Parallel Vision: Special School Eye Care Service Update

I am writing to update members about the Special School Eye Care Service (SECCS). Around 40% of children attending special school have no history of eyecare. The SECCS programme was developed by NHS England and the charity, SeeAbility, to address this gap.

In 2013, SeeAbility began a new service in special schools and the BIOS SEN CAG supported this, championing the role of the orthoptist in special schools. In 2018, the CAG was approached for a stakeholder to join a working group to make primary eye care in special school available to all children across England. This was termed the SECCS.

Through 2018-2020, the working group developed the relevant paperwork to allow contracts to be set up creating primary eye care in special schools. These are GOS contracts, employing Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians. NHS England carried out a Proof of Concept piece of work, where the model and funding was tested by new providers of this service.

In 2021 services were halted to evaluate the Proof of Concept, the findings are yet to be published by NHS England. On 19th June, 2023 NHS England announced that the Proof of Concept was successful and that they will continue to meet the NHS Long-Term Plan commitment. Expanded services are expected to be in place for 2024/25.

As representative for BIOS, my role continues to be to highlight existing HES services, and that the NHS England SECCS should complement whatever service is already provided. There will be engagement events across this summer, and we have asked NHS England where these details will be published. I would encourage leads of SEN services to attend these to support your own area.

Please contact me if there are any questions.

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