

General Optical Council – stakeholder engagement strategy

The General Optical Council is the regulator for optometrists and dispensing opticians in the UK. Our purpose is to protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of the public by ensuring high standards of education and conduct amongst opticians. To improve health outcomes for patients and the public, we are committed to taking into account the views and interests of our stakeholders in our deliberations.

Our stakeholder engagement strategy will ensure that the Council engages with a wide range of groups, including registrants, service users and partners, and reflects their views where appropriate in our policy and decision making.

Our goals for successful engagement:

- Stakeholders are well informed about the GOC's work, and are able to input in a timely manner.
- Officers and members have access to a range of measures to inform, consult and involve stakeholders (and support and advice to do so).
- Council and committees formally demonstrate how stakeholders' views have been considered as part of policy development and decision making.

Principles

- We will provide clear and timely information
- We will be clear about the scope for involvement, including where decisions cannot be changed
- We will make particular efforts to seek views on issues where stakeholders' interests may not coincide
- We will support stakeholders to enable them to provide meaningful input
- We will seek opportunities to pursue joint engagement activities where appropriate
- We will provide feedback on the outcome of engagement activities

How it will work

The Council will establish a high-level stakeholder consultative group. This group's role will be to:

- Advise on and guide the stakeholder engagement strategy
- Oversee the creation of a stakeholder engagement action plan
- Report to Council on the progress of stakeholder engagement activities

The Chairman and Chief Executive will act as stakeholder engagement 'champions'. In addition, Council will designate one of its lay members as the stakeholder engagement lead. This member will chair the stakeholder consultative group.

Core elements of engagement

The detail of the Council's stakeholder engagement activities will be set out in an action plan, linked to the business plan. It will need to ensure that engagement is core to the Council's work. Engagement activities will include the following core elements, as appropriate and consistent with the Council's duties and responsibilities:

Communication

All departments take a proactive role in providing information about their work to stakeholders. Council publications are in accessible language and formats.

Consultation

Staff and members work to build relationships and links with relevant stakeholder groups. Key policies and decisions are the subject of broad-based consultation.

Involvement

Some stakeholders have significant involvement at a high level in shaping the Council's strategic agenda and decision-making.

Who we will engage with

Registrants	Optometrists Dispensing opticians Student registrants Business registrants
Potential registrants	Those considering a career in optics Non-UK opticians
Service users	Patients Carers Members of the public Patient groups Relevant voluntary organisations
Partners	Optical professional and representative bodies Health care providers Commissioners of health services Employers Education providers/assessors/funders Other professional regulators

	Health services regulators Legislators and governments
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Measures

We will develop a range of qualitative and quantitative measures to gauge the effectiveness of our stakeholder engagement activities, including by developing benchmarks against relevant sector organisations.