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Powys Teaching Health Board

Primary Care Optometry Services
Annual Report
2024/2025

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1. Summary of the provision of WGOS 1-5

Wales General Ophthalmic Services (WGOS) is a Primary Care Optometry service delivered from both fixed location premises in the community and closer to/in homes via mobile practices. WGOS is a tiered Service comprising of the following:

- WGOS 1: eye examinations and patient management plan.
- WGOS 2: made up of three bands:
 - Band 1 – Acute eye care and referrals for examination from another healthcare professional.
 - Band 2 - Further examinations following WGOS 1 to inform or prevent a referral.
 - Band 3 - Follow up examinations to WGOS 2 Band 1 and Cataract Post-operative Assessments.
- WGOS 3:
 - Assessments for those with low vision and providing low vision aids where appropriate, as well as holistically supporting the patient and providing rehabilitative support.
 - Certification of Vision Impairment for patients whose leading cause of vision loss is Dry Age-Related Macular Degeneration
- WGOS 4: examinations for patients who would previously have been referred to/or managed in the Hospital Eye Service (HES) instead remain in primary care for further enhanced assessment as part of an agreed referral refinement or monitoring pathway for patients:
 - with or with suspected medical retina conditions
 - with or with suspected glaucoma or ocular hypertension; and
 - who are at risk of retinopathy due to taking hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine
- WGOS 5: examinations in primary care for acute eye conditions that require management by an independent prescriber optometrist to reduce the need for onward referrals to Hospital Eye Services.
- NHS Optical vouchers: financial support for the provision of spectacles or contact lenses to patients in eligible categories determined by Welsh Government.

There are currently 15 Optometry practices across PTHB and 4 mobile contractors. All 19 contractors offer a mandatory level of service of WGOS 1 and 2 and a range of additional services across WGOS 3-5 are offered. There is an additional mobile contractor providing WGOS 3 mobile services only.

The Powys WGOS 1 and 2 mandated access offer is detailed below:

Business name	Location	Core Hours Mon-Fri	Core Hours Weekend
Jonathan Partridge Optometrists	Welshpool	09:15 - 13:00 13:50 - 16:40	Test one Sat/month core hours on that day 9:00 - 12:30
Specsavers Welshpool	Welshpool	09:00 - 17:30	09:00 - 17:00

Mehta Opticians	Welshpool	09:30 - 13:00 14:00 - 16:30	
Mehta Opticians	Newtown	09:30 - 13:00 14:00 - 16:30	
Specsavers Vision Plus	Newtown	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 17:00
Probert & Williams Eyecare	Machynlleth	9:30 – 16:00 Wednesdays only – no clinical offer	
SG Marshall Metropia Optics	Builth Wells	09:30 - 13:00 14:00 - 17:00 (Weds 9:30 – 13:0)	
SG Marshall Metropia Optics	Llandrindod Wells	09:30 - 13:00 14:00 - 17:00	
Evans and Jones	Llandrindod Wells	09:00 - 13:00 14:00 - 17:00	
Specsavers Brecon	Brecon	Mon/Tue/Wed/Fri 09:00 - 17:30 Thu 09:00 – 18:30	Sat - 09:00 - 16:30 Sun - Closed
Vision Express	Brecon	09:00 - 17:30	09:00 - 17:00
First Optic	Brecon	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 16:00 (Sat)
Jackson & Gill Opticians	Hay-on-Wye	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 16:00 alternate Saturdays
Crickhowell Optometrists	Crickhowell	Mon/Wed/Fri 09:30 - 13:30 (Term time only)	
David R Jenkins Optometrist	Ystradgynlais	09:00 - 12:45 14:00 - 17:00	
Mobile Providers			
Outside Clinic Services	Swindon		Core hours mobile 9:00 - 17:30
Catvog Domiciliary Specsavers Home Visits	Barry	09:00 - 17:00 Tuesday	
Clwyd and Snowdonia Domiciliary	Mold	09:00 - 17:30 mobile only	
Gwent Domiciliary Specsavers	Caerphilly	09:00 - 17:30 mobile only	
Jamo Group athome Healthcare	Newport	09:00 - 17:00 WGOS 3 only	

