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## News Update March 2026

Your guide to the latest in optometry, clinical practice, CPD events and more

CATARACT TREATMENT,  
IT'S TIME TO  
***DROP***  
**THE DROPS.**

### **Drop-Free Cataract Surgery: Strong Clinical Results at Scale**

Optegra's Drop-Free cataract surgery pathway is firmly established as our standard NHS aftercare model, with more than **12,500 procedures** completed nationwide.

Data from our Eye Sciences team continues to show strong clinical performance, including **lower rates of cystoid macular oedema (2.84% vs 3.55%)** and **fewer post-operative IOP spikes (0.44% vs 0.68%)** compared with traditional drop-based care.

recovery; no 4-week drop regimen, and no reliance on carers for administration. It's a streamlined pathway designed to support both clinical safety and patient experience at scale. For patients, drop-free care means less stress and more independence after surgery.

[Explore Drop-Free Care](#)

### Your next steps to clearer vision

**1. Visit your local optician to obtain a referral**

Your referral will be sent directly to Optegra.

**2. Telephone assessment**

Once your referral is processed, Optegra will call you to ask a few medical questions and arrange your initial appointment at Birmingham.



## Why Choose Optegra for Cataract Treatment?

See why Optegra Birmingham Eye Hospital is clearly the best place for your free cataract treatment



## Referral Guides: Your Local Optegra Pathway

Our new NHS referral pathway guides are available for all 17 NHS Optegra hospitals, providing patients with clear, site-specific information on cataract referral pathways. Each guide outlines the referral process, what patients can expect at their local Optegra hospital, and key features such as **drop-free cataract surgery, advanced lens options, and expert consultant-led care.**

The guides are designed to help you support your patients, making it easier for them to understand the process and feel confident about their journey.

[Access the Guides](#)

## Meet the Consultant: Mr. Fadi Alfaqawi



Ophthalmic Surgeon at Optegra, specialising in advanced cataract and refractive surgery. Performing around **2,000 procedures annually**, he combines technical precision with a patient-focused approach, tailoring care to each individual's visual needs.

A recognised leader in his field, Mr. Alfaqawi is a Fellow of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists and the European Board of Ophthalmology. He also plays a key role in training the next generation of ophthalmic surgeons, mentoring junior doctors, and contributing to research in cataract and refractive surgery.

Patients under Mr. Alfaqawi's care benefit from cutting-edge procedures, including **drop-free cataract surgery, advanced lens implants, and refractive lens exchange**, all delivered with a focus on comfort, safety, and optimal outcomes.

**For optometrists referring NHS or private cataract patients**, Mr. Alfaqawi and his expert team provide consultant-led care designed to restore vision and confidence.

[Learn More](#)

## CPD Event Raffle: Win a £250 John Lewis Voucher

We're excited to invite you to a **Drop-Free Cataract Surgery Workshop**, led by Mr. Saruban Pasu.

- **Thursday 26th March**

## £250 John Lewis Voucher up for grabs

Enter the raffle when you attend our 'Drop-Free Cataract Surgery Workshop' at Sovereign Harbour Yacht Club in Eastbourne

Attendees earn **3 CPD points** while gaining practical insights into our Drop-Free cataract pathway.

All attendees will be entered into a raffle to win a **£250 John Lewis voucher**, a small thank you for joining us and engaging with the latest in cataract care.

Reserve Your Spot



### Winter Olympics: Vision on the Slopes

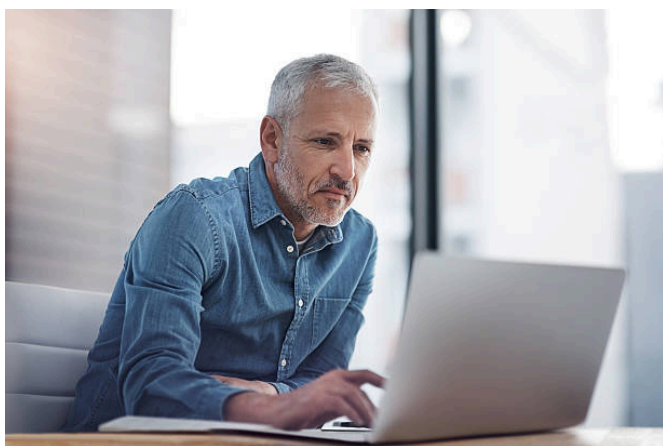
Colchester Optegra ophthalmologists have highlighted just how critical vision is in the Winter Olympics, where athletes face **extreme glare, flat light, and rapidly changing brightness**. Even with excellent eyesight, skiers and snowboarders must rely on exceptional **contrast sensitivity, depth perception, and rapid light adaptation** to navigate the slopes safely.

**Mr Amir Hamid, Chief Medical Officer at Optegra**, explains: “Fresh snow can reflect up to 90% of UV radiation, flooding the visual system and making it harder for the brain to judge shape, distance, and texture. High-quality goggles and appropriate lens tints are essential for both performance and safety.”

While these challenges are extreme, they illustrate a broader point: **even small changes in vision can impact daily life and sports performance**. For optometrists, understanding how vision affects real-world activities

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[Read the Full Article](#)



## Workplace Eye Wellness Awareness Month

Protecting your eyes at work can prevent strain, fatigue, and long-term issues.

### Simple tips to use and share with patients:

- **Set up your screen properly:** Top at eye level, an arm's length away, and reduce glare from windows or bright lights.
- **Take regular breaks:** Follow the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- **Wear the right protection:** Use glasses or safety equipment for screens or high-risk environments like dust, chemicals, or bright light.

Healthy eyes mean better focus and a safer workplace. Encourage patients to get regular eye checks and speak up if discomfort persists.

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[Explore Optegra NHS Care](#)



## 🌟 Giving Patients Hope. Wet AMD Care at Optegra

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of central vision loss in the UK. At Optegra, our **NHS Wet AMD service** offers consultant-led care, with **anti-VEGF injections** helping to stabilise vision and preserve independence.

Patients like Ruth Reddock, diagnosed with Dry AMD, have also accessed innovative private therapies, giving hope where treatment was previously limited. Her story highlights the difference **early detection and timely intervention** can make.

Under the guidance of **Mr Sajjad Mahmood, AMD Lead**, Optegra combines **clinical expertise, advanced technology, and personalised care** to support patients with both Wet and Dry AMD.

Discover our NHS Wet AMD care

# Did You Know?

IRIS, our AI assistant, is helping optometrists focus on complex care.

Discover how AI is helping us integrate

When integrated safely, AI allows optometrists to focus on **early detection, sharper triage, and personalised care**. At Optegra, **IRIS**, our AI-enabled assistant, supports patients from **referral through follow-up**, with pilots underway in **glaucoma, refractive surgery, and advanced OCT interpretation**.

Explore AI in Eye Care

# Accredited Events

## Q1 2026 CPD Focus: Drop-Free Cataract Surgery

Join our interactive sessions to explore a Drop-free cataract surgery aftercare approach through real-world case scenarios. Learn about patient selection, pathway integration, and practical considerations while engaging in hands-on discussion with peers. Build your understanding of how Optegra is delivering Drop-Free cataract surgery and how this approach fits into modern cataract care.

[Join An Event Near You](#)

## Hear from our Patients:



“You as an individual are being cared about - called absolutely on time for the operations, ladies giving drops beforehand, answering questions, and being friendly and helpful. The surgeon coming out and speaking to you before the surgery. Everything worked like clockwork.”

- Linda Law, treated at Optegra Eye Hospital

## Download Resources

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