

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201609013, An Opticians in the Lothian NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Miss C complained to us that, when she attended her local opticians, she reported symptoms of flashing lights in her left eye. The optometrist said there was nothing to worry about and did not offer her a follow-up appointment. When she saw another optometrist six months later, she was urgently referred to the eye hospital where it was discovered she was blind in her left eye. Miss C said that the first optometrist should have taken her concerns seriously.

We took independent advice from an adviser in optometry and concluded that the first optometrist had provided a reasonable standard of care. This optometrist had seen Miss C on two occasions. At the first appointment there was no record that Miss C had reported flashes in her left eye. Her vision had deteriorated from her last annual check-up, however there was nothing to suggest that Miss C should have been referred to a hospital specialist at that time.

At the second appointment two months later, it was noted that Miss C had reported flashes in her left eye and was worried about going blind. The optometrist offered to perform a dilated examination (detailed eye examination following administration of eye drops) but Miss C declined the offer. The adviser noted that although there was no explanation as to what the optometrist felt was the cause of the flashes, there was no clinical evidence of additional problems or a need for a specialist referral. We did not uphold the complaint. However, we found that the first optometrist should have arranged for Miss C to attend an earlier recall for the recent onset of flashes in line with the local referral protocol. This would have resulted in an earlier check-up, which would have been in advance of Miss C's appointment with the second optometrist. We offered some feedback on this to the opticians.