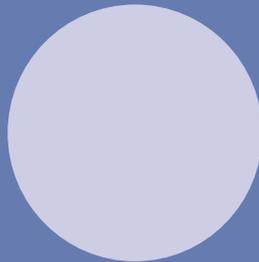




# **Business Plan and Budget**

April 2021 – March 2022



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# Introduction

**The General Optical Council (GOC) is the UK-wide regulator for optometrists and dispensing opticians, student optometrists and dispensing opticians, and optical businesses. We exist to protect the public by raising standards in the optical professions.**

## **Our regulatory functions are:**

- Setting the standards expected of optometrists, dispensing opticians, optical businesses, and students
- Investigating and acting where registrants' fitness to practise, to train, or continue business is impaired
- Maintaining a register of those who are qualified and fit to practise, to train, or continue business as optometrists and dispensing opticians
- Setting the standards for education and approving qualifications leading to registration



# Foreword

Although there are some signs of normality returning, we continue to operate in unprecedented times for the optical professions. Responding to the COVID-19 emergency has been at the forefront of our work over the past 12 months and required agility with the delivery of some aspects of our strategy accelerated and others delayed.

We present this year's Business Plan in the knowledge that we will need to continue to adapt to regulatory issues brought about by the pandemic. That will continue to be a high priority, but we must also deliver our operational functions to fulfil our statutory obligations and in doing so, protect the public.

Council have reviewed our five-year strategic plan 'Fit for the Future' in light of COVID-19, and re-affirmed the broad direction of travel, so we set out here our work programme for the year ahead. It captures our operational priorities and strategic programmes of work in line with our vision of being recognised for delivering world-class regulation and excellent customer service.

We will begin implementation of our education reforms, following the Education Strategic Review, working closely with our education providers and other stakeholders. As we come toward the close of the final year of the final CET cycle, we will also be preparing for the implementation of a new CPD scheme from 2022.

Our recent success in reducing the fitness to practice (FTP) caseload has been driven by focussing on the right cases and dealing with those cases more appropriately. Over the course of the coming year, we expect that to translate into improved timescales enabling us to invest resource in activities that prevent things from going wrong in the first place. Our first FTP learning bulletin, which draws lessons from the cases we investigate, was widely welcomed and we will issue further bulletins during the year ahead.

We will also launch a new Communications Strategy underpinned by a modern and refreshed GOC website, alongside other exciting IT changes that will deliver enhanced services to our registrants.

Finally, we will continue to put GOC values, our public duty to progress equality, diversity, and inclusion, and our recently published commitment to become an anti-racist organisation at the heart of all we do.

I look forward to working with all our stakeholders to deliver this exciting programme of work for the year ahead.

**Lesley Longstone, Chief Executive and Registrar**

# Our mission, vision, and values

## Our mission, vision, and values

Our 'Fit for the future' strategy for 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025 describes what we plan to do over the next five years to achieve our vision of being recognised for delivering world-class regulation and excellent customer service.

### Our mission is...

to protect the public  
by upholding high  
standards in the  
optical professions

### Our vision is...

to be recognised for  
delivering world-class  
regulation and excellent  
customer service

## Our values

The interests of patients and the general public are at the heart of all we do, and we aspire to the timeless seven (Nolan) public sector principles of public life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership).

Our values underpin the way we work with each other, and with the public, our registrants and partner organisations:

We act with **integrity**

We pursue **excellence**

We **respect** other people and ideas

We show **empathy**

We behave **fairly**

We are **agile** and responsive to change

# Our strategy

## Strategic objectives

Our priorities are organised under three overarching strategic objectives:



Delivering  
world-class  
regulatory practice



Transforming  
customer service



Building a culture  
of **continuous**  
**improvement**

## 2021/22 year in view

This business plan sets out the milestones, outputs, and outcomes that we plan to deliver in 2021/22 in order to deliver our three strategic objectives. We plan to achieve a break-even position in relation to our business-as-usual, while investing some of our reserves on strategic projects.

