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Aneurin Bevan  
University Health Board

# WALES GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Primary & Community Care Services Division

*Primary Care Contracting*

# 2024/25 Wales General Ophthalmic Services Annual Report

## Introduction

The National Health Service (Wales Eye Care Services) (Wales) (No. 2) Directions 2024 place a requirement on Health Boards to complete an annual report for the purpose of monitoring Wales General Ophthalmic Services (WGOS) 1-5.

This report provides details in respect of Wales General Ophthalmic Service provision across Aneurin Bevan University Health Board in 2024/25 and will provide details in respect of workforce, effectiveness, finances and communications.

The report will also highlight any gaps in service provision and plans to address and close gaps to ensure an equitable service, closer to home, for all patients within Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

## 1. Wales General Ophthalmic Services

The new NHS (Ophthalmic Services) (Wales) 2023 regulations, which govern WGOS 1 and WGOS 2, came into force on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The new regulations and legislative directions replace all previous General Ophthalmic Service instructions for optometry services including all Wales Eye Care Service instructions for example, Eye Health Examinations Wales and Low Vision Services Wales.

As at March 2025 there were 54 Optometry practices and 5 domiciliary providers providing WGOS 1 and 2, all of which were open for urgent and essential appointments and could also provide routine sight tests to patients. Practices continue to prioritise and schedule patient appointments based on clinical need and presenting symptoms relative to the risk of sight loss and harm. There was also one 1 domiciliary provider who provided a WGOS 3 service only.

Of the 54 practices and 6 domiciliary providers across the Health Board in 2024/25, 11 had mobile service agreements in place with the Health Board, 35 practices provided WGOS 3 and 23 practitioners/23 practices were eligible to provide the WGOS 5.

The WGOS 4 service was launched within the Health Board on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024. In 2024/25, 22 practices provided a Medical Retina Service, 11 practices provided a Glaucoma service and 2 practices were commissioned to provide Hydroxychloroquine monitoring.

The Health Board also commissioned 5 Ophthalmic Diagnostic Treatment Centres which provided care for patients with Glaucoma that were suitable to be treated within Primary Care. Referrals were made and reviewed by Secondary Care. One of the Ophthalmic Diagnostic Treatment Centres in Newport also provided a Wet AMD service. In line with the WGOS 4 implementation plan, the Ophthalmic Diagnostic Treatment Centre/Wet AMD service ceased on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 with all providers transitioning to provide WGOS 4.

## 2. WGOS Service Provision

The table below shows the number of practices, by Neighbourhood Care Network as at March 2025 providing each WGOS service;

	WGOS 1 & 2	WGOS 3	WGOS 4- Medical Retina	WGOS 4- Glaucoma	WGOS 4- HCQ	WGOS 5
Blaenau Gwent East	2	2	2	1	-	2
Blaenau Gwent West	4	3	2	-	-	3
Caerphilly East	9	7	3	2	-	2
Caerphilly North	3	3	3	1	-	2
Caerphilly South	5	4	3	2	-	2
Monmouthshire North	8	5	2	2	-	2
Monmouthshire South	3	1	1	-	1	1
Newport East	5	2	2	-	-	2
Newport West	8	4	4	2	1	5
Torfaen North	3	2	2	1	-	1
Torfaen South	4	1	-	-	-	
Domiciliary	5	1	-	-	-	1

In 2024/25 a practice in Caerphilly North closed, a Contractor who had practices in both Newport East and Monmouthshire North closed and merged the two practices, opening in a new premise in Newport West. A new practice also opened in Newport East.

