Procurement

Electronic Case Management System (Fitness to Practise)

<u>**Expression of Interest**</u>

We are the regulator for the optical professions in the UK. Our purpose is to protect the public by promoting high standards of education, performance and conduct amongst opticians. We currently register around 30,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student opticians and optical businesses. All individuals (and optical businesses that meet certain criteria) must be registered with the GOC to be able to carry out clinical practices that are restricted by law to registered persons.

A brief description of our four core regulatory functions is:

- Setting standards for optical education and training, performance and conduct.

- Approving qualifications leading to registration.

- Maintaining a register of individuals who are qualified and fit to practise, train or carry on business as optometrists and dispensing opticians.

- Investigating and acting where registrants' fitness to practise, train or carry on business is impaired.

Our website is at: www.optical.org

This procurement process is being undertaken as a two-stage restricted tender procedure, pursuant to section 6.2 (ii) of the GOC Contracts and Procurement Policy: Contracts and procurement policy (optical.org)

1. Background

We generally receive around 450 concerns per annum relating to the fitness to practise (FtP) of individual optometrists/dispensing opticians (including students), or businesses carrying out those functions. However, this year we expect to receive more than 500 new referrals.

We expect to open a formal investigation into approximately 25 per cent of these new referrals (probably 125 – 150). Of these full investigations opened, our case examiners are likely to refer up to 60 per cent for a Fitness to Practise Committee (FtPC) hearing.

Although we have improved the timeliness of our progression of cases through the FtP process, we are still not where we need to be with this, and we see a fully functioning electronic Case Management System (CMS) as essential to provide the support for investigation officers, and oversight/reporting tools for managers, that is needed to improve timeliness and customer service further. (Noting that several of our processes have legal timeframe requirements.)

Important: Please note that this document – and this stage of the process - does not constitute an invitation to tender, and it should not be construed as such.

Our current case records management system is manual and multi-stepped, and **lacks** the following:

- centralised customer service record data

- workflow management, e.g., reminders, alerts, escalations

- proper management oversight e.g., non-completion alerts, dashboards

- management reporting tools (statistics are currently compiled manually)

- document management

- full integration with other GOC systems/software

- ability to communicate with customers via the system

- pull-through (e.g., case data does not automatically pull through to the Hearings Team when a case is referred to the FtPC)

2. Our Processes

Attached at Annex B is a very broad overview flowchart of our FtP process. Please note that the document at Annex B is also <u>not</u> a specification document. We will be providing more detailed specification requirements (including detailed process maps) at formal Invitation to Tender (ITT) stage.

In brief, this covers the following main* areas:

<u>Substantive Case Processes</u>

- stage 1 (triage) – this is the stage at which initial assessment of new complaints is undertaken, with a decision taken as to whether the complaint should be closed, or formally investigated
- stage 2 (investigation) – at this stage the complaint is investigated, and relevant information (potentially including clinical case records, witness statements and expert reports) is gathered, before allegations are drafted and the registrant is invited to provide a written response. The papers are then considered by our case examiners
- stage 3 (post-referral to the FtPC) – after case examiners have referred a case for a FtPC hearing, the GOC must prepare and disclose (serve) its final case on the registrant and the Hearings team.
- stage 4 (disclosure of GOC's final case, through to the FtPC hearing) – during this phase, the registrant prepares and serves their response to the GOC's case, and both parties liaise with witnesses. Case management meetings and procedural hearings may also be held with both parties to ensure that they are ready for the hearing.
- substantive order reviews – where a FtPC imposes suspension or conditions, these orders usually require a committee review before they expire.

Important: Please note that this document – and this stage of the process - does not constitute an invitation to tender, and it should not be construed as such.

<u>Non-Substantive Case Processes</u>

- interim order applications, reviews, and extensions
- substantive order reviews
- procedural / interlocutory hearings to discuss and agree contentious points

<u>Hearings Team Processes</u>

- the scheduling and management of all types of FtPC hearings by our Hearings team to include coordinating availability and assessing for conflicts (where parties may have sat on previous hearings)

[*Please note that there are several additional minor processes that will also need to be covered by the CMS]

Further information about our FtP process can be read at: How to complain about an optician (optical.org)

3. Our Overarching Requirements

We are seeking to procure a supplier to develop an electronic CMS to support the management of FtP cases by our Regulatory Operations directorate. The CMS must cover all areas of the FtP process.