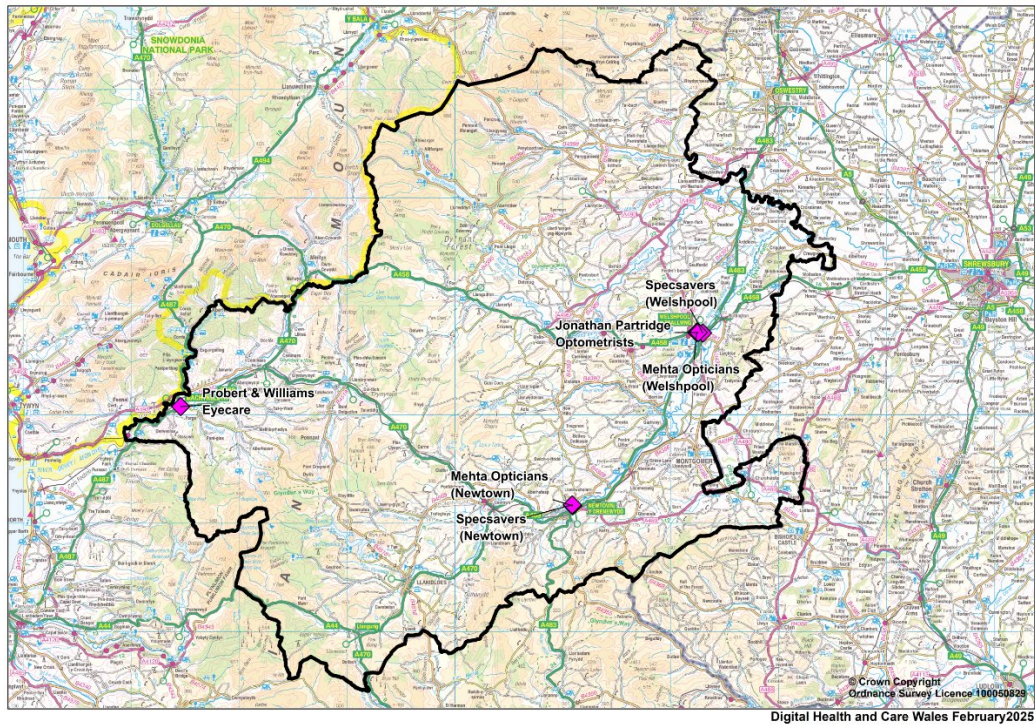
Location of WGOS providers across PTHB

Patient access to optometry services is not linked to patient registration and therefore patient choice informs where patients choose to access optometry services. Many Powys residents choose to access across border optometry services. This includes both Wales and England services.

The following maps outline the current location of Optometry practices across each of the three Powys Cluster footprints:

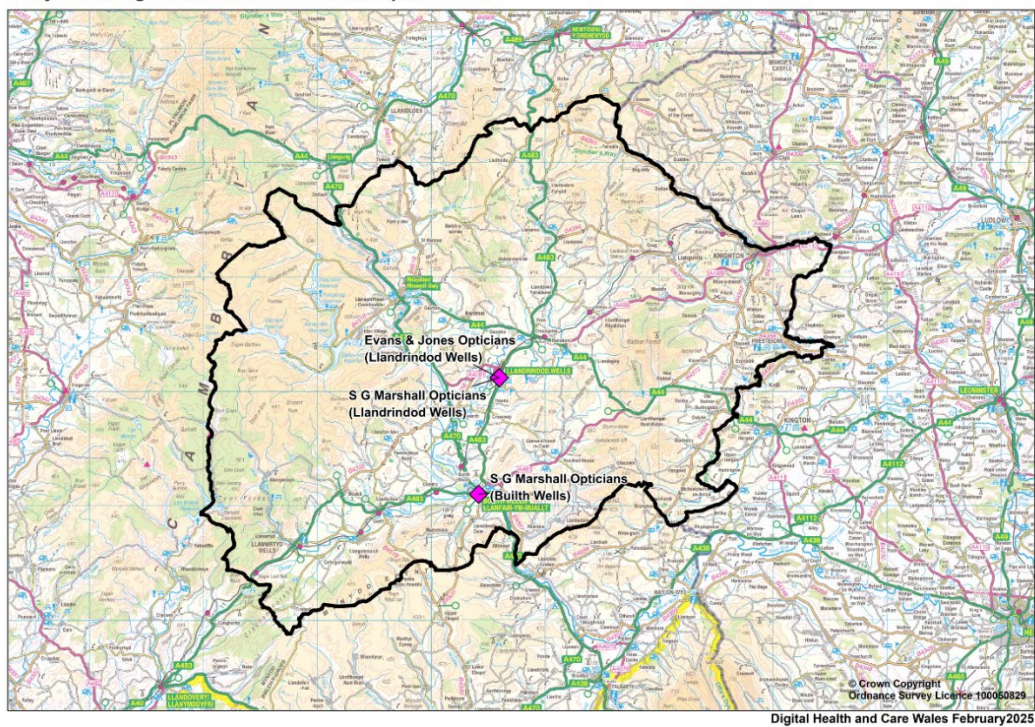
a) North Cluster:

