

# **General Optical Council**

# **Registrant Workforce and Perceptions**

# **Survey 2022**

Research Report

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Thornhill Brigg Mill, Thornhill Beck Lane, Brighouse, West Yorkshire, HD6 4AH

T: 01484 404797

W: [www.enventure.co.uk](http://www.enventure.co.uk)

**Report prepared by:**

Matt Thurman  
matt@enventure.co.uk

**Report reviewed by:**

Andrew Cameron  
andrew@enventure.co.uk

Kayleigh Pickles  
kayleigh@enventure.co.uk

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**Enventure Research**

**Head Office:**

Thornhill Brigg Mill, Thornhill Beck Lane, Brighouse, West Yorkshire, HD6 4AH  
T: 01484 404797

**London Office:**

Smithfield Business Centre, 5 St John's Lane, London, EC1M 4BH  
T: 0207 549 1616

W: [www.enventure.co.uk](http://www.enventure.co.uk) E: [info@enventure.co.uk](mailto:info@enventure.co.uk)

Reg no: 4693096  
VAT no: 816927894



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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The General Optical Council (GOC) commissioned Enventure Research, an independent research agency, to conduct a survey of its individual registrants. The last registrant survey was conducted in 2021. The survey aimed to track registrants' views and perceptions of the GOC and their experiences of working in clinical practice. This report details the findings of this research.

## Methodology

A questionnaire was designed by Enventure Research and the GOC, including a mix of new questions and previously used questions to allow attitudes and experiences to be tracked over time.

The survey was delivered online. All GOC registrants with a valid email address were invited by email to take part in the survey. Targeted reminders were sent to those yet to take part to encourage them to respond, and the survey was also promoted by the GOC in email newsletters and via social media. Between 22 March and 26 April 2022, **4,102 responses** were received, representing a **14% response rate**.



For a more detailed description of the methodology, please see the methodology section in the main body of this report.

## Key findings

The bullet points below and overleaf present the topline key findings from this survey. For more detailed analysis, including subgroup analysis by registration type, workplace setting, working status, region, and key demographics including gender, age, ethnicity, and disability, please see the main body of the report.

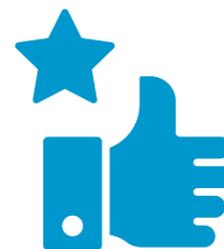
### Working status and hours worked

- The majority of respondents were **working/employed (88%)**
- Of these, **50% worked full-time** (35 hours or more per week) and **50% worked part-time** (fewer than 35 hours per week)
- Part-time work was more common amongst optometrists, those who worked as locums, older respondents aged 55+, and female respondents
- The **average number of hours worked in a typical week was 30.2**. By workplace setting, the average number of hours worked were:
  - Independent opticians/sole practitioner – 26.5 hours
  - National chain – 26.5 hours
  - Regional chain – 22.2 hours
  - Hospital – 20.2 hours
  - Domiciliary care – 17.7 hours
  - Education/academia – 20.3 hours



## Job satisfaction

- **62%** of respondents said that they were **satisfied with their role or job over the last 12 months**, but 21% were dissatisfied
- This represents a small increase in satisfaction when compared with 2021 (+4 percentage points)
- Job satisfaction was higher amongst student dispensing opticians, those who worked full-time, those who worked in a hospital, domiciliary care, or in education/academia, those involved in enhanced services, and those who lived in Wales
- Job dissatisfaction was higher amongst optometrists, locums, those who worked for a multiple optician, and those who lived in London
- Key drivers of satisfaction focus on:
  - Enjoying work/finding it rewarding
  - Delivering varied/interesting work
- Key drivers of dissatisfaction focus on:
  - Increasing workloads and pressure
  - Poor pay/lack of financial reward
  - Commercial pressure
  - Feeling underappreciated



## Working conditions

- In the last 12 months:
  - **57%** of respondents reported **working beyond their hours** (a significant increase from 40% in 2021). This included larger proportions of optometrists, those who worked in a hospital or in education/academia, and those who worked full-time
  - **41%** reported **feeling unable to cope with their workload** (37% in 2021). This included larger proportions of those who worked for a multiple opticians, in a hospital, in education/academia, and those who worked full-time
  - **31%** reported finding it **difficult to provide patients with the sufficient level of care they need** (28% in 2021). This included larger proportions of optometrists, those who worked for a multiple opticians or in a hospital, and locums
  - **9%** reported **taking a leave of absence due to stress** (6% in 2021)



## Plans for the future

- **40%** of respondents planned to **gain additional qualifications/skills** (43% in 2021)
  - This included larger proportions of student optometrists, student dispensing opticians, those who worked in a hospital or in education/academia, those who worked full-time, locums, and those involved in enhanced services
  - Common reasons provided for this focused on delivering better care/helping more patients, expanding scope of practice/delivering more services, and career progression/increasing opportunities
- **27%** planned to **reduce their hours** (36% in 2021)
  - This included larger proportions of optometrists, those who worked for a multiple opticians, those who worked full-time, locums, and those involved in enhanced services



