



**Kent
Association
for the
Blind**



ECLO [Eye Clinic Liaison Officer] **Impact Report** **2025/6**



www.kab.org.uk

The ECLO Service

Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) are a nationally recognised model of good practice, providing a bridge between Health and Social Care services.

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists “considers ECLOs as integral to meeting the needs of patients in hospital eye units” and “considers ECLOs to be a core patient service within ophthalmology and, where in place, have a dramatic impact on patients’ quality of life”.



KAB’s ECLOs support, on average, 2,800 patients, carers and family members across 10 hospitals in Kent, Medway and the London boroughs of Bromley and Bexley per year.



Key interventions provided by ECLOs include emotional support, specialist information, including on eye conditions and the registration process, and referral or signposting to other services.

For patients offered certification as sight impaired or severely sight impaired, ECLOs are an essential part of the pathway to ensure the Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) reaches the local authority in a timely manner so that patients can start receiving support from the most relevant service(s) as quickly as possible.

This early intervention is vital and can prevent related problems such as falls or deterioration of physical and emotional wellbeing. This reassurance is crucial to patients at what can be a very difficult and emotional time.

Annual ECLO activity in numbers

2,800

interventions



930

patients
supported
with CVIs



570

patients
referred to Low
Vision Clinic





You were really helpful and kind at the hospital. I was particularly grateful as it was a bit of a shock to get the AMD (age related macular degeneration) diagnosis and CVI (Certificate of Vision Impairment) but you were a great support and help at this time.



The impact to patients

KAB's ECLOs provide early, specialist intervention, from emotional reassurance and guidance on eye conditions to helping navigate the registration process and connecting people with the right services. An ECLO intervention ensures that patients receive timely, holistic support that not only improves wellbeing but also helps prevent avoidable complications, offering people practical tools at a time when they need them most.

Short questionnaires were given to a random sample of patients seen by our ECLOs, which asked what difference seeing the ECLO made to the patient.

100%

of patients said that they would recommend the ECLO service to others visiting the hospital eye clinic.



I wanted to thank you for all your help and advice that you have given. It was always very much appreciated. Your role is such an important one and you do it very well.



Case Study

Miss C was an inpatient following a brain injury that caused multiple injuries and severe sight loss. KAB's ECLO visited her regularly, supported her through the process of being certified as Severely Sight Impaired, and arranged a Low Vision Aids assessment that provided her with magnifiers.

Before her injury, Miss C had lived an active life with a successful career, animals to care for, and a love of reading. Due to the dramatic change in circumstances, the ECLO offered ongoing emotional support to Miss C and, with her consent, referred her to the hospital counselling service, which she found very helpful. The ECLO also taught her Eccentric Viewing, the name given to a technique that teaches people how to best use their residual vision.

Practical adjustments were made to her mobile phone, enabling voice activation and using the camera to enlarge text. These changes helped her regain confidence - she was able to see a photo of her animals and make an independent phone call to a friend, easing her loneliness. When she later moved to a rehabilitation unit, the ECLO ensured her talking book service was transferred.

Miss C said the ECLO had given her hope for the future at a time when she had felt none.

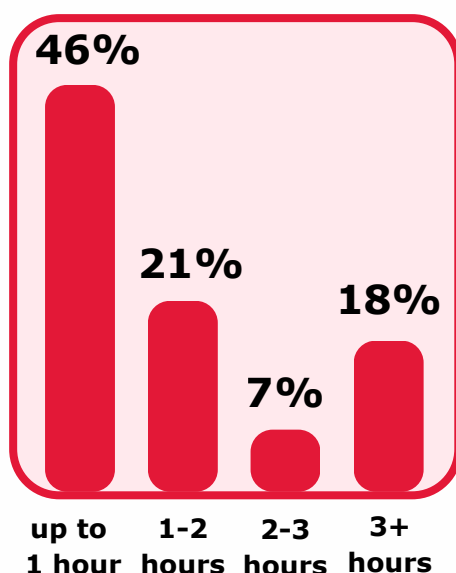
The impact to the NHS

Feedback from consultants, clinicians and eye clinic staff shows that KAB's ECLO service delivers significant benefits to NHS eye departments by offering essential support to patients at a time when they need it the most. Health professionals consistently describe ECLOs as an essential part of a well-functioning clinic - providing the time, expertise and continuity needed to support patients beyond their clinical appointments.

Online surveys were sent to health professionals, including consultants, doctors, nursing staff and secretaries, asking for their opinions about the ECLO service and how they feel the service impacts on eye clinic staff and patients.

We received some incredibly positive and powerful information from the staff surveyed. Many of the quotes highlight the successful outcomes experienced by patients as a result of seeing an ECLO, and **how KAB's ECLOs actively contribute to the emotional wellbeing and improved eye health of patients.**

92% of eye clinic staff said that having an ECLO saves them time each week.



93% of respondents stated that an ECLO positively affects the emotional support offered to patients



The ECLO is invaluable to my patients as a link between the clinic and KAB. It is a huge relief to be able to put patients directly in touch with someone who can offer them real help. Patients are invariably grateful for the support.



Excellent targeted and thoughtful help. Makes eyecare better and more productive.



ECLOs take the time to explain eye conditions and any treatment plan to patients, to help maintain optimum eye health and **prevent avoidable vision loss.**



We liaise with other hospital departments, give advice to ward staff around good communication and support with planning for discharge from hospital.



Case Study



After a routine eye clinic appointment, Michael was referred to our ECLO for advice on choosing a smartphone with voice activation and speech recognition. During their conversation, the ECLO recognised that Michael might also be eligible to be certified as Severely Sight Impaired.

With Michael's consent, the ECLO advocated for certification with the ophthalmologist, resulting in a Certificate of Vision Impairment. As a former soldier, this enabled a referral to the charity Blind Veterans, where Michael now receives support and attends a regular social group.

Alongside this, Michael was referred to KAB's Assistive Technology team and now has a new accessible smartphone.

This story highlights how ECLOs ensure patients are signposted to the right services to support independence and wellbeing.

Added value

Our ECLOs are committed to ensuring patients get the right support they need to help navigate the challenges of vision loss.



We provide visual impairment awareness training to eye clinic staff.



We deliver sight loss awareness training to staff in other hospital departments, such as stroke and falls teams.



Without ECLO, the department will not run efficiently. The role is now one of the foundations that our practice is dependent on.



We arrange Glaucoma Support Groups and Glaucoma Awareness days.



We attend local Macular Society support groups to talk about ECLOs and how they can support people attending eye clinic appointments.



Someone with the knowledge and time to listen to patients and offer correct support/explain their diagnosis is invaluable to the team in an acute hospital setting! Doctors and Allied Health Professionals are all so stretched - we need our ECLOs.



Summary

The ECLO service is a crucial part of KAB's client pathway and it is clear that the service is essential to both the patients who use it and the clinical staff it supports.

As part of KAB's Health & Wellbeing team, our highly skilled ECLOs benefit from specialist Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in a nurturing environment. Recent CPD topics have included supporting patients with suicidal ideation, and working with patients in a trauma-informed way. The feedback from both patients and clinicians clearly demonstrates the impact the ECLO service has on those it supports.

KAB remains committed to the long-term development of the ECLO service but is conscious of the risks associated with a reliance on voluntary funds.

Our vision for the ECLO service is a joint funding commitment from Health, Social Care, and KAB resulting in an engaged and equal partnership ensuring KAB can increase resources as necessary to support more patients across the 10 hospitals we currently cover. Joint funding would also support KAB's drive to be innovative and responsive to changing demands of both patients and health services, and become a national model of best practice.

"At a time when the NHS is looking for better models of care and intervention to overcome increasing patient demand, ECLOs can increase capacity in the hospital eye service and deliver the human touch needed for vulnerable patients" –
Royal College of Ophthalmologists.

With thanks



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