

Invitation to tender: Stakeholder research 2021/22

Summary

1. We are looking to commission a research agency to carry out the GOC's stakeholder research project. This will involve designing and conducting the research, then analysing and reporting on the findings.
2. The research will be carried out with a number of key external stakeholder organisations across the UK, including professional and representative bodies, patient organisations, education bodies, employers and government bodies. We would also like the research to include GOC business registrants.
3. The aim of the research is to help us better understand for example:
 - views and perceptions of the GOC;
 - GOC performance in line with our regulatory functions and the aims and objectives in our Strategic Plan 2020-2025; and
 - our agility and support given to our stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. We are tendering at a total cost of **£30,000 including VAT**.
5. **The deadline for tenders is 5pm on 21 January 2022.**

About the GOC

6. We are the regulator for the optical professions in the UK and our mission is to protect and promote the health and safety of the public. We currently register around 32,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student optometrists, student dispensing opticians and optical businesses. For more information, please visit our website: <https://www.optical.org/>
7. Optometrists examine eyes, test sight, and prescribe spectacles or contact lenses for those who need them. They are also qualified to fit spectacles and contact lenses, give advice on visual problems and detect any ocular disease or abnormality, referring the patient to a medical practitioner if necessary. A fully qualified optometrist can also gain specialty qualifications in independent prescribing.
8. A dispensing optician advises on, fits and supplies spectacles after taking account of each patient's visual, vocational and lifestyle needs. A fully qualified dispensing optician can undertake additional specialist training to fit and supply contact lenses.

9. We launched our [Strategic Plan 'Fit for the Future 2020-2025'](#) on 1 April 2020. This outlines what we plan to do over the next five years. The three main strategic objectives for the next five years are:
 - delivering world-class regulatory practice;
 - transforming customer service; and
 - building a culture of continuous improvement.
10. The plan was launched almost at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and we reviewed in June 2020 in light of this in order to prioritise new workstreams to support the profession, such as amending the way we delivered regulatory functions during this time, and guidance and support produced for our registrants to help them deliver the nation's eyecare. During this time, we worked closely with key organisational stakeholders in order to achieve this. We would like to gain a view on how well the GOC was able to respond to this situation and how agile it was in adjusting strategic priorities in the plan.
11. The last [stakeholder research](#) we did was in 2016. This was a survey of senior people from 30 of our key stakeholders about their perceptions of the GOC and their views on the future of the optical professions.

Research aims

12. We have split the research into two broad areas, but we would like to work with the appointed agency in finalising the research questions/topics. In short, we would like the research to help us better understand:
 - views and perceptions of the GOC;
 - GOC performance in line with our regulatory functions and our aims and objectives in our Strategic Plan 2020-2025; and
 - our agility and support given to our stakeholders during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Methodology

13. We would like the appointed agency to advise on the most appropriate methodology, including the number and type of questions.
14. We would like the appointed agency to advise on the number of stakeholders that can be involved in the research given the budget – in our last survey we were able to include 30 organisational stakeholders in the research. However, this time we would also like to include all GOC business registrants within this piece of research, although we recognise that the method of engaging with this group may need to be different to other stakeholders because of the volume.
15. The categories of stakeholders within the optical sector we would like the appointed agency to survey include:

- professional and representative bodies within the optical sector (approximately ten bodies);
- groups representing patients and the public (we are in contact with no more than ten optical charities);
- employers (which could also include GOC business registrants) within the optical sector, ranging from high street chain to sole practitioners and partnerships – there are thousands of potential employers so the methodology will need to take that into account;
- GOC business registrants (2,843);
- approved providers within the optical sector (these are listed on our website: <https://optical.org/en/education-and-cet/education/what-to-study-and-where/>); and
- representatives from Government in all four nations of the UK.

Outputs

16. The appointed agency will be expected to deliver the following:
- design questions based on the research aims;
 - data collection;
 - data processing;
 - rigorous analysis of findings and drawing conclusions for the GOC;
 - production of a detailed written report (template to be agreed in advance with the GOC and include infographics) to publishable standards, including annexes and data tables as necessary;
 - preparation and delivery of a presentation of the findings and conclusions to Council; and
 - delivery of all background and foreground data to the GOC on fulfilment of the contract.

Budget

17. The budget is £30,000 including VAT.

Timetable

18. The timetable for this project is outlined below.

Task	Date
Bid submitted by agency	5pm, 21 January 2022
Selection process by GOC	w/c 24 January 2022
Final report submitted by agency	27 May 2022
Presentation of findings to our Council by agency	29 June 2021

Proposals

19. Proposals should clearly state how you would meet the requirements set out in this invitation to tender. They should include:
- evidence of an understanding of our requirements;
 - details of the project team, relevant skills and experience (including examples of relevant projects previously conducted) and specific project roles;
 - details of any information or assistance that will be required from the GOC;
 - details of how this project will be delivered, including the project management procedures and a research timetable for the different stages;
 - a comprehensive itemised cost for all aspects of the work and total cost; and
 - a breakdown of different elements of the research and costs to help us prioritise which methodologies to focus on.

Selection process

20. Tenders will be assessed with reference to the following criteria:
- extent to which proposals demonstrate understanding of the brief, and meet its stated objectives in terms of research design;
 - the tenderer having appropriate skills, qualifications and a track record in delivering similar projects; and
 - the ability of the tenderer to deliver this project within the specified timescale and at reasonable costs.
21. All work should comply with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society.
22. The Council reserves the right to pay only for work it deems to be satisfactorily completed.
23. The Council is not bound to accept the lowest offer or any tender.

GOC contacts

24. Please send tenders and direct any questions to Angharad Jones (Policy Manager) by email to ajones@optical.org