The table below details the workforce and number of practitioners providing WGOS 4 and 5 by Neighbourhood Care Network;

	WGOS 4- Medical Retina	WGOS 4- Glaucom a	WGOS 4-HCQ	WGOS 5
Blaenau Gwent East	3	1	-	2
Blaenau Gwent West	3	-	-	3
Caerphilly East	6	2	-	2
Caerphilly North	5	1	-	2
Caerphilly South	6	2	-	2
Monmouthshire North	5	2	-	4
Monmouthshire South	3	-	3	2
Newport East	3	-	-	3
Newport West	6	2	1	6
Torfaen North	3	1	-	1
Torfaen South	-	-	-	-
Domiciliary	-	-	-	1

*\*At the time of publication, workforce data in respect of the Wales General Ophthalmic Services 1 and 2 was unavailable.*

### 3. WGOS Assessment

#### WGOS 1-3

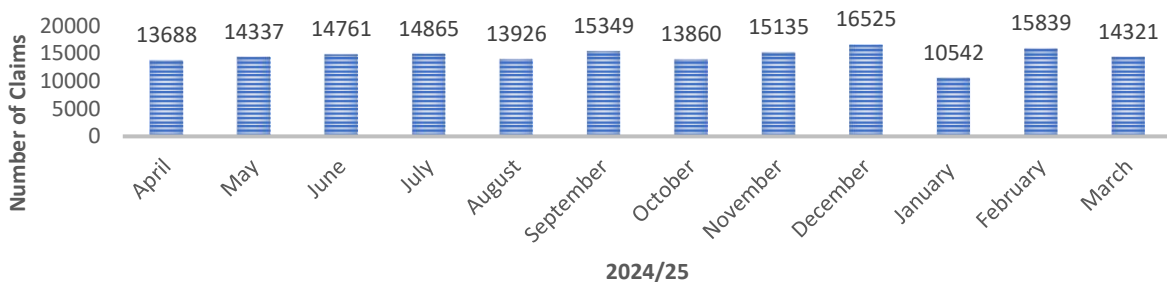
Under the new regulations, WGOS 1-3 are categorised as follows;

- 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 Wales General Ophthalmic Services 1 to inform or prevent a referral.
  - Band 3 - Follow up examinations to Wales General Ophthalmic Services 2 Band 1 and Cataract Post-operative Assessments.
- WGOS 3- Low Vision and Certificate of Visual Impairment
  - Assessment 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

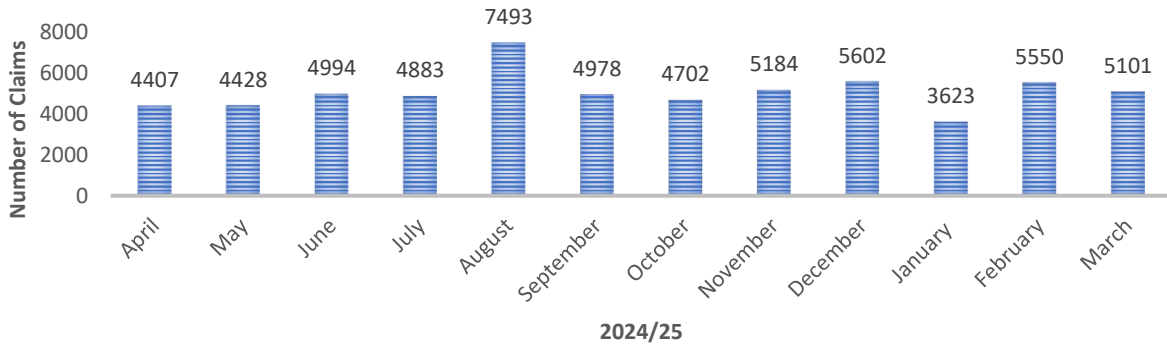
The graphs below detail the number of claims processed for WGOS Services Level 1 -3 between April 24 – March 25;

