

Northumberland 
Care Trust
Innovation in Practice Awards



Outstanding
Optometrist
of the Year

INDEPENDENT
Prescribing
OPTOMETRISTS

Extending the Role of Community Based Eyecare

UK consumer group 'Which?' report 'Independent' optometrists score highest for customer satisfaction

Without recourse to huge marketing budgets to entice patients in, 'Independent' optometrists must rely on word of mouth, which will only be positive if the patient experience is 'WOW'. Independents do not represent a unified group and as such the range of services vary, but the 'Which?' report indicates that independents give the best service and best value for money. Why hide behind gimmicks? Just offer honest service and value.

***Which?* glasses**

Independent opticians achieved the highest customer satisfaction score in a report published by *Which?* on the 'Best and worst places to buy glasses.'

More than 5,000 members of the UK consumer body took part in the survey, which asked them to rate their experience of the opticians when having an eye test and buying glasses and/or contact lenses in the past three years.

Ranking their level of satisfaction, independents achieved the highest score (88%).

THE UK consumer body, *Which?*, has released a report on the optical sector looking at the 'Best and worst places to buy glasses,' with local independent opticians achieving the highest customer satisfaction score.

Top performers

Local independent practices topped the survey, achieving a customer score of 88%.

The results revealed that independent opticians were the only practices to achieve top ratings for 'customer service,' 'timekeeping' and 'product quality.' Independents were also picked out for their 'staff communication' and 'staff skills'.

Commenting on the results of the survey, *Which?* editor, Richard Headland, said: "Not all optician stores are the same and we found big differences between them. We were surprised to see that some of the big High Street chains didn't fare as well as other retailers

Independents top practice survey

A *Which?* guide published last month shows independents are top performers when it comes to buying glasses, writes *OT*'s John White

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04/07/14 CONSUMER SURVEY

THE UK consumer body, *Which?*, has released a report on the optical sector looking at the 'Best and worst places to buy glasses,' with local independent opticians achieving the highest customer satisfaction score.

More than 5,000 *Which?* members took part in the survey in March 2014, which asked them to rate their experience of using opticians to have eye tests and buy glasses and/or contact lenses in the past three years.

The report offers a 'customer score,' based on *Which?* members' "satisfaction with the practice on their last visit and the likelihood of recommending it to a friend."

Top performers

Local independent practices topped the survey, achieving a customer score of 88%, with Costco ranked a close second (86%), and Asda third (77%). Well-known High Street chains were also ranked positively, with Specsavers achieving 72%, Boots 69%, and Vision Express 68% ratings.

"The findings of the report are generally positive"

The survey also asked members to rate customer experience in the practice, ranging from 'store environment' to 'product range.' The results revealed that independent opticians were the only practices to achieve top ratings for 'customer service,' 'timekeeping' and 'product quality.' Independents were also picked out for their 'staff

communication' and 'staff skills,' and were recognised for being 'more likely to fix a problem with glasses at no extra cost.'

Which? members were also asked to consider the cost impact, with members-only store Costco receiving top ratings for 'price' and 'value for money,' backed up by its 'product quality' and 'timekeeping.'

The report contains a guide to buying glasses, offering advice from three anonymous opticians. On choosing frames, the report states: "The mark-up on cheaper frames tends to be higher – you'll get better value from frames if you can spend a bit more. But paying 'top whack' doesn't guarantee quality."

On the question of where to buy

glasses, the article recommends that glasses are bought from the practice which "carry out your eye test. Resolving issues can become complicated if you go to different stores."

Commenting on the results of the survey, *Which?* editor, Richard Headland, said: "Not all optician stores are the same and we found big differences between them. We were surprised to see that some of the big High Street chains didn't fare as well as other retailers, like Costco, who aren't famous for selling glasses."

Which? is the largest consumer body in the UK, with a membership of over 617,000 members. The last survey the consumer body produced was Opticians fail the *Which?* eye test, which was published in September 2011.

Optical practice	<i>Which?</i> 'customer score'
Local independent optician	88%
Costco	86%
Asda Opticians	77%
Rayner Opticians	74%
Specsavers	72%
Boots Opticians	69%
D&A/Dollond & Aitchison*	69%
Vision Express	68%
Tesco Opticians	65%
Scrivens Opticians	61%
Optical Express	59%

Table 1 *Which?* 2014 customer satisfaction scores

* D&A merged with Boots in 2009. All branches will adopt Boots Opticians branding in due course