



Optical Express, Cabot Circus, Bristol

This high street practice performs surgery on the premises and aims to offer a complete eye care solution

How long has the practice been established? Since November 2008.

Number of staff and their main roles. Seventeen, including our ophthalmic surgeon, laser manager, laboratory manager, two laser nurses, laser technician, IOL assistant, store manager, assistant manager, five optical assistants, two optometrists, and pre-reg optometrist. We are lucky to have a very skilled and diverse group.

What typifies the sort of patients you see? We see a whole host of patients at Cabot Circus – from spectacle and contact lens wearers coming in for regular eye tests, to laser eye surgery (LES) and intraocular lens treatment (IOL) patients. We get to interact with the whole spectrum.

What percentage of your patients wear contact lenses? Thirty per cent.

Describe your favourite type of patient and explain why. Those patients arriving for their one-day postop after having LES or IOL, and for the first time in their lives have woken up and not had to reach for their glasses. They are so delighted – many of them have tears of joy in their eyes – it is extremely rewarding.

What is the estimated size of your patient base? 33,000.

What would you say was the most successful area of your business? Our greatest success comes from the fact that we can offer the complete vision solution – whether you are looking for spectacles, contacts, LES or IOL treatment, we can provide you with the best possible products and services to meet your needs. It's impossible to choose just one area, because what we pride ourselves on is being able to serve the entire range.

How many days a week are you open? Seven.

Describe one area of your practice service that you would like to highlight. IOL treatment. It's often overlooked,



but IOL can be a great alternative for patients who are unsuitable for LES. We are really happy to be able to offer this and expand the breadth of patients whom we are able to treat and offer solutions.

What instrumentation or equipment are you proud of? All Optical Express stores, including ours, is equipped with a Pentacam, which we feel is the best way to assess corneal topography. In addition, we are the only corporate provider to offer Advanced CustomVue Wavefront technology to our LES patients. Wavefront measures and calculates imperfections in vision 25 times better than standard methods, and is required for all servicemen in the US Navy who require treatment.

How often do you change your window display? Monthly.

What is the average eye examination time? Twenty minutes for eye exam, 40 minutes for a refractive consultation.

How many other practices are there within a one-mile radius of you? Three.

Best dispense in the last year. We fitted a 12-year-old footballer with Biofinity Toric contact lenses, at £20 a month. He has a high degree of astigmatism and was forced to wear glasses constantly, but they were really holding him back in football. It's been really wonderful to hear how well he has been performing on the field with his new lenses.

Trial frame or phoropter head? Both Nidek phoropter head and trial frame. We're lucky to have a choice.

Name three things in your waiting room. Patient testimonial book filled with pictures and stories from our LES and IOL patients, full box of LES and IOL patients' old glasses to donate to The Caring City, and happy patients.

Mention one surprising fact about your practice. Most people are surprised to discover that we perform surgery on the premises – no trip to the hospital, just the convenience of our state-of-the-art equipment and talented staff at our high street location. We're also Care Quality Commission approved. We really want to be able to provide the full vision care solution from one very accessible location.

Mention one top tip you have found has benefited your practice. Our fully electronic patient database is a huge asset, connecting us with all the other Optical Express locations, and enabling us to provide the best possible service for all of our patients.

Why should your practice feature in Practice of the Week? We just passed our one-year anniversary, and we really feel that we've established ourselves as the only provider in the area to offer the complete eye care solution. We also really pride ourselves in our technology. All of our patients can rest assured that we are using the best technologies to look after them as well as we possibly can. ●