Powys Teaching Health Board - North Cluster Optometrists



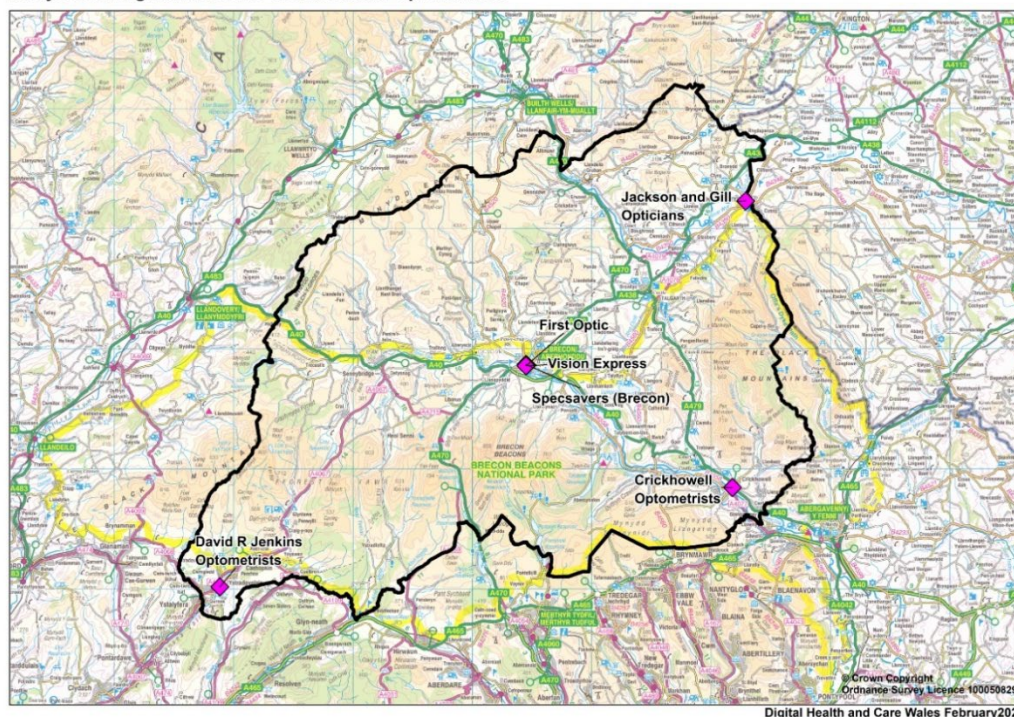
b) Mid Cluster

Powys Teaching Health Board - Mid Cluster Optometrists



c) South Cluster

Powys Teaching Health Board - South Cluster Optometrists



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Provision of WGOS 1-5 by Practice		WGOS 1	WGOS 2	WGOS 3	WGOS 4	WGOS 5
North	Jonathan Partridge, Welshpool	X	X	X		X
	Specsavers Welshpool	X	X	X		X
	Mehta Opticians, Welshpool	X	X			
	Mehta Opticians, Newtown	X	X			
	Specsavers Newtown, Vision Plus	X	X	X		X
	Probert and Williams	X	X	X		
	6	6	6	4	0	3
Mid	SG Marshall, Builth Wells	X	X	X	x (GF)	
	SG Marshall, Llandrindod Wells	X	X	X	x (GF)	
	Evans & Jones, Llandrindod Wells	X	X	X		
	3	3	3	3	2	0
South	Specsavers Brecon	X	X			X
	Vision Express, Brecon	X	X	X		
	First Optic, Brecon	X	X	X		X
	Jackson & Gill, Hay on Wye	X	X			
	Crickhowell Optometrists	X	X	X		
	David R Jenkins, Ystradgynlais	X	X	X		
	6	6	6	4	0	2
Mobile	Outside Clinic Services, Swindon	X	X			
	Catvog Domiciliary Specsavers	X	X			
	Clwyd and Snowdonia Domiciliary	X	X			
	Gwent Domiciliary Specsavers	X	X			
	Jamo Group athome Healthcare			X		
	5	4	4		0	0
Totals	15 Practices and 5 mobiles = 20	19	19	13	2	5

2. Summary of the workforce providing WGOS 1-5

PTHB currently has 39 registered professionals.