We have developed a working list of needs (Annex A), but we stress that this is not a specification document (more detailed technical specifications of our requirements will be provided within the ITT pack at that stage of the procurement process). This working list is provided at this stage to help you to understand the extent of our CMS requirements, so that you can decide whether to express an interest.

4. Integration with GOC Systems

All our systems are in the cloud, and we have no server infrastructure. We use the Microsoft 365 environment extensively, and integration of the CMS with existing GOC systems will be crucial. The GOC currently uses the following technology/systems:

- SharePoint 365
- Microsoft Dynamics 365 (CRM)
- Microsoft Office, including Outlook
- Sage

Our Microsoft Dynamics platform is used extensively across the GOC and currently includes a case records management system that is used to retain all core registrant data, and which also functions as a basic case records system for FtP cases.

Although there might be potential advantages to a solution that is built around Dynamics 365, we stress that we are open to any potential solution that can meet our business requirements and our system integration needs.

Important: Please note that this document – and this stage of the process - does not constitute an invitation to tender, and it should not be construed as such.

5. CMS Anticipated Benefits

We require a CMS that, in meeting our overarching list of needs (working document at Annex A), provides the GOC with the following benefits:

- improvements in case progression timeliness, through:
  - automated workflow management
  - fewer keystrokes
  - enhanced management control, oversight and reporting
  - automatic escalations
  - configured user dashboards

- reduction in lost hearing days, achieved through semi-automated scheduling and improved conflict checking.

- resource efficiencies, achieved through significantly leaner processes

- tangible customer service improvements (leading to excellent customer service), achieved through:
  - automated updates
  - fully documented processes
  - modern customer feedback processes
  - reduction in risk via automatic draw-through of data across areas of work

- reduction in data breaches through automation of templates

All the above go towards our overarching objective to protect the public.

This list of potential benefits is a work in progress and a final benefits map will be provided at ITT stage.

6. Development and Support Phases

We anticipate that there will be two phases to the CMS build, with a go-live date for phase one ('must have' and 'should have' requirements) of <u>no later than</u> 30 June 2023, and with phase two ('could have' requirements) being subject to (a) successful completion of phase one and (b) an internal GOC benefits validation process in respect of the phase one build.

This means that there is likely to be a gap between the end of phase one and the commencement of phase two, and that a phase two build will be contractually at the GOC's discretion.

Ongoing technical support for the developed system (both phase one and phase two product) will be required until 31 March 2026, with an option for the GOC to extend this support period by twelve months to 31 March 2027. This support aspect will be contractually contingent upon the GOC accepting the build product(s).

7. Indicative Procurement Timetable (may change)

5 September 2022 (12:00)	Expressions of interest closing date
13 September 2022	Invitations to tender sent out
10 October 2022	Closing date for full tenders
w/c 10 October 2022	Demonstrations to GOC
21 October 2022	Notification of Tender Decisions
early November 2022	Contract commences

8. Assessment Criteria (Expression of Interest stage only)

> **IMPORTANT NOTE**
>
> Please note that we are taking a low-risk approach to this development work. This means that we will not be inviting anyone to tender on the basis that they *think* they can develop a solution to meet our needs. We are looking for potential suppliers who either already have a product that (with, or without, some modification) will meet our needs, or potential suppliers who can demonstrate that they have prior experience of developing a case management system (or similar), preferably within a legal or regulatory environment.

Expressions of Interest will be assessed against the following:

A. A self-declaration in respect of the *mandatory* exclusions set out at regulation 57 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Subject to consideration of any potential exceptions and/or self-cleaning (regulation 57, paragraphs (13) to (17)), this is a **PASS/FAIL criterion.**

B. A self-declaration in respect of the *discretionary* exclusions set out at regulation 57. Subject to consideration of any self-cleaning (regulation 57, paragraphs (13) to (17)). this is a **PASS/FAIL criterion.**

C. Evidence of an existing case management system product that is relevant to GOC requirements, or evidence of having previously successfully developed a case management system (or similar).

   This is a PASS/FAIL criterion – where no evidence is provided that the GOC considers relevant to its CMS needs, those applications will fail and will not be assessed further. Applications that pass criterion C will be assessed up to 30% of the available maximum score.

Applications that pass stages A to C will then be further assessed against the following criteria:

D. Previous experience of successfully and comprehensively integrating a case management system (or similar system) with the existing technologies and systems used by the GOC (particularly Dynamics and SharePoint - see 4 above), or with similar technology/systems (35%)

Important: Please note that this document – and this stage of the process - does not constitute an invitation to tender, and it should not be construed as such.

