# Vision and stroke: Professionals Involved Transcript

Voice-over: This podcast is brought to you by the RNIB Older People and Complex Needs team, RNIB ECLO team and RNIB Eye Health team. It is part of our vision and stroke series. The information in this podcast will be helpful for health and social care professionals and anyone who wants to know more about vision and stroke.

Linzi: Hello and welcome to RNIB's vision and stroke podcasts. I'm Linzi from RNIB Older People and Complex Needs team, and talking with me today in this podcast will be Mrs Stevie Johnson who's clinical lead in the RNIB ECLO team and Louise Gow who is the specialist lead for the RNIB Eye Health team.

In this podcast we'll be talking about professionals involved in stroke care and in particular the difference between different eye care professionals who may be involved if someone's vision has been affected by their stroke.

We all know that there are many different health and social care professionals involved in stroke care, and this can include stroke experts, such as stroke doctors, nurses, neurologists. Health and social care professionals can be involved including occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, dieticians, clinical psychologists, rehab assistants, pharmacists, social workers, sensory impairment teams - the list can go on and on! In particular though, we're going to speak about eye health professionals today and explain a little bit more about their role.

If vision has been involved, or if your vision's been impacted, an occupational therapist may do a screening within the ward and if they suspect a visual change they can then refer you on to an eye health professional. Stevie and Louise are going to describe a little bit more about the roles of the different eye care professionals, and as we are all eye care professionals ourselves: Stevie an orthoptist, Louise an optometrist, and myself a registered optometrist as well, we thought it would be helpful to describe each of these eye care professionals as it can be quite confusing. So Stevie if I can pass over to you to describe some of these eye care professionals?

Stevie: So, confusingly, a lot of the eye health professionals who work in an eye department, all begin with the letter o. Lots of o words to get your head round. So, the first one I'm going to explain is an opthalmologist, and then I'm going to talk about orthoptists, and then I'm going to describe again what ECLOs do.

So, an opthalmologist is a medically-trained doctor. They've done their training for a number of years to become a general doctor and then they've specialised in opthalmology. And they can diagnose eye conditions, and they can also treat them. They can do surgery sometimes, and they can prescribe medication. But that is the doctor, and there are lots of different levels of opthalmologists, right from the consultant but there's other levels and specialisms, but essentially that's what an opthalmologist is.

An orthoptist is someone who's a specialist in how the eyes work together as a pair. And so they work with anybody who for any reason is having a problem with their eyes working together as a pair, or how their eyes move properly. So, if as a result of a stroke there's a problem with the eye movement, then it would be an orthoptist that you would go and see.

And I think, as we mentioned in a previous podcast, ECLOs

are there to provide practical and emotional support to anyone affected

by sight loss, so that might be the person that's had the stroke themselves, but it might also be friends, or family members or carers. And they help connect people with other services and support outside of the hospital. Louise is going to tell us now about some of the other o words.

Louise: Thanks, Stevie. So, another o person you'll find within the hospital setting is an opthalmic nurse, and this is a nurse that's specialised in looking after people attending a hospital eye clinic, so they may perform some of the tests at the hospital eye clinic, such as testing the level of vision in a letter chart, or putting in eye drops. Some opthalmic nurses are also trained to do some minor eye surgery treatments such as injections. Another o is an optometrist. Optometrists can be found in hospital and they can be found in high street optician practices. They used to be known as ophthalmic opticians and they're trained to examine the eyes and prescribe spectacles and contact lenses, but they're also trained to detect signs of injury, ocular disease or problems in the general health, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, and they can offer clinical advice and where necessary refer patients for medical opinions and treatments. Also, you'll find some optometrists

within the hospital setting that have specialist qualifications in managing eye conditions such as cataracts, or minor eye conditions, macular degeneration, glaucoma, childhood conditions and some optometrists work within the low vision clinics in the hospital and in the community.

And the final person that you need to know about is a dispensing optician. So this is an optician that won't be found testing eyes, but they are trained to fit and supply spectacles. And they're qualified to give advice on suitable frames and lenses, and some opticians may also have additional qualifications to fit contact lenses or prescribe low vision aids.

Linzi: Thanks Stevie and Louise for those explanations. So there are many professionals involved in the treatment, assessment, rehabilitation when someone who has had a stroke, and lots of professionals to help support and provide advice to the person and their families or carers.

We hope that this podcast has helped to explain the role of the eye care professionals who may be involved if someone's vision has been affected after stroke.

So thank you to Stevie and Louise today for all your explanations on those professionals, and thank you for listening.

Voice-over: If you found this helpful listen to our other podcasts in our vision and stroke series. We also have information and support online, relating to vision and stroke, on the RNIB webpages. You can find this information by typing 'stroke' into the search bar at the top right hand side of the RNIB webpages. Www.rnib.org.uk.

For more information about working with people with sight loss and complex needs, go on to the RNIB website. Type 'complex needs' in the search box. You can call the RNIB helpline on 0303 123 9999. Thank you for listening.

Document ends.