Optometrists	Student Optometrists	Dispensing Opticians
32	4	3

Of these 39 professionals, 35 are known to be associated with a named Contractor. This can be summarised as:

- North Cluster: 17 professionals
- Mid Cluster: 6 professionals
- South Cluster: 11 professionals
- Mobile: 1 professional
- Unspecified: 4 professionals

The local higher qualified workforce aligned with WGOS 3-5 is summarised below:

Higher Qualified workforce					
	Higher Certificate Glaucoma	Professional Certificate Glaucoma	Professional Certificate Medical Retina	Independent Prescribers	Low Vision
North Cluster					
Welshpool	0	2	3	2	2
Newtown	0	1	2	1	1
Machynlleth	0	0	0	0	1
Mid Cluster					
Llandrindod Wells	1	1	1	0	2
Builth Wells	1	1	1	0	1
South Cluster					
Hay-on-Wye	0	0	0	0	0
Crickhowell	0	1	1	0	1
Brecon	0	1	1	2	2
Ystradgynlais	0	1	0	0	1

3. Assessment of the effectiveness of the provision of WGOS 1–5

WGOS 1-2

All 15 practices and the 4 mobile providers are mandated to provide WGOS 1 and WGOS 2 across their core hours. There is a reasonable geographical spread of these services across the Health Board,

WGOS 3

There are currently eleven WGOS 3 practices and one mobile provider (providing WGOS 3 only). There is good coverage across all three clusters. However, the limited mobile provision presents challenges across a geographically large, rural Health Board.

WGOS 4

Implementation of WGOS4 services has had a slow start, due to recruitment, capacity and optometrist skill set limitations across the county. This is further compounded by the complexity of the Powys secondary care commissioning arrangements.

- **Glaucoma Filtering:** There are currently two practices offering this service in Mid Powys (Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells). As of Q4 2024/25, there is a lack of higher qualified (or in training) workforce to provide a health board-wide WGOS 4 Glaucoma Filtering service. Additionally, there is a lack of available provision in North and South Powys.
- **Glaucoma Monitoring:** As of Q4 2024/25, pathway not yet commenced.
- **Medical Retina:** As of quarter four, 2024/25, pathway not yet commenced.
- **Hydroxychloroquine monitoring:** As of quarter four, 24/25, pathway not yet commenced. However, two practices in North Powys (Welshpool and Newtown) meet the necessary qualification and equipment requirements to provide this service.

WGOS 5

As of Q4 2024/25, there is WGOS 5 provision in two out of three Clusters. WGOS 5 services are currently provided in North Powys (Welshpool and Newtown) and South Powys (Brecon). There is no provision in Mid Powys. There are no mobile providers of WGOS 5 within PTHB.

The table below summarises WGOS activity (levels 1-5) across quarters 1 to 3, 2024/25, per Cluster including mobile provision. (Quarter 4 data not available at time of publishing)

Activity Q1-3 24/25	North Powys	Mid Powys	South Powys	Mobile	POWYS Total
WGOS1	10506	3652	7674	704	22536
WGOS2 B1	1357	583	1542	2	3484
WGOS2 B2	691	180	301	37	1209
WGOS2 B3	492	185	365	4	1046
WGOS3	48	54	65	9	176
WGOS4	0	0	0	0	0
WGOS5 New	179	0	287	0	466
WGOS5 FU	47	0	122	0	169

4. Any identified gaps in service

There are no optometry practices in some of the Powys towns where there is main General Medical Services provision.

There is no optometry service provision in the following Powys towns:

North Cluster	Mid Cluster	South Cluster
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Llanfyllin, Llanfair Caereinion, Montgomery Llanidloes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knighton, Presteigne Rhayader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talgarth

The table below shows the current WGOS provision by Cluster and highlights the gaps in service.

