they are in the creator’s imagination. Emmanuelle’s frames reached this culmination with oversized shapes in luxurious materials, in fabulous colours new to eyewear at the time,



Bold and dashing: EK designs from the 1980s

all handcrafted in France. The first pair of frames that she made is still the eyewear shape that continues to sell internationally. Emmanuelle passed away in 2017, but Eva Gaumé, a graduate of the prestigious Genève University of Art and Design/Switzerland (HEAD-Genève), where she participated in masterclasses given by eyewear innovator, Jeremy Tarian, is now at the design helm.

Eva is imbued with the Emmanuelle Khanh spirit and carries on the creative legacy, remembering the core character of the designs, while being completely adaptable to contemporary alterations. Throughout the decades, the EK frames have been carefully curated, and a selection of them



Theo archive collections in Antwerp Belgium



Resplendent Retro by Theo

is displayed in the prestigious Parisian Museum – Musée des Arts Décoratif.

Claire Goldsmith describes the OG archives as “an historic vault that is home to everything from the simplistic to the extraordinary; a physical timeline of the brand’s hard work and creativity. The back catalogue starts from 1926, the year the brand was established, and continues to 1985 when Oliver Goldsmith ceased production for a 20-year hiatus.”

In the eyewear business, you always have to work up front, explains Geert at Theo. So much is invested in stock before a frame is launched on the market. “Not everything is sold at once and the successful frames need reordering until the demand slows down,” says Geert, “and the result is we are left with a number of frames that we hold onto religiously. So now we have an absolutely amazing archive that is our pride. Walking through the corridor towards the end is like going back in time.”



Historical browsing: Oliver Goldsmith archives in the Notting Hill Boutique



Eyewear blast from the past by Theo

HERITAGE EYEWEAR

In Oliver Goldsmith’s chic little boutique in Notting Hill, opticians, students, fashion pros and people who appreciate fine eyewear, can visit the OG archives. “It’s always a pleasure to show the archive to anyone – whether they know the brand or not,” declares Claire, “as customers are instantly transfixed. When fashion or design students see it, you can literally see their eyes light up. Having such close access to the frames, being able to hold them and inspect the vintage craftsmanship is fascinating for them, and it’s a great way to pass on the story of the brand to a new generation.”

At the Theo archives in Antwerp, Geert says: “Initially, people cannot believe their eyes. They imagine a number of frames in a cupboard, but never this much. They start opening drawers at random and then it is time for the aahs and oohs to begin – but they are even more shocked about



Vintage forever: Emmanuelle Khanh fashion and frames



Legendary frames – and fans – in the OG archives

the beauty of the designs. The drawers are filled with amazing things, cool technologies and crazy designs. We have schools, journalists and opticians passing by to learn about the business and to be inspired. The ‘back to the future’ aspect is a continuous source of inspiration.”

RETRO CORNERS AND FRAME LEGACY

Theo has launched an intriguing concept in optical boutiques that illustrates the allure of vintage eyewear. Geert explains: “Some of the opticians we have been working with for a long time are familiar with our history and eyewear heritage. They come to browse through our archives and to curate an eclectic vintage Theo collection they display in a dedicated corner of their store. Success guaranteed.

“Some opticians are new in the business,” Geert continues, “but they have a ‘nose’ for things trendy and beautiful, no matter when it was made. Retro is bingo! Whether dedicated archaeologists and theoristas, savvy journalists, opticians with a hankering for the past and the future: you are always welcome to visit our archives.”

Eva Gaumé’s passion for the EK spirit was further documented when she meet Emmanuelle Khanh, as I was fortunate to do years earlier. We both agreed with Emmanuelle’s philosophy from the outset of her first creations: that glasses are a fashion advantage, and to find your own personality in fashion and eyewear. And as Claire Goldsmith points out: the timelessness of retro designs is what makes them so enduringly in demand.

For independent opticians, eyewear with retro heritage affords ideal opportunities through frames that are contemporary yet stylish, innovative, revered – all of which encourages flourishing profitability.



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Directory listings are available free of charge to all preferred suppliers, with a larger listing available to Vision Now Advertisers. To make changes to the directory listings, please call Sharon Hicks on **01580 713698** or email s.hicks@nationaleyecare.co.uk

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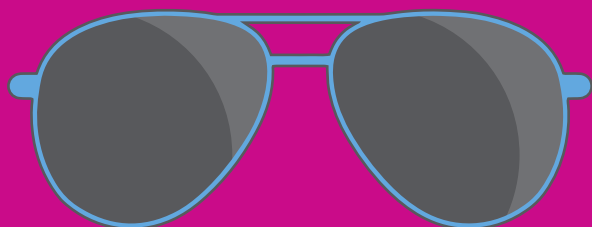
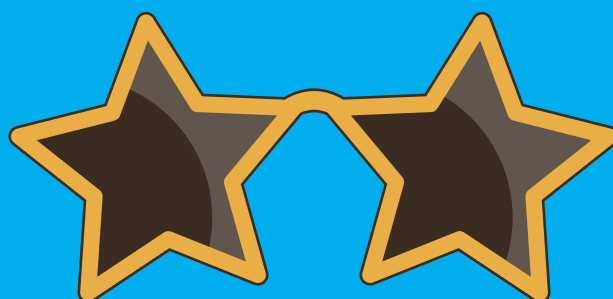
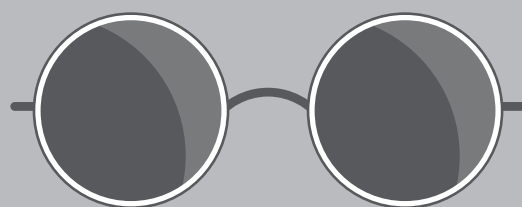
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