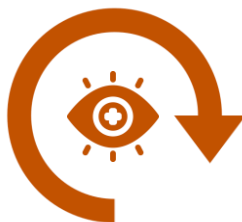


This profile of a dispensing optician is based on findings from the **General Optical Council (GOC) Registrant and Workforce Perceptions Survey 2026**. The results presented aim to highlight what the current dispensing optician workforce looks like, how dispensing opticians feel about working in the profession, experiences of commercial pressures, and attitudes towards artificial intelligence (AI). To read the full survey report, please visit the [GOC's website](#).

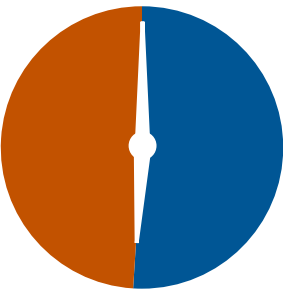
## Workforce



**6,700**  
registered  
dispensing  
opticians

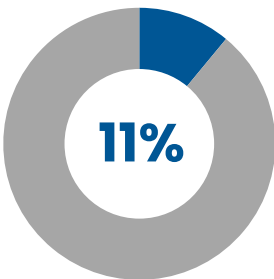


There are approximately  
**5,494**  
working full time equivalent  
dispensing opticians



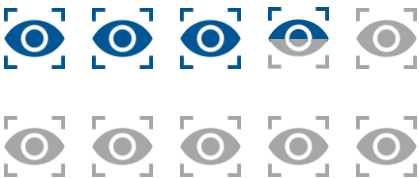
**51%**  
Work **full time**

**49%**  
Work **part time**



work as **locums**

**34%** are involved in the  
delivery of **enhanced**  
**eye care services**



**21%**

Plan to **leave the**  
**profession** in the  
next 12 months



**34%** hold some **management responsibilities**  
and/or a **supervision role** in their current role



## Job satisfaction

**Six in ten** have felt **satisfied** in their job/role over the last 12 months



**57%**  
Satisfied



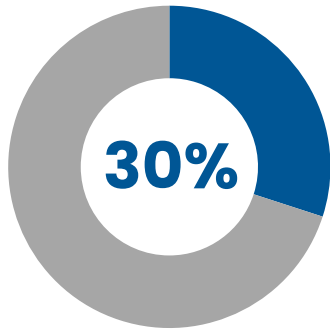
**19%**  
Neither satisfied  
nor dissatisfied



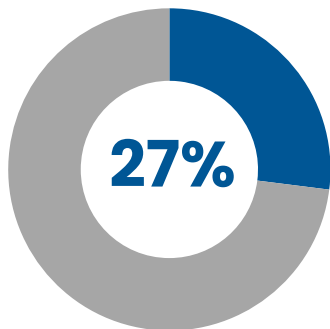
**23%**  
Dissatisfied

# Commercial pressures

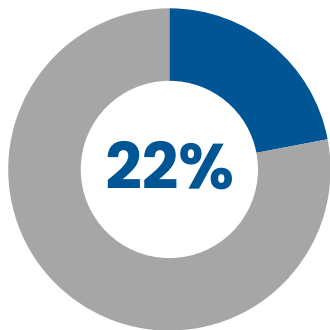
Reports of feeling the following commercial pressures **sometimes** or **frequently**...



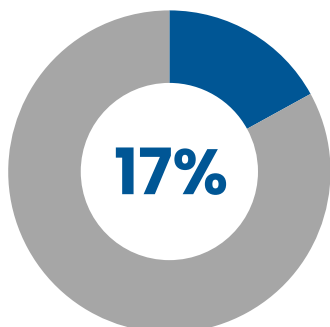
*"I have felt under pressure to see a high number of patients every day which has impacted on my ability to provide safe patient care"*



*"I have felt under pressure to sell certain types of glasses or contact lenses that will earn more money for the business"*



*"I have felt under pressure to meet commercial targets at the expense of patient care"*



*"I have felt under pressure to sell a product or provide a service which I considered was not needed by the patient"*

Those who reported that they had experienced commercial pressures were asked *"When you experienced pressure of this kind, what did you do?"* \*



Did nothing



Raised concerns informally with colleagues



Reported it to my line manager/supervisor



Reported it to senior/practice management



Raised concerns through a formal process



\*Main **concerns** about **commercial practice** in terms of its potential impact on patient care include...



*"Encouragement to sell patients products they don't need or aren't the most suitable but are the most expensive."*

Overselling/upselling products and services

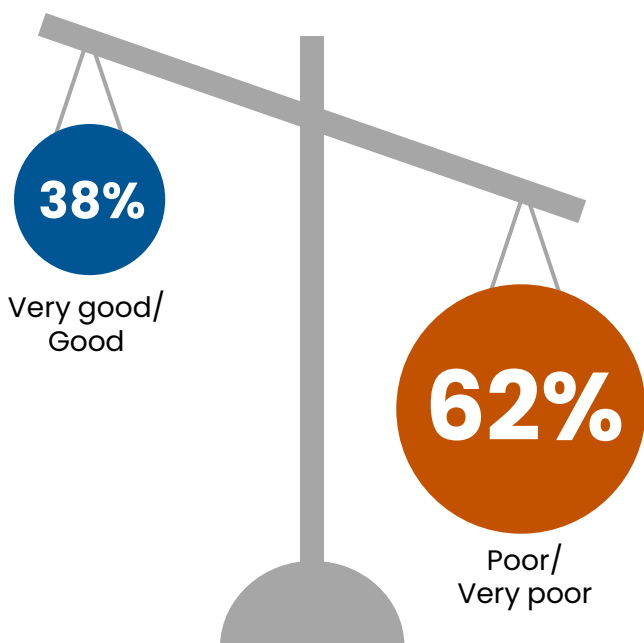


*"Pressure to dispense and meet targets."*

Conversion/sales targets

# Artificial intelligence (AI)\*

**Six in ten** would describe their **knowledge** and **understanding** of AI in relation to optical care and professional practice as **poor**



**Over a third** said they **don't know** what the impact of AI on the quality of eye care will be, while **three in ten** believe that the quality of eye care will **improve**



**35%**

Don't know



**31%**

AI is likely to improve the quality of eye care



**19%**

AI is unlikely to improve the quality of eye care



**15%**

AI is likely to reduce the quality of eye care

The **most common concerns** in relation to the **use of AI in eye care** include...



**74%**

were concerned about the **AI making errors**



**72%**

were concerned about their **legal responsibility** if something goes wrong



**67%**

were concerned about the **AI internal decision-making process** not being transparent to users



**63%**

were concerned about **data security and patient confidentiality**



**62%**

were concerned about the **impact on the clinician-patient relationship**



**57%**

were concerned about their **ability to challenge/ disagree with AI recommendations**



**55%**

were concerned about **obtaining informed patient consent**



**52%**

were concerned that **AI over time will replace their role**



**48%**

were concerned about the **environmental impact**