## WALES GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES

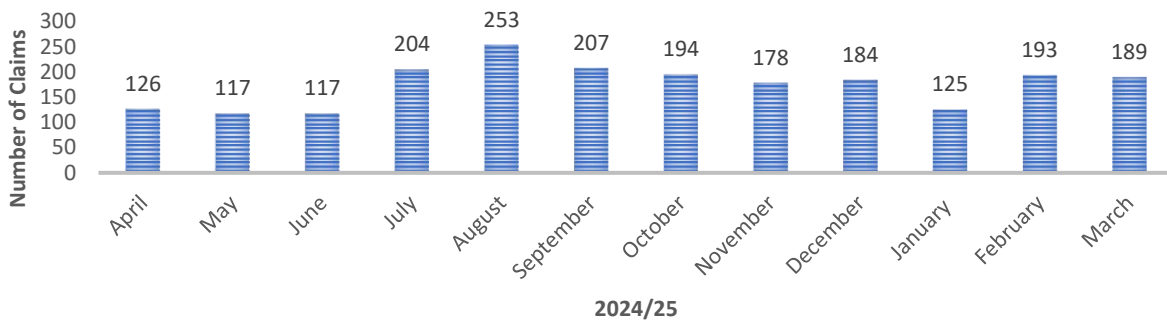
### 1



## WGOS 2



## WGOS 3



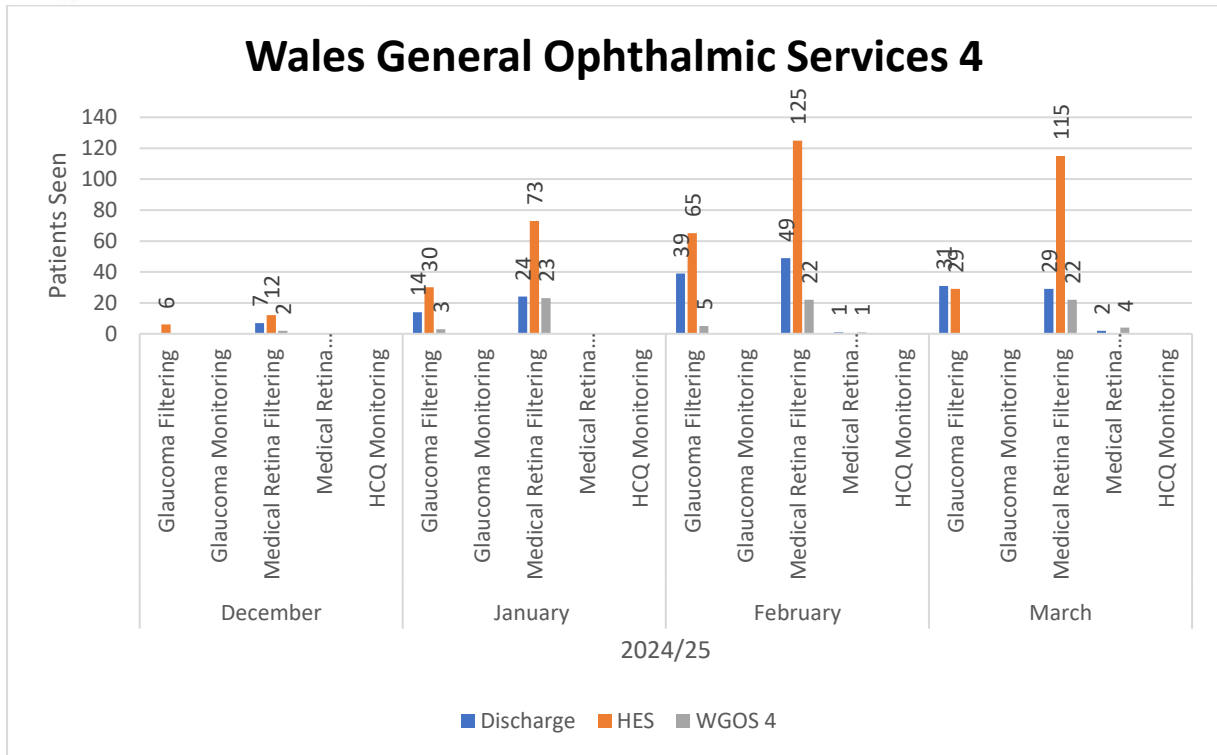
## WGOS 4

WGOS 4 sees patients who would previously have been referred to/or managed in the Hospital Eye Service 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

The WGOS 4 Referral Filtering service was launched within the Health Board on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024. The WGOS 4 Monitoring service will be launched Spring/Summer 2025. However, some patients referred for a referral filtering examination may be determined as being eligible for ongoing monitoring within Primary Care, particularly under Medical Retina services.

