



House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

## **Press Release – For immediate release**

**Sarah Champion**

**Member of Parliament for Rotherham**

**16th April 2013**

### **Sarah Champion MP calls on constituents to look after their eyesight by having regular eye tests**

Local MP for Rotherham, Sarah Champion visited Scrivens Opticians at All Saint's Square in the centre of Rotherham on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April to find out why regular eye tests are so important in preventing blindness.

1.8 million people in the UK are living with sight loss and this figure is set to increase by 115% to nearly 4 million people by 2050, largely due to the ageing population (1). Much of this is preventable through the early detection and treatment of eye problems. Regular eye tests are a simple and practical way to maintain good eye health and look after your eyes.

Senior Optometrist at the Rotherham branch, Robert King, explained the health benefits of regular eye tests:

*"An eye test is not just a check to see whether you need glasses or not, but is also a means of ensuring your eyes are healthy. At Scrivens Opticians our eye tests can pick up other health problems such as high blood pressure and diabetes so they are an important health check for everyone. Many eye conditions such as glaucoma are treatable and in many cases sight loss can be prevented if they are detected early enough."*

Commenting on her visit Sarah Champion said:

*"Excuse the pun, but it really was an eye-opener visiting Scrivens. Seeing the sophisticated services they provide the people of Rotherham was very impressive. Their early intervention work prevents costly NHS bills and, genuinely, saves sight!"*

Many groups of people are entitled to free NHS sight tests. These include those aged 60 and over, all children under 16 and those on low incomes. Optical practices are convenient and offer easy access in the local community. You can visit any practice that is either near where you live or where you work. Optical practices can see NHS patients at times that suit them.

**-ENDS-**

**Notes to Editors:**

- 1) Access Economics, 'The Future Sight Loss UK.' 2009. This research was commissioned by the RNIB. The report is available to download here: <http://www.vision2020uk.org.uk/ukvisionstrategy/page.asp?section=74>
- 2) The visit was arranged as part of the Optical Confederation's ongoing campaign to reduce the high level of avoidable sight loss in the UK.
- 3) The attached photo include (from left to right) Robert King, Senior Optometrist; Cheryl Pearce, Branch Manager; and Sarah Champion MP