E. Evidence of having provided ongoing post-implementation technical support in respect of a case management system, or similar (regardless of whether the system was developed by you) (15%)

F. Evidence of having previously successfully interpreted a customer's complex processes and/or requirements (this can relate to any IT system requirement) (15%)

G. Evidence of your ability to manage sensitive personal data and to comply with data protection legal requirements (5%)

You should therefore ensure that your completed Expression of Interest Questionnaire addresses all these criteria.

> **Note:** Interested parties who are subsequently invited to tender in full will be required at that stage to address other relevant provisions set out in section 5, sub-section 7 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. (For *example*, relating to economic and financial standing, and to technical and professional ability). This will also apply to any other entities that the proposed supplier intends to rely upon if awarded the contract (see regulation 63).
>
> You are therefore advised to familiarise yourself with the 2015 Regulations before submitting your Expression of Interest.

Please note that we are **not** requesting pricing information at this stage of the process. We will request pricing proposals at full tender stage, but it may assist you to know that we are likely to require pricing to be expressed in terms of:

- Build costs (for phase one to go live by 30 June 2023)
- Build costs (for a possible Phase Two)
- Ongoing support costs until 31 March 2027

9. How to Express an Interest

Before applying, please ensure you have fully read this document and that you are familiar with the FtP function of the General Optical Council:

https://www.optical.org/en/Investigating_complaints/index.cfm

To be considered for this contract opportunity, you **MUST** complete the Expression of Interest Questionnaire that is available for download at www.mytenders.co.uk.

Your Expression of Interest must address the criteria at section 8 above (these criteria are replicated in the questionnaire).

Expressions of Interest **MUST** be submitted via the electronic postbox facility at: www.mytenders.co.uk. Expressions of Interest that are submitted in any other way will be disregarded.

Should you have any questions regarding this invitation please ask them via the facility at www.mytenders.co.uk

The closing date for submitting an Expression of Interest is Monday 5 September 2022 (12:00).

Important: Please note that this document – and this stage of the process - does not constitute an invitation to tender, and it should not be construed as such.

ANNEX A: Working List of Business Needs

	Description	Priority	Phasing
Need 1	**Reduction in repetitive manual activities** and introduction of mandatory fields (i.e., prevent saving of the record without completing certain fields) and pop-up alerts (e.g., 'this case is closed')	Must Have	Phase One
Need 2	Enable **greater management oversight** of case activity and case progression (across both Hearings and Case Progression teams), including dashboards, alerts/escalation re overdue or imminent targets (with colour coding if possible), and support for management control checks. **Remove reliance on spreadsheets and email.**	Must Have	Phase One
Need 3	Enable **full integration** with our existing CRM system (e.g., 'pulling through' specified data from other parts of CRM such as all optometrist data) and (if CRM the solution), removal of redundant fields	Must Have	Phase One
Need 4	**Document management** – with either integral document management capabilities integrated with our SharePoint, or with direct access to our SharePoint file storage structure and potentially to our external SP sharing portal (i.e., clicking on a case name should give access to all files/folders relating to that case, wherever they are hosted)	Must Have	Phase One
Need 5a	**Integration of emails** with Outlook/SharePoint /Dynamics	Must Have	Phase One
Need 5b	Ensure the CMS **utilises the integration between Dynamics and the phone system** to display past registrant interactions	Should Have	Phase One
Need 6	Locally **configurable task and workflow management for case officers** (both Hearings and CPT), including dashboards, and alerts and escalations – both auto and manual - when actions become due/overdue (with colour coding if possible). **Remove reliance on email.**	Must Have	Phase One
Need 7	**Bundling** capabilities, include 'smart' redaction capabilities [Note: Nitro is current GOC bundling/redaction software)	Must Have	Phase One
Need 8	**Secure portal** access to support paperless hearings (for example, access to hearing documents for FtPC members and case parties), and **live newsfeed option** for updating key parties on progression of a hearing.	Could Have	Phase Two
Need 9	Ability to **configure permissions** and activities by defined role and improved **case owner allocation options** (for example, when case owners are on leave, and owner history)	Must Have	Phase One
Need 10	**Scheduling** capability to include conflict checking – pre-determined and previous hearings (definitely for Hearings, but also for CEs and IC if possible)	Must Have	Phase One
Need 11	'Press of a button' production of **management data/statistics** (both raw data and reports/charts) and automated management reports (e.g., Monday morning reports) including **data forecasting** Capability to produce **trend analysis reports** (e.g., EDI data)	Must Have	Phase One
Need 12	**Template letters / forms** functionality (with auto-population built in)	Must Have	Phase One
Need 13	**Printing/exporting of case files** (for audits/reviews)	Should Have	Phase One
Need 14	One **continuous record** for the life of a case (with ability to restrict access permissions to parts of the record) and improved management of **linked cases**	Must Have	Phase One
Need 15	Potential to develop **customer update 'portal'** (whereby customers can receive case updates by accessing a controlled part of the system) and **improved communication options** (such as text messaging and option to **automate case updates**, for example at the conclusion of a hearing, or when case stage changes)). (NB: An 'external solution may already have this)	Could Have	Phase Two
Need 16	Integrated **calendar functionality** for scheduling, with the ability for external stakeholders to log in and provide availability, and to view upcoming/allocated events (for example, FTPC and IC members, and witnesses) (NB: An 'external solution may already have this)	Should Have	Phase One
Need 17	The ability to **link data to and from the GOC website** – i.e., upcoming hearing activity, registration status of registrants (who go through the process) and hearing outcomes, and improved **capabilities for**	Should Have	Phase One

