

## Setting a strategy for 2010-2015

Have your say on the future work of the GOC



## About the General Optical Council

### Introduction

The General Optical Council (GOC) is one of 13 organisations in the UK known as health and social care regulators. These organisations oversee the health and social care professions by regulating individual professionals. We are the regulator for the optical professions in the UK. The Council currently registers around 22,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student opticians and optical businesses.

### Mission and values

The GOC's mission is to protect the public by promoting high standards of education, conduct and performance amongst opticians. Our work is built on a foundation of six core values. These values are based on the Better Regulation Commission's criteria for good regulation.

#### **Proportionate:**

We will identify and target the issues of greatest risk to public safety.  
We will remove unnecessary bureaucracy.

#### **Accountable:**

We will seek, and respond to, the views of stakeholders and partners.  
We will consider and review the consequences of our actions.

#### **Consistent:**

We will work in collaboration with UK health regulatory bodies and other partners to develop consistent policies and procedures.

#### **Transparent:**

We will explain and publicise decisions, and make public, wherever possible, Council information, activities and proceedings.

#### **Targeted:**

We will ensure that our activity is focused on the areas of greatest risk, or where there is most benefit to public health and safety.

#### **Organisational Excellence:**

We will provide good value for money.  
We will pursue high standards of customer service.  
We will ensure that the Council is a good place to work, particularly through developing and training our staff and members.  
We will promote and develop equality and diversity in all our work.

### Contact details

Address: 41 Harley Street, London, W1G 8DJ  
email: [goc@optical.org](mailto:goc@optical.org)

tel: 020 7580 3898  
web: [www.optical.org](http://www.optical.org)

## About this consultation

During the last few years, the GOC has undergone significant reforms to its ways of working. In April 2009, those changes culminated in the reconstitution of the Council. We are now looking ahead to the next five years, to ensure that our work is fair, effective and proportionate.

In November 2009 we will launch a consultation on our five-year strategic plan. To help us formulate this plan, we are encouraging partner organisations, patients and the public, individual registrants, and anyone with an interest in our work to have their say on the GOC's role over the next five years.



Your responses to this consultation will help to inform our work priorities. Please answer as many, or as few, questions as you wish, but don't feel you have to stick to the questions we have asked - we want to hear any opinion you have on any aspect of our work.

Consulting with our stakeholders plays a crucial role in formulating GOC policy. Earlier this year we launched our Consultation Framework, which sets out how and why we wish to engage with those affected by our work. You can download the Consultation Framework from our website, [www.optical.org](http://www.optical.org)

I do hope you are able to participate in this consultation, helping us to protect the public and promote good eye care.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dian Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below a horizontal line.

Dian Taylor - Chief Executive and Registrar, General Optical Council

May 2009

### Respond to

Please send your responses to **Dian Taylor**, Chief Executive and Registrar, no later than **31 August 2009**.

Post: 41 Harley Street, London, W1G 8DJ

Email: dtaylor@optical.org

This document is an open consultation on the future work of the GOC. We will use your responses to help us formulate a strategic plan which we will publish in November for consultation. We welcome your views on any aspect of the GOC's work, not just those addressed by the specific questions asked.

Please include contact details so that we can follow-up any relevant aspect of your response. Unless you state otherwise (and an automatic disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be taken as such), we will assume you are happy for us to publish your response and to share it with other appropriate bodies and stakeholders.

### Further information

Where possible, please provide evidence to support your response. If you are a representative group, it would be helpful if you could include a summary of the people and organisations that you represent.

A copy of this consultation has been sent to a large number of stakeholder groups representing our registrants, the public, patients, partner organisations and other groups.

If you have any queries about the consultation then please contact **Maria Claridge** on 020 7307 3469 or mclaridge@optical.org

### The GOC's commitment to consultation

The General Optical Council believes it is important that the people affected by our work have a say in how we deliver it. We believe it is vital to consult with all the groups with an interest in the GOC; patients, the public, our registrants, optical organisations, healthcare organisations, employers, other regulators, staff and other stakeholders.

Effective consultation is valuable to help us improve the way we work. It informs us and helps us to achieve our mission of protecting the public through promoting good eyecare.

We have recently launched consultation framework to standardise and improve our consultation methods throughout the organisation. This is available on our website.

Feedback on the consultation process itself would be welcome. If you have any comments then please contact **Simon Grier** on sgrier@optical.org.