Percentage of practices providing WGOS 1-5 across PTHB Clusters									
	WGOS 1	WGOS 2	WGOS 3	WGOS 4 Medical Retina Filtering (not live)	WGOS 4 Medical Retina Monitoring (not live)	WGOS 4 Glaucoma Filtering (GF)	WGOS 4 Glaucoma Monitoring (not live)	WGOS 4 HCQ (not live)	WGOS 5
North Cluster	100%	100%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%
Mid Cluster	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	67%	0%	0%	0%
South Cluster	100%	100%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%
	100%			>50%					<50%

One practice in North-West Powys (Machynlleth) declares 'zero core' hours which leaves an ongoing service provision gap in this area for both WGOS 1 and 2. The lack of provision for acute appointments under WGOS 2 is more of an issue. Currently, patients face increased travel to access a WGOS 2 service, often this will be out of Powys to either Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDUHB) to the West, or Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to the North. The table below highlights the increased travel for patients who are not currently able to access services from the registered contractor in Machynlleth:

Destination	Distance from Machynlleth	Travel time from Machynlleth
Aberystwyth	18 miles	35 minutes
Dolgellau	16 miles	25 minutes
Newtown	32 miles	50 minutes

In addition to the service gap in North-West Powys, there has also been a recent practice closure in the Mid Cluster. During January 2025, there was a permanent practice closure in Knighton. Whilst the records transferred to the main branch of this business in Llandrindod Wells, it has resulted in reduced access in the Knighton area. Patients now face increased travel to access Optometry services either to Llandrindod Wells or Newtown within Powys, or outside of Wales to Kington, Leominster, or Hereford.

The table below highlights the increased travel for patients who are no longer able to access services from an Optometry practice in Knighton:

Destination	Distance from Knighton	Travel time from Knighton
Newtown	20 miles	35 minutes
Llandrindod Wells	19 miles	30 minutes
Kington	13 miles	22 minutes
Leominster	19 miles	34 minutes

There are also challenges in providing domiciliary eye care services in Powys which may result in gaps in service provision. This is primarily due to the limited number of mobile Optometry providers. Currently, there are only four mobile WGOS 1&2 Optometry providers serving the health board, and all of them are based outside of Powys.

This situation is further complicated by the limited provision of WGOS 3 mobile services (one additional WGOS 3 only provider) and the complete absence of WGOS 4 & 5 mobile services. As a result, residents of Powys may face challenges in accessing timely and convenient eye care, highlighting the need for ongoing support in this area.

5. Any identified need and, if applicable, proposals for service improvement pathways

Due to an ageing population and increasing prevalence of most major eye conditions, there is an increasing demand for all levels of WGOS across PTHB. Access to Optometry services within Powys has reduced over the years with practices closing, however the demand for WGOS 1-3 continues to be met through reasonable geographical coverage across the Health Board, with the notable exception of service gaps in some main towns and in particular North-West Powys.

Currently across Powys there is a very small cohort of Optometrists with specialist skills and qualifications to provide WGOS4 services. This includes no WGOS 4 and WGOS 5 provision in some clusters, or a low level of service provision, providing an inequitable service offer.

The complexity of Powys secondary care pathways and the lack of available data regarding secondary care activity makes it difficult to identify the true demand of services that can be transferred into primary care WGOS 4. However, based on the Powys population eye health demographics and the RNIB future predictions for prevalence of ocular conditions (see Appendix 1), it is clear that there is a particular need to focus on increased service delivery for WGOS4 including glaucoma, medical retina and hydroxychloroquine within primary care optometry.

The PTHB aspiration is for a minimum of 50% of Practices to be delivering the full range of WGOS services.

The Health Board's priority, in order to meet future demand, will be to continue to support the provision and development of WGOS services including supporting and promoting the optometry workforce to expand their skill set and gain the required accreditation.

	Current service provision	Planned increase 2025/26	Future aspiration 2025 - 2028
WGOS 4			
Glaucoma Filtering (Higher Certificate Glaucoma qualification requirement)	Mid cluster provision only Two practices currently providing, located in Llandrindod Wells & Builth Wells	Two practices in the north cluster anticipated to join the service in Q4 2025/26 (Welshpool and Newtown). This will provide a total of 27% of Powys coverage, but only in the north and mid cluster area. The mid cluster may have capacity to support south cluster referrals. This will need to be scope with the mid practices.	To encourage South Cluster practices to progress required qualification through HEIW. To aspire to a minimum of 50% practices offering the service.