The graph below details the number of patients seen for each service under WGOS 4 and the outcome of the examination;



Since November 2024, WGOS 4 have prevented a total 278 referrals being made into Secondary Care. During 2024/25, the Health Board audited a sample of Hospital Eye Service referrals, and have since reviewed all WGOS 4 Medical Retina referrals to ensure patients are accessing services via the appropriate pathways.

In order to support the implementation of WGOS 4 monitoring services the Health Board are in the process of appointing a minimum of two higher qualified Optometrists to review existing HES referrals and assess their eligibility to be seen in Primary Care. Administrative staff will also be appointed, alongside the Optometrists, to undertake all administrative duties relating to the discharge of patients.

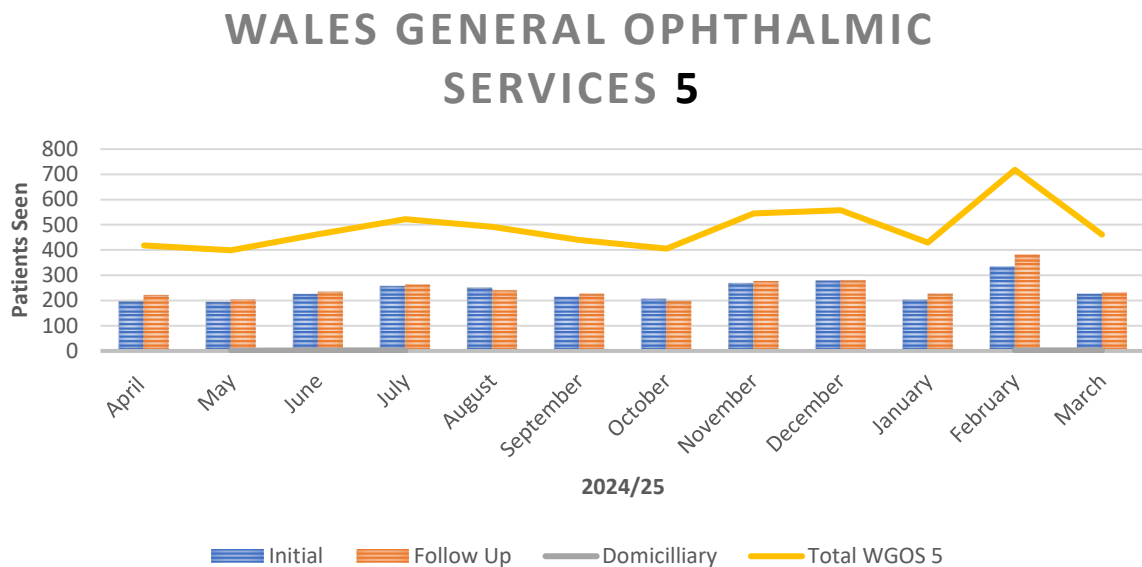
In line with WGOS 4 implementation plans, the Ophthalmic Diagnostic Treatments Centre service which was launched in 2016, ceased on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. 5 practices provided this service in Gwent and all transitioned into WGOS 4. The Health Board worked closely with the providers throughout the year to ensure a smooth transition of service delivery.

## WGOS 5

WGOS 5 allow practitioners with an Independent Prescribing qualification to manage certain conditions in primary care following a referral from a WGOS practitioner or discharge from Hospital Eye Services.

WGOS 5 Urgent services were launched within the Health Board on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Following the update to the WGOS 5 clinical manual in 2024, to include the Hospital Eye Service discharge element of the service, this part of the service was launched on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

The table below details the number of patients seen under WGOS 5 between April 2024 – March 2025.