## Consultation summary

### Consultation details

**Start date:** 15 May 2009

**End date:** 31 August 2009

**Results published:** Five-year strategy consultation document to be published November 2009

**Contact:** Maria Claridge 020 7307 3469, mclaridge@optical.org

### Consultation summary

1. In November 2009 the General Optical Council will publish a five-year strategic plan for consultation. The Council intends to implement the plan from April 2010 following the consultation period. The strategy document will then determine the direction of the GOC's work for 2010-2015.
2. This consultation is designed to be as open as possible. We want to gather evidence from our partners about all areas of our work. This will help us put together an effective draft strategy which we hope to further refine during the consultation later in the year.
3. We are particularly keen to hear views on the areas raised by the questions in this document but we want to hear views on all areas of our work. Please offer any opinion you wish to outside the remit of the questions. Similarly, do not feel obliged to answer every question if you do not have the time or subject knowledge to do so. Your answers will carry equal weight no matter how many or few of the questions you respond to.
4. We aim to collect a wide range of views from our partners to help us formulate our plan. We welcome views from, but not limited to, patients and the public, registrants, optical bodies, charities, educators, other regulators, optical employers and government.

## Consultation questions

### Question 1

#### **What should the GOC's role be in relation to patients?**

The GOC aims to promote good eye care and protect the public. We want your views on the steps we should take to achieve this. It is our duty to deliver public protection whilst remaining fair, effective and proportionate. Are we doing enough to protect the public and if not, what additional measures should we be implementing?

### Question 2

#### **What do patients need to know about us and why?**

What sort of information should we be including in our publications, information leaflets and on our website? What information might patients and the public require?

### Question 3

#### **What can we do to support patients?**

Working with patients plays a critical role in our work. What can we do to support patients, and to encourage them to get involved in our work?

### Question 4

#### **How should we work with other organisations to protect the public?**

A lot of our work takes place in partnership with other organisations such as: optical bodies representing opticians and the optical industry; other healthcare regulators; and education providers. For example, in collaboration with other healthcare regulators we produced a patient leaflet about regulating healthcare professionals. We are also a member of the Eye Health Alliance, teaming up with other optical bodies to promote eye health to policymakers and the public. What else could or should we be doing?

### Question 5

#### **How do the public know that optical professionals are doing a good job?**

Patients and the public need to have confidence in their optician. The vast majority of opticians do an excellent job - what can the GOC do to encourage public confidence in opticians and help towards an increased understanding of optometry and dispensing optics?

### Question 6

#### **What can we do to support registrants to meet our standards?**

The GOC sets standards of conduct and competence that opticians must meet in order to practise. Professional and representative bodies such as the College of Optometrists, the Association of British Dispensing Opticians publish professional guidance for optometrists and dispensing opticians. The GOC regularly reviews this guidance. What else should we be doing to help registrants meet the required standards?

### Question 7

#### **What should our role be when things don't go well?**

What should our role be when a patient is unhappy with the standard of care they receive from their optician?

### Question 8

#### **How should we support patients who raise concerns?**

We are aware that making a complaint about an optician can be a stressful experience for a member of the public. What could we do to improve the process so it is as straightforward as possible?

### Question 9

#### **How should we support registrants who raise concerns?**

The process can be just as stressful for a registrant who raises a concern about a fellow optician. What can we do to help them?

### Question 10

#### **How should we support others who raise concerns?**

### Question 11

#### **What else should we be doing to protect the public?**

These questions have been designed to gather information on certain areas of interest. However, we want to hear your views on any area of our work which you think can be improved. Please use the final question for any comments or suggestions that you think can help us to improve our work.

## Consultation response form

### How to respond

Please send your responses to **Dian Taylor**, Chief Executive and Registrar, no later than **31 August 2009**.

Post: 41 Harley Street, London, W1G 8DJ

Email: dtaylor@optical.org

Alternatively, visit [www.optical.org](http://www.optical.org) where you will find an electronic version of this form.

### Response form template

#### Your Details

Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

Email:

#### Are you replying on behalf of an organisation?

Name of the organisation:

Your position:

Nature of the organisation's work:

#### Keeping in touch

Because we value your input, we would like to contact you occasionally to let you know when we launch consultations and to invite you to future events. We will not pass your data on to any third party. Please tick here if you do not wish to be contacted in this way about the GOC's consultations:

#### Question 1 - What should the GOC's role be in relation to patients?

**Question 2 - What do patients need to know about us and why?**

**Question 3 - What can we do to support patients?**

**Question 4 - How should we work with other organisations to protect the public?**

**Question 5 - How do the public know that optical professionals are doing a good job?**

**Question 6 - In addition to what we are already doing, what can we do to support registrants to meet our standards?**

**Question 7 - What should our role be when things don't go well?**

**Question 8 - How should we support patients who raise concerns?**

**Question 9 - How should we support registrants who raise concerns?**

**Question 10 - How should we support others who raise concerns?**

**Question 11 - What else should we be doing to protect the public?**