<p>Glaucoma Monitoring</p> <p>(Professional Certificate Glaucoma qualification requirement)</p>	<p>No provision currently in place</p>	<p>Eight practices are anticipated to start providing in 2025/26, with coverage across all three clusters.</p> <p>Three practices in North Powys (Welshpool x 2, Newtown x1).</p> <p>Two practices in mid Powys (Llandrindod Wells and Builth wells).</p> <p>Three practices in south Powys (Crickhowell, Brecon and Ystradgynlais).</p> <p>This will provide 53% of coverage across Powys.</p>	<p>To maintain a minimum of 50% of practices offering the service.</p>
<p>Medical Retina monitoring and filtering</p> <p>(Professional Certificate Medical Retina qualification requirement)</p>	<p>No provision currently in place</p>	<p>Nine practices anticipated to start providing Medical Retina services in 2025/26, both monitoring and filtering, providing coverage across all three clusters.</p> <p>Five practices in North Powys (Welshpool x 3, Newtown x 2).</p> <p>Two practices in mid Powys (Llandrindod Wells and Builth wells).</p> <p>Two practices in south Powys (Crickhowell and Brecon).</p> <p>This will provide 60% of coverage across Powys.</p>	<p>The assumption is that the Medical Retina provision will be sufficient to meet health board demand.</p> <p>To maintain a 60% service offer.</p>
<p>Hydroxy-chloroquine monitoring:</p>	<p>No provision currently in place</p>	<p>Two practices in North Powys (Welshpool and Newtown) who meet the necessary qualification and equipment requirement.</p> <p>Anticipated service due to commence in 25/26.</p>	<p>To aspire to a minimum of 50% practices offering the service</p>

		This will provide 13% of coverage across Powys, but in the north cluster only.	
WGOS 5	<p>North and South cluster service provision already in place</p> <p>Five practices providing</p> <p>North Cluster – Welshpool x 2, Newtown x 1</p> <p>South Cluster – Brecon x 2</p>	<p>Anticipated that a further two practices will provide this service in 2025/26.</p> <p>The service will be extended to Crickhowell (south cluster) and Llandrindod Wells (mid cluster.</p> <p>This will provide 47% of coverage across Powys, available in all three clusters</p>	<p>To encourage a further mid Cluster practice to progress required qualification through HEIW</p> <p>To aspire to a minimum of 50% practices offering the service</p>
Mobile Provision	<p>4 mobile providers delivering core level 1 & 2 services</p> <p>1 mobile provider delivering WGOS 3 services only</p> <p>Poor access being offered to Powys residents due to the geography of the county and the mobile providers being placed out of county.</p>	To engage with existing providers to further understand the Powys offer alongside confirmed core hours	To secure additional mobile providers and increase access offer to patients

Implementation of WGOS4 will enable opportunities for referral management support across both PTHB in-reach and commissioned services and pathways.

The implementation and roll out of WGOS 4 will support the 'shift left' of services by enabling care closer to home and freeing up Ophthalmology capacity within community hospitals, in-reach services and secondary care. It is important to note that Patients will continue on existing secondary care pathways until WGOS pathways can be implemented.

The Health Board's priority, in order to meet future demand, will be to continue to support the provision and development of WGOS services, including supporting and promoting the optometry workforce to expand their skill set and gain the required accreditation.

Optometry capacity to undertake WGOS extended services needs to be considered against the following factors

- practices capacity to deliver
- performer capacity to deliver
- the location of the service (due to rurality)
- other available WGOS services in the practice/cluster, and
- to not be at the detriment of the delivery of mandatory services (WGOS 1 & 2)

The pace of change to implement WGOS pathways is dependent on the above factors.

Unfortunately, due to the geography and size of optometry practices in Powys, there is, and will continue to be a high risk of potential single points of failure for WGOS pathways. WGOS pathways are reliant on individuals with the required qualification working in practices and service provision can be impacted by sick leave, retirement, and optometrists moving out of the area. Therefore, alternative pathway arrangements need to be considered to mitigate this potential eventuality, so patients do not get lost in the system.

The WGOS 4 service delivery cannot be to the detriment of WGOS mandatory services. WGOS 1 & 2 has to be maintained. Practitioner capacity to meet WGOS service demand along with the continuation of WGOS 1 & 2 will need to be continually reviewed and monitored.

To meet the current and future demands, The Health Board, through its primary care, Academy and Cluster teams, will continue to work with HEIW to support targeted workforce upskilling in the necessary areas.