- Common reasons provided for this focused on stress/burnout/fatigue, improving work-life balance, and workload/pressure/targets
- **15%** planned to **leave the profession** (26% in 2021)
  - This included larger proportions of dispensing opticians, those who worked part-time, and locums
  - Common reasons provided for this focused on low salaries, workload/pressure, stress/burnout/fatigue, and lack of job satisfaction
- **10%** planned to **retire** (13% in 2021)
  - This included larger proportions of those who worked for an independent opticians/sole practitioner, those who worked part-time, and locums
- **8%** planned to **switch to locum work** (12% in 2021)
  - This included larger proportions of student optometrists, those who worked for a multiple opticians, and those who lived in London
  - Common reasons provided for this focused on flexibility, better pay, less stress/pressure/responsibility, and more independence/control/choice
- **6%** planned to **take a career break** (11% in 2021)
  - This included larger proportions of optometrists and student optometrists, those who worked in a hospital, for a multiple opticians, or in education/academia, and those who lived in London
  - Common reasons provided for this focused on stress/burnout/fatigue, assessing career options, workload/pressure/targets, and the need to take a break/relax/recharge

## Perspectives of the General Optical Council

### Meeting strategic objectives

- **62%** of respondents agreed that the GOC is **building a culture of continuous improvement**
- **58%** agreed that it is **delivering world-class regulatory practice**
- **43%** agreed that the GOC is **transforming customer service**. However, a significant proportion (28%) answered 'don't know' in response to this statement
- Agreement with each objective has fallen slightly since 2021, and the proportion of respondents who answered 'don't know' has grown



### The roles and responsibilities of the GOC

- **76%** of respondents agreed that the GOC **sets fair standards for the profession** (76% in 2021)
- **71%** agreed that the GOC **ensures the quality of optical education** (71% in 2021)
- **66%** agreed that the GOC **promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion in its work** (not asked in 2021)
- **49%** agreed that GOC **charges registration fees which are reasonable** (49% in 2021) – almost the same proportion disagreed (46%)
- **40%** agreed that the GOC **is fair to registrants when taking action through the fitness to practise process** (40% in 2021), but 45% answered 'don't know' in response to this statement
- Dispensing opticians were far less likely to agree that the GOC **charges registration fees which are reasonable** when compared with other registration types



## Continuing professional development (CPD)

- **47%** of respondents rated their understanding of the requirements of the new CPD scheme as **OK**
- **21%** rated their understanding as **very good or excellent**, but **28%** rated their understanding as **poor or very poor**
- The most popular suggestions for areas of further information to help understand the CPD requirements were:
  - Completing your personal development plan (42%)
  - Completing a reflective activity (41%)
  - Gaining points from self-directed CPD (37%)
  - Participating in a peer review activity (27%)



## Communication

### Frequency of communication and keeping up to date

- **79%** of respondents described the frequency of communication from the GOC as **about right** (80% in 2021). Just 4% thought it was *too often* and 11% *not often enough*
- **88%** of respondents kept up to date with GOC news via **emails/eBulletin** (88% in 2021) and 33% via the **GOC website** (33% in 2021)
- Only small proportions of respondents kept up to date via LinkedIn (5%) and Twitter (4%)
- **67%** said they found the updated GOC website **easy to navigate**



### Email bulletins

- **86%** of respondents **read the GOC eBulletin** (13% *in detail* and 74% *scan*)
  - Readership has increased steadily from 78% in 2016, to 83% in 2021, and to 86% in 2022
  - **81%** find this bulletin **informative** (83% in 2021)
- **46%** of respondents **read the Fitness to Practise (FTP) Focus learning bulletin** (8% *in detail* and 38% *scan*)
  - 20% of respondents said that they did not receive the FTP Focus learning bulletin
  - Readership has fallen slightly from 49% in 2021 to 46% in 2022
  - **85%** find this bulletin **informative** (87% in 2021)

## Speaking up

### Speaking up: guidance for registrants

- **36%** of respondents rated their understanding of the 'Speaking up' guidance as **OK**
- **16%** rated their understanding as **very good or excellent**, and **10%** rated their understanding as **poor or very poor**
- **24%** said they had **not yet read the guidance**, and **15%** said they were **not aware of it**



### Patient safety concerning an individual GOC registrant

- The majority of respondents would feel comfortable speaking up about patient safety concerning an individual GOC registrant to their **manager or tutor (67%)**, followed by **their employer/education provider (64%)** or **professional association (58%)**
- In contrast, only **44%** said they would feel comfortable speaking up to **the GOC**
- These results are broadly reflective of those found in 2021



### Patient safety concerning an employer

- Large proportions of respondents would feel comfortable speaking up about patient safety concerning an employer to their **manager or tutor (61%)**, their **employer/education provider (55%)** or **professional association (60%)**
- Again, a smaller proportion said they would feel comfortable speaking up to **the GOC (48%)**
- Those who rated their understanding of the ‘Speaking up’ guidance as *very good* or *excellent* were more likely to feel comfortable speaking up about patient safety concerning an individual registrant or an employer to all authorities

### The Optical Consumer Complaints Service (OCCS)

- **58%** of respondents said they were **aware of the OCCS** (57% in 2021)



# The Research Programme

## Introduction

The GOC is the regulator for the optical professions of optometry and dispensing optics in the UK, with the overarching statutory purpose to protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of the public. The GOC currently registers approximately 29,300 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student optometrists, and student dispensing opticians.

To help track registrants' views and perceptions of the GOC, and their experiences