### Work programmes

Below we have outlined the key work programmes that will be undertaken and when they will occur.

| <b>Strategic Objective One – Delivering world-class regulatory practice</b>  |              |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Activity   | Start        | Finish       |
| Publish and implement guidance on ‘speaking up’ for registrants  | Apr–Jun 2021 | Jan–Mar 2022 |
| Develop and consult on new standards of practice for individuals   | Apr–Jun 2021 | Oct–Dec 2022 |
| Implement outcomes, standards for education delivery and new quality assurance scheme  | Oct–Dec 2020 | Apr–Jun 2022 |
| Review and implement any changes to non-UK registration scheme resulting from outcomes of Brexit negotiations and change to education scheme | Apr–Jun 2020 | Oct–Dec 2021 |

## 2021/22 year in view

|   |               |                            |
|---|---------------|----------------------------|
| Publish and implement 'Outcomes for Registration,' 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' and 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method' for GOC approved qualifications and commission longitudinal research-measures | April 2021    | 2024/25 and beyond to 2030 |
| Commission knowledge hub/ information exchange and indicative curricula to support providers and potential providers in their design of qualifications to meet our new education requirements                           | June 2022     | 2024/25                    |
| Advise providers and potential providers applying for GOC qualification approval and work with sector to manage key risks.  | April 2021    | 2024/25 and beyond to 2030 |
| Consider applications for new qualification approval and adaptation of existing approved qualifications   | Jan-Mar 2022  | 2024/25 and beyond to 2030 |
| Implement new CPD scheme  | Jan-Mar 2021  | Oct-Dec 2021               |
| Launch new CPD scheme   | Jan-Mar 2022  | Oct-Dec 2024               |
| Implement Government reforms to the governance of GOC   | Apr-Jun 2020  | Jan-Mar 2022               |
| Implement Government reforms to the fitness to practise process   | Apr-Jun 2020  | Jan-Mar 2022               |
| CPD scheme underpinning legislation   | Apr-Jun 2020  | Oct-Dec 2021               |
| Implement GOC Refresh to support the delivery of the GOC's strategic objectives   | Apr-June 2021 | Jan-Mar 2025               |

## 2021/22 year in view

| <b>Strategic Objective Two – Transforming customer service</b>                                      |              |              |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| Activity  | Start        | Finish       |
| Review, development and launch of a new public website  | Apr–Jun 2020 | Apr-Jun 2021 |
| Development and launch of new MyGOC website for registrants based on Microsoft 365                  | Jul–Sep 2020 | Apr-Jun 2021 |
| Publish FTP learning bulletins  | Apr–Jun 2020 | Jan–Mar 2022 |
| Revised communications strategy   | Jul–Sep 2020 | Jan–Mar 2022 |
| Develop and implement improved fitness to practise case management system                           | Apr–Jun 2020 | Apr–Jun 2021 |
| Review and implement new illegal practice strategy  | Apr–Jun 2020 | Jan–Mar 2022 |
| Project to automate registration processes  | Jan–Mar 2021 | Jan–Mar 2022 |
| Research into impact of GOC fitness to practise processes on different groups of registrants        | Jan–Mar 2021 | Jan–Mar 2022 |
| Review, develop and implement new processes for presenting GOC fitness to practise cases (advocacy) | Jul–Sep 2020 | Jul–Sep 2023 |
| Improve recording, analysis and sharing of fitness to practise data                                 | Apr–Jun 2020 | Jan–Mar 2022 |

## 2021/22 year in view

| <b>Strategic Objective Three – Building a culture of continuous improvement</b>  |              |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Activity   | Start        | Finish       |
| New secure portal to share information with external parties involved in fitness to practise, registration, and education processes as well as those members on Council and committees | Jan–Mar 2022 | Jan–Mar 2025 |
| Development of CRM to support regulatory functions   | Apr–Jun 2021 | Jan–Mar 2025 |
| Archive management project to reduce historic paper records  | Apr–Jun 2021 | Jan–Mar 2022 |
| Review of data collection on protected characteristics to better inform regulatory policy and impacts  | Jan–Mar 2022 | Jan–Mar 2024 |
| Develop and roll-out of three-year management development programme  | Apr–Jun 2021 | Jan–Mar 2025 |
| Review of internal banking and accounting procedures   | Apr–Jun 2021 | Jan–Mar 2024 |
| Implement and progress year one of our EDI Plan  | Apr–Jun 2021 | Jan–Mar 2022 |

# What will success look like?

## We will measure our success through the following high-level outcomes

In aspiring to be world-class we should be rated highly by the Professional Standards Authority. We will aim to meet all their standards but will not let this get in the way of trying new and innovative approaches to regulation.

