

Young eye cancer survivor joins Vision Express to officially open new optical store at Tesco in Dereham

11-year-old Isobel Hammond and her family share their battle with rare eye cancer as optician launches



L-R. Vision Express Dereham store manager Stephen Moore with CHECT ambassador Isobel Hammond and optical assistant Carie Angood

The new 'Vision Express at Tesco' store in Dereham has officially opened its doors, with a celebration led by child eye cancer survivor and charity ambassador, Isobel Hammond.

Aged 11, Isobel is an ambassador for the Childhood Eye Cancer Trust (CHECT) and was on hand to help cut the ribbon on the premises, which is home to sophisticated sight screening equipment.

Isobel was diagnosed with retinoblastoma (Rb), a rare and

aggressive eye cancer, when she was three years old after her mum, Sara Cassidy, noticed a slight movement delay in her right eye. Concerned, the family visited their local optician and Isobel was referred to hospital for a suspected detached retina.

Sarah said: "Luckily, the consultant at the hospital had experience with Rb and referred Isobel to the Royal London Hospital, where she was diagnosed with cancer in her right eye. Things happened very quickly from there on, with her affected eye being removed a week later. Luckily, she didn't have to undergo chemotherapy and it was all contained in her right eye.



L-R. Vision Express Dereham store manager Stephen Moore, CHECT ambassador Isobel Hammond with brother Isaac Hammond, Tesco store manager Lisa Johnson and optical assistant Carie Angood

“I had never heard of Rb until Isobel was diagnosed with it, and there’s limited information dotted about, so CHECT is a great support network.”

Vision Express at Tesco Dereham store manager, Stephen Moore said: “Retinoblastoma is a condition we are very passionate about raising awareness of at Vision Express, so it was great to have Isobel and her family with us to help

us unveil our new store in Tesco.

“We had a fantastic day celebrating the opening and with our state-of-the-art examining equipment, we’re looking forward to delivering an individual and thorough vision care service to current and new customers.”

The Dereham optical store, is one of more than 200 ‘Vision Express at Tesco’ outlets launching across the UK in 2018 and showcases a purple-infused rebrand being introduced across the entire Vision Express chain.

The re-brand introduces a refreshed logo and striking purple and green colour decor, featuring bright sofas and wooden flooring, delivering a modern, inviting and vibrant environment to encourage customers to feel at ease.

Vision Express’ acquired Tesco Opticians at the end of 2017. In preparation for the expected increase in demand for frames prompted by the acquisition, a £1.5 million investment has been made at Vision Express’ Nottingham-based Technical Centre.

The national home of Vision Express’ laboratory, the Technical Centre currently produces more than one million pairs of glasses a year but following the investment, production capacity is expected to double during 2018.

Vision Express CEO Jonathan Lawson added: “This is a hugely exciting time for the Vision Express family, and we’re delighted to welcome new team members to the company and provide a seamless eye health service to former Tesco optical customers. Crucially, we’re pleased to now be able to offer our vision expertise in a convenient location to residents.”

ENDS

Notes for editors

For further information, media can contact:

The Tonic Communications, 0191 2299702 / 0115 8532198, visionexpress@thetoniccomms.co.uk

About Vision Express

Vision Express is one of the largest optical retailers in the UK and part of [GrandVision](#), the global leader in optical retail operating in more than 40 countries, spanning over 6,500 stores and online.

With almost 600 stores nationwide, Vision Express first opened its doors in Newcastle in 1988. Built on a passion for the profession, it has gone from strength to strength, driven by a commitment to unparalleled customer service and providing the best individual optical care, the right product and great value. Customers can select from a vast range of genuine designer brands and the latest technology lenses, through to complete glasses from £39.

With around 6,000 employees, Vision Express makes a significant difference to the communities it operates within, and the organisations it chooses to support. As part of its commitment to [Vision. Taken Seriously](#), and as a responsible and caring retailer, Vision Express is proud to partner with a range of healthcare charities, which have touched the lives of customers and teams. These companies provide vital support to people affected by vision-related conditions. They are part of the [Vision Express Charity Project](#) and include:

1. Childhood Eye Cancer Trust (CHECT)
2. International Glaucoma Association
3. Macular Society
4. Stroke Association
5. Temple Street University Hospital
6. Brake

About the Childhood Eye Cancer Trust

1. The Childhood Eye Cancer Trust (CHECT) is a UK charity dedicated to helping people affected by retinoblastoma. It:
 - Provides ongoing support and information to families and individuals.
 - Funds research into the prevention and treatment of retinoblastoma.
 - Raises awareness among health professionals and the public.
 - Influences policy to improve services for patients.

2. Retinoblastoma is a rare and aggressive form of eye cancer that affects babies and young children, mainly under the age of six. Around 40-50 cases are diagnosed a year in the UK – or one child a week. It represents 3% of all childhood cancers and 10% of cancers in babies under the age of one in the UK.
3. Around 98% of children survive retinoblastoma in the UK but early diagnosis is crucial in order to save a child's eyes, sight and life. The most common symptoms are a white glow in a child's eye or pupil in dim lighting or when a photo is taken using a flash, and a squint.
4. CHECT has been a registered charity since 1987 and was formerly known as the Retinoblastoma Society. For more information on CHECT or retinoblastoma (also known as Rb), including signs and symptoms, diagnosis, the red reflex test and treatment options, visit www.chect.org.uk