Cluster funding opportunities and initiatives that allow optometry workforce development including succession planning are being progressed to support the implementation and ongoing sustainability of WGOS services across cluster footprints.

6. Financial forecasts for service delivery

	Allocation	Funding held centrally		Q2 Ytd Actual	Q2 Year End Forecast	Year End Forecast at Q3	Year End Forecast at 20-3-25
	£m	£m		£m	£m	£m	£m
Activity	0.498	0.107		0.290	0.655	0.635	0.608
Occupational Health Total	0.023			0.012	0.023	0.006	0.006
Cluster Engagement Total	0.032			0.012	0.023	0.023	0.026
Total CPD	0.031			0.014	0.028	0.031	0.031
Quality for Optometry	0.135			0.025	0.135	0.150	0.098
Total	0.719	0.107		0.352	0.864	0.845	0.768

(Reporting financial data available at time of publishing)

The financial forecast indicates a variance of approximately £48,000 above the allocated budget, primarily driven by increased service activity levels. This variance reflects an overall increase of around £109,000 above the initial activity allocation. This is partially offset by approximately £61,000 in 'non activity' area allocation.

Notably, the activity budget anticipates very limited WGOS 4 for this financial year due to delays in launching the service. However, a significant increase in WGOS 4 activity claims is expected in the 2025-26 financial year and therefore will create an increase in variance above the allocated activity allocation budget. Welsh Government have been made aware and dialogue between Primary Care Finance Business Partner and Welsh Government is ongoing.

7. A summary of the Local Health Board's communications activity relating to WGOS 1–5

Optometry Professional Collaboratives and Practice Engagement

The Health Board has actively engaged with Optometry Professional Collaborative to enhance the delivery of WGOS 1–5 services. Currently, there is a pan-Powys Collaborative representing all 3 Clusters. Regular meetings and collaborative efforts have ensured that optometric practices are well-represented and engaged in these clusters.

Engagement with ROC

The Local Health Board continues to engage and work with South West Wales Regional Optometric Committee (SWWROC) to ensure that optometric services align with regional healthcare priorities. This facilitates the exchange of insights and the development of strategies to improve patient care and service delivery.

Engaging with Clusters/GP Collaboratives

Engagement with Clusters and Collaboratives has seen improved focus and remains a high priority for 2025/26 with valuable opportunities for sharing improvement work and influencing service development across the healthcare system.

Eye Care Collaborative Group

The Local Health Board has an established Eye Care Collaborative which ensures primary care Optometry is aligned with the wider Eye Care agenda across Powys including secondary care and third sector services.

Patient Experience

As part of WGOS 4, the Local Health Board intends to capture patient experiences to inform service improvements. This initiative aims to gather feedback on patient satisfaction and outcomes, ensuring that services are patient-centred and responsive to their needs. The insights gained will be used to refine service delivery and enhance patient care.

Appendix 1

The RNIB (2023) Sight Loss Data Tool¹ estimates the prevalence of a number of ocular conditions for PTHB. This data has been used to inform the Powys future eye healthcare needs:

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)

Across PTHB, the RNIB estimate:

- 8,310 (6.2 %) people are living with the early stages of AMD;
- 640 (0.48%) are living with late-stage dry AMD;
- 1,320 (0.99%) are living with late-stage wet AMD.
- 1,860 (1.39%) combined late-stage AMD
- Between 2022 and 2032 the RNIB estimates an increase of 22% (409) in the number of people living with late-stage AMD

Cataract

The RNIB estimate that, across PTHB:

- 2,080 (1.56%) people living with cataract.
- Between 2022 and 2032 there is estimated to be an increase of 22% (458) in the number of people living with cataract.

Glaucoma

Across PTHB, the RNIB estimate:

- 3,030 (2.278%) people are living with ocular hypertension.
- A further 1,940 (1.45%) people are living with glaucoma.
- Between 2022 and 2032 there is estimated to be an increase of 14% (272) in the number of people living with glaucoma.

Diabetic Retinopathy

Across PTHB, RNIB estimate

- 2,700 (2.03%) people are living with diabetic retinopathy.
- Of these, it is estimated that 250 (0.18%) have severe diabetic retinopathy likely to result in significant and potentially certifiable sight loss.
- Between 2022 and 2032 there is estimated to be an increase of 2% (54) in the number of people living with diabetic retinopathy.

(¹Source: RNIB Sight Loss Data Tool Version 5.2 - Powys Teaching Health Board sight loss briefing. 2023)