

Optical Express Optometrist Completes 7th Vision Aid Overseas Project



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Author: [Optical Express](#)

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Optical Express Optometrist Ed Baldwin has successfully completed his seventh Vision Aid Overseas project, a trip to Burkina Faso to distribute eyeglasses and screen patients for cataract surgery.



Baldwin went on his first project with Vision Aid in 2001, working with a team to provide [eye tests](#) and eyeglasses in Latvian prisons. Since then, his projects have included such locales as Ethiopia, Moldova, Bulgaria, and Ghana. He has also served as a team leader on more than one occasion. Baldwin's most recent trip was unique, however, because of the cataract screening element.

"My most recent trip to Burkina Faso was a little different, since we were not only giving out glasses but also trying to find patients who needed cataract surgery," he said. "We found about a hundred patients that needed intraocular lens treatment, and another team went out a few weeks after us with surgeons. It was great, because normally when you see patients with cataracts you can't really do anything about it."

Vision Aid Overseas (VAO) sends teams of volunteer Optometrists and dispensing [opticians](#) to developing nations to screen and outfit patients with appropriate spectacles. Nearing its 25th anniversary, VAO has provided 300,000 individuals with spectacles, and conducted 600,000 eye tests.

Baldwin commented, "Volunteering is the most rewarding thing you can do," Baldwin said. "It's giving people sight where they would otherwise be blind. In a lot of places there are no provisions for eye care, so if you haven't got a pair of glasses you can't work and feed your family.

"When you test eyes back home in the UK, the general public have a huge choice of opticians. In parts of Africa, people will walk from miles around to see you. You're really making a difference to people's lives in a short space of time with something as simple as a pair of spectacles."

Baldwin has worked for Optical Express since 2001, and is currently based in Cardiff, providing both [laser eye surgery](#) and intraocular lens treatment consultations to prospective patients.

"You need to test prescriptions and eye health, so it's all the same skills we use day-to-day in practice, except that you have to do it in the field," he said. "Often, it is literally in a field or even under a mango tree. I've been hit over the head with a mango before when testing eyes."

"The hardest thing is adapting what you do to the environment that you're in," Baldwin said. "From a high-tech environment at Optical Express with my automated equipment to using old fashioned equipment where you don't know where you'll be from one day to the next and seeing as many people as you possibly can because if you don't see them, no one else will."

About Vision Aid Overseas:
For 25 years Vision Aid Overseas has been helping some of the poorest people in the world gain better sight. Whether it be a teacher in Ghana, a seamstress in Zambia, or a school pupil in India, deteriorating sight can have a devastating impact on people's lives and livelihoods. Vision Aid Overseas believes that everyone has a right to an eye test, and if needed, glasses to help correct poor sight.

About

The Optical Express Group was founded in 1991 and is now a global leader of selected healthcare services, specialising in opticians services. The group covers optical stores, refractive laser eye surgery, glasses, contact lenses as well as dental clinics.

Optical

Optical Express provides trained specialists to help patients determine which laser eye surgery treatment is best suited to their unique needs and offers the most advanced eye surgery treatments such as [LASEK](#) and [LASIK eye surgery](#) as well as Advanced CustomVue Wavefront and Intralase.

Express:

Optical Express is the leading provider of laser eye surgery in the UK and Europe, with over 100 laser eye clinics including laser eye surgery and opticians offering pre and post-operative care.

For more information, please contact:

Lindsay Taylor
Marketing & Communications
5 Deerdykes Road
Westfield Industrial Estate
Cumbernauld
Glasgow
G68 9HF
+44 (0)1236 723 300
uk.opticaexpress.com

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