

**BEFORE THE FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE
OF THE GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL**

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

F(22)30

AND

GARETH LONG (01-24213)

**NOTICE OF INQUIRY
SUBSTANTIVE HEARING**

Take notice that an inquiry will be conducted in the above matter by the Fitness to Practise Committee of the General Optical Council.

A substantive hearing will be proceeding:

Blended hearing

This means part of the hearing will be held physically in person and part of the hearing will be held remotely via video conference facilities.

Physically at 10 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7NG:

- **Monday 20 November – Wednesday 22 November 2023**

Remotely via MS Teams:

- **Thursday 23 November – Thursday 30 November 2023**

The Inquiry will be based upon the allegation submitted by the Council (see below) and will determine whether the fitness to practise of **Gareth Long** is impaired by virtue of the provisions contained in section 13D(2) of the Opticians Act 1989.

Vineeta Desai
Hearings Manager, General Optical Council
17 June 2023

ALLEGATION

The Council alleges that you, Gareth Long (01-24213), a registered optometrist, whilst employed at Spa Medica [redacted]:

- 1) On or around 14 December 2021 you:
 - a. Did not verify Patient A's identity prior to the consultation taking place;
 - b. Advised Patient A that he had cystoid macular oedema when he did not have cystoid macula oedema.

- 2) On 14 December 2021 on or around 9.36 pm you inserted additional notes onto Patient A's record for 14 December 2021 including:
 - a. That you had discussed the YAG capsulotomy with Patient A
 - b. "Regarding the note stating, 'cystoid macular oedema' that Patient A had presented to his wife: I am not certain where this came from"
 - c. "I did see another Patient ("Patient X") immediately after Patient A who I diagnosed with cystoid macular oedema, and this Patient asked me to write the name of the condition down for him";
 - d. "I did note that as I handed the Patient this note as requested, he was sat next to Patient A in the waiting area;
 - e. "It occurs to me that Patient A may have picked up paperwork belonging to this other Patient whilst in the waiting area"
 - f. "Patient A was confused about the reason for his visit today".

- 3) The records referred to at 2 a – f above were inaccurate and/or misleading in that:
 - a. In relation to 2 a, you discussed cystoid macular oedema with Patient A and not the YAG capsulotomy
 - b. In relation to 2 b you had written the note for Patient A;
 - c. In relation to 2 c it was Patient A and not Patient X who had asked you to write the note;
 - d. In relation to 2 d Patient A and Patient X had not been sat next to each other in the waiting area;
 - e. In relation to 2 e you had provided the note to Patient A;
 - f. In relation to 2 f Patient A was not confused about the reason for his visit in that he understood his visit was for a YAG capsulotomy.

- 4) You recorded that it would be wise for Patient A to be accompanied by a chaperone and to use a dual consent form for any further Tx required when a chaperone and/or a dual consent form was not indicated.

- 5) Your conduct at 2 a – f and/or 3 a - f was dishonest in that:
 - a. You knew the record was inaccurate and/or misleading; and/or

b. you made the additional record in order to conceal that you had incorrectly advised Patient A that he had cystoid macula oedema.

And by virtue of the facts set out above, your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of misconduct.

Committee Members: Rachel O’Connell (Chair)
Mark McLaren (Lay)
Asmita Naik (Lay)
Denise Connor (Optometrist)
Gaynor Kirk (Optometrist)

Legal Adviser: Mike Bell
Hearings Officer: TBC
Transcribers: Marten Walsh Cherer Limited

If you require further information relating to this hearing, please contact the Council’s Hearings Manager at hearings@optical.org.