The Health Board have conducted practice visits to all WGOS 5 providers during 2024/25 as part of its ongoing monitoring process. It is reported that patients are seen within agreed timescales, as per the WGOS 5 clinical manual.

#### 4. WGOS Service Provision and Service Improvement Plans

Since Gwent has become a Marmot Region there is a network of local stakeholders committed to tackling inequity through action on the social determinants of health – the social and economic conditions which shape our health. Becoming a Marmot Region signifies a collective intent to work together to improve equity across Gwent, and improve the lives of all our communities as a result, in line with Marmot principles.

The Health Board have reviewed services and any gaps in service provision throughout 2024/25 and this has been formalised through the Eye Health Needs Assessment. Going forward, information from the Eye Health Needs Assessment, and the workforce toolkit submitted by practices as part the Quality for Optometry practice will inform future planning, with consideration being given to those cluster areas with the greatest needs.

The Health Board continues to work collaboratively with key stakeholders to ensure WGOS services are delivered appropriately and are equitable for the population of Gwent.

## 5. Financial Report

The table below show the financial forecast for 2024/25 in relation to WGOS 2-5. WGOS 1 is non-cash limited and has therefore not been included.

COST AREA	24/25 FORECAST COSTS £
WGOS 2	3,739,328
WGOS 3	191,404
WGOS 4	144,495
WGOS 5	601,818
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,677,045</b>

*\*\*At the time of publication, the figures for 2024/25 had not been finalised*

The Health Board continues to monitor claiming and prescribing patterns on a monthly and quarterly basis, liaising with the NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership colleagues and the profession where necessary.

Ongoing budgetary discussions will be a key area for the Health Board's Eye Care Collaborative Board meeting.

## 6. WGOS Communication

The Health Board have hosted a number of engagement events in relation to WGOS, in collaboration with Secondary Care. Details can be found below;

- 2 x engagement events with the Independent Prescribers
- 1 x engagement event with the non-WGOS 4 practitioners
- 1 x engagement event with the WGOS 4 Glaucoma practitioners, led by Secondary Care colleagues
- 1 x engagement event with the WGOS 4 Medical Retina practitioners, led by Secondary Care colleagues

These events have been well attended by the profession and have provided an opportunity for each party to provide feedback to ensure services can continue to evolve through greater collaboration and integration.

A quarterly newsletter, containing key updates, continues to be circulated to the profession. Information pertinent to WGOS services is hosted on the Optometry Wales website including local availability rotas, referral pathways and templates.

The Health Board's Eye Care Collaborative Board has been re-established with regular meetings throughout the year, alongside the Eye Care Working Group.

A Regional South East Wales Regional Optical Committee group was established between Aneurin Bevan, Cardiff and Vale and Cwm Taf Health Boards and continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis. This group works collaboratively to support the implementation of Optometry services. This meeting has not replaced the local Optometry Liaison Group meetings.

The Communications Team continue to update the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board website: <https://abuhb.nhs.wales/hospitals/gps-dentists-opticians-ncns/optician/> as and when necessary.

The Health Board actively engages with all stakeholders and in March 2025 hosted a South East Wales Regional Optometry event that was led by Welsh Government, and was attended by Health Education and Improvement Wales and the National Clinical Leads.

The Health Board will continue to engage with the profession with further engagement events, Continuing Professional Development sessions and practice visits. Also recognising the impact that the delivery of new Optometry services has on patients, patient communication and third sector engagement will be a key focus going forward.

## **7. Conclusion**

The Annual Report demonstrates the Health Board have been committed to implementing WGOS services within Gwent, in line NHS (Ophthalmic Services) (Wales) 2023 Regulations and the supporting Wales General Ophthalmic Services clinical manuals. The recently published Eye Health Needs Assessment alongside the ongoing monitoring of services will further embed services and inform future service planning. This, coupled with the continued dedication to work collaboratively with key stakeholders, will ensure WGOS is effective and services are equitable across Gwent.