Important: Please note that this document – and this stage of the process - does not constitute an invitation to tender, and it should not be construed as such.

	identifying register errors (i.e., support for management register control checks)		
Need 18	**Staff training** completed within four weeks of completion of UAT	Must Have	Phase One
Need 19	**Follow-up support** for the new system	Must Have	Phase One
Need 20	**Finance** functionality (calculate case costs, cost/invoice submission and approval, uploading of invoices). Possible integration with SAGE finance system.	Should Have (but could split this)	Phase One / Two
Need 21	Ensure **independence** of Hearings function through (proportionate) separation between Case Progression and Hearing but permit appropriate data 'pull-through'.	Must Have	Phase One
Need 22	**Customer feedback** functionality (NB: An 'external solution may already have this)	Could Have	Phase Two
Need 23	**Case chronology** functionality (linked to case decisions, notes and communications fields)	Should Have	Phase One
Need 24	Improved **search functionality,** especially in respect of previous ftp history	Must Have	Phase One
Need 25	**Easy set-up** on system for new users	Must Have	Phase One
Need 26	Implementation of **system change control processes** that facilitate the continuous improvement and adaptation of the system in a consistent and managed way	Must Have	Phase One
Need 27	Introduce full **management of Interim Order and Substantive Order Review** processes, including conditions monitoring (remove reliance on spreadsheets)	Must Have	Phase One
Need 28	Must **integrate** with our proposed GOC customer service solution (separate project)	Must Have	Phases One & Two

Important: Please note that this document – and this stage of the process - does not constitute an invitation to tender, and it should not be construed as such.

Complaint received

Assess complaint

Is there a FtP allegation?

Maybe → Gather further information

No → Refer elsewhere

Yes

Open full investigation & notify registrant

Interim Order risk assessment

IO criteria invoked - apply for Interim Order

Gather information relevant to the complaint

Draft case report and allegations

Serve registrant with info and case report, and request representations

Send registrant representations to complainant (if appropriate)

Allocate to case examiners

Minded to warn - registrant given 28 days to respond

Case examiner / IC decision

CEs cannot agree or require assessment of performance or health

Serve respondent and complainant

Rule 15 reconsideration application

NFA, NFA (advice) or non-public warning CASE CLOSED

Referred to Fitness to Practise Committee (FtPC)

Refer to Investigation Committee (IC)

Rule 16 reconsideration application

Prepare and serve GOC case for FtPC hearing

Registrant prepares and serves defence (four months permitted by Rules)

Case Management Meeting and/or Procedural Hearing, if required

FtPC hearing & decision

All or some of the facts proved?

No → CASE CLOSED (NFA)

Yes

Misconduct found?

No → CASE CLOSED (NFA)

Yes

Fitness to practise impaired?

No → Public warning could be issued (but not at substantive order review stage)

Yes

Appeal by registrant (decision wrong, or too harsh) or PSA (too lenient)

Sanction imposed (erasure, suspension, conditions of practice, or financial penalty)

FtPC review hearing if suspension or conditions imposed