**Template email 6:
Sight for SEN: Secure the future of the Special Schools Eye Care Service [England only]**

**{{INSERT MP NAME}}**

UK Parliament

House of Commons

Westminster

London

SW1A 0AA

 **{{INSERT DATE}}**

Dear **[Insert name]**

**Re: Sight for SEN: Secure the future of the Special Schools Eye Care Service**

My name is **[insert name]**. I am a local **[optometrist/dispensing optician**] working in **[insert practice/location]** and I am writing to you in support of the Special Schools Eye Care Service (SSECS).

Children with special educational needs (SEN) are 28 times more likely to have an eye condition so the recent announcement to roll out sight testing in special schools in England via the Special Schools Eye Care Service is a welcome move. As someone who has **[insert your experience]**, I know first-hand that the Special Schools Eye Care Service provides a service in schools which increases the quality of life of children with special educational needs.

[Here you can include details of your experience of the Special Schools Eye Care Service and why it is an invaluable service in your area.]

As part of the service, community optometrists, conduct sight tests in special schools to ensure that children with SEN can access equitable eye care in their area which is tailored to their needs. We try our best to accommodate every patient that comes into our practice, however children with SEN are often understandably uncomfortable in unfamiliar environments. In some cases, this may mean we need to rebook the appointment, causing further distress, or are required to refer these children into secondary paediatric ophthalmology departments which contributes to the already severe backlogs in hospital eye services.

The Special Schools Eye Care Service solves this issue by providing treatment to children with SEN in their school environment where they feel comfortable and safe. For this reason, it is essential that this service is provided long-term to ensure that these patients receive the treatment they need.

To shine a spotlight on this challenge, the Association of Optometrists, of which I am a member, have produced a briefing document (attached) which explains how the Special Schools Eye Care Service provides eye care to children who currently may not have the means to access treatment in their area.

I would be grateful if you could write to Steve Barclay MP and/or Neil O’Brien MP at the Department of Health and Social Care, on my behalf, and ask them to ensure there is a long-term commitment to the Special Schools Eye Care Service. If you were able to raise this matter in questions and debates in the House that would be hugely valued.

Best wishes,

**[Name, address, including postcode]**