# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Consultation on the reform of primary care ophthalmic services** |
| **DATE** | **24 April 2023** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

The Welsh Government is committed to improving health care services in Wales, and improving service provision for people with poor eye health is a priority.

Following optometry contract negotiations, I announced, in principle, a new optometry contract terms of service in a Written Statement last September. We are now consulting on the proposals to expand the services delivered by primary care optometry providers and launch the new optometry contract. The consultation will run from 24 April to 19 June.

This represents a significant reform of eye care services, aligned to the commitments set out in A Healthier Wales and our Future Approach for Optometry Services, and will drive forward the delivery of higher quality services and, subsequently, improved outcomes for citizens. Furthermore, this will deliver positive benefits for health professionals and NHS Wales and will enable a new system-wide approach for the delivery of ophthalmic services by NHS Wales

A key driver for change is the need to alleviate pressure on hospital eye departments. This is achievable through increasing the range of services delivered closer to home in primary care, by a trained and well-equipped workforce.

We have the infrastructure and a highly qualified and motivated workforce in primary care, working collaboratively with hospital eye services to ensure Wales’ eye care services continue to be a triumph for devolution. I encourage all those with an interest in eye health care in Wales to consider the proposals and to respond to this consultation at the earliest opportunity.

This policy development ensures Wales remains at the cutting edge of the UK, leading reform clinically from a patient centred perspective, and being the first UK nation to fully embrace clinical services in optometry primary and community care.

The Welsh Government has worked closely with stakeholders on the proposed reform to ophthalmic services through robust dialogue, discussion, and collaborative working. I look forward to continuing with this collaborative approach over the upcoming months in our

shared endeavour to further improve services for people with poor eye health and deliver against the objectives of the Future Approach for Optometry Services in Wales.