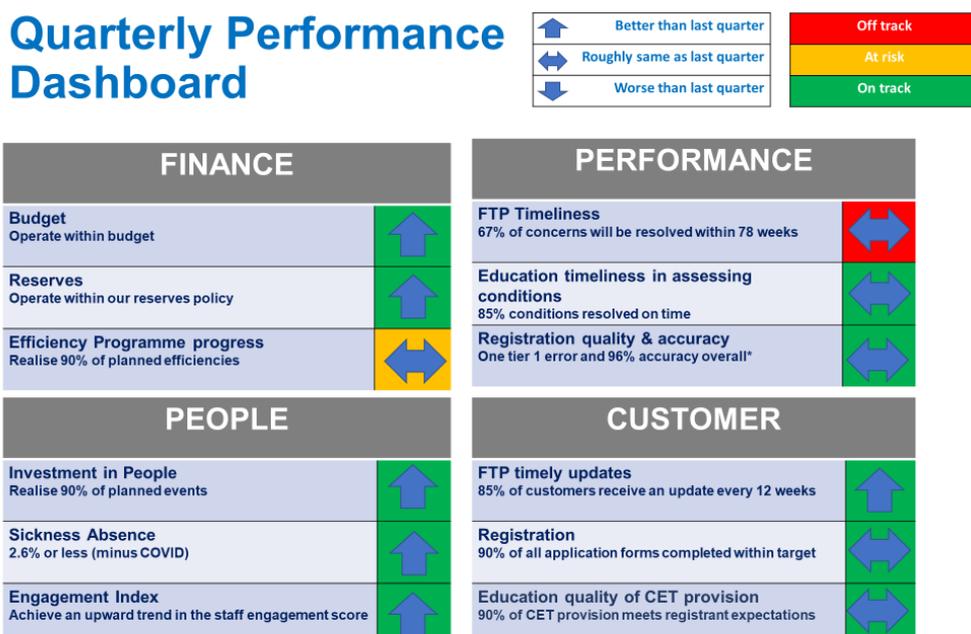
We should also retain the confidence of the optical professions and we will measure this through an annual registrant survey and regular stakeholder survey, looking, for example, at the extent to which we follow our values including behaving fairly, acting with integrity and pursuing excellence.

Public confidence in the professions we regulate is already strong and we expect this to be maintained if we are to uphold high standards. By protecting the public, we are also protecting the reputation of the optical professions. We have instigated an annual public perceptions survey and will continue this throughout the period of this plan.

We expect customer satisfaction with the GOC to increase if we deliver on our customer engagement strategy. We do not have a robust baseline and will prioritise the development of this in 2021/22, with an emphasis on patients, the public and registrants.

We will measure success on a business as usual basis quarterly at Senior Leadership Team level and Council level, providing success measure indicators, RAG rated progress reporting and an indication of changes which have occurred from the previous quarter

Council receive the following balanced scorecard report quarterly:



\* Tier 1 errors are the most serious and are reserved for errors where the applicant should not have been put on to the register

| Budget 2021-22                 |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                                | 2021-22<br>Budget Final<br>£'000 |
| <b>INCOME</b>                  |                                  |
| Registration                   | 9,524                            |
| Dividend Income                | 196                              |
| Bank and Deposit Interest      | 10                               |
| Other Income                   | 20                               |
| <b>Total Income</b>            | <b>9,750</b>                     |
| <b>EXPENDITURE</b>             |                                  |
| Staff Salaries Costs           | 4,869                            |
| Other Staff Costs              | 427                              |
| Staff Benefits                 | 125                              |
| Members Costs                  | 1,290                            |
| Case Examiners                 | 80                               |
| Professional Fees              | 482                              |
| Finance Costs                  | 183                              |
| Case Progression               | 620                              |
| Hearings                       | 180                              |
| CET and Standards              | 216                              |
| Communications                 | 40                               |
| Registration                   | 15                               |
| IT Costs                       | 668                              |
| Office Services                | 1,001                            |
| Other Costs                    | 100                              |
| Depreciation and Amorti-sation | 131                              |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>       | <b>10,426</b>                    |
| Surplus / Deficit              | (676)                            |
| Unrealised Investment gains    | 269                              |
| Surplus / (Deficit)            | (407)                            |

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You can get this plan in Welsh by visiting [www.optical.org](http://www.optical.org)

The GOC is a charity registered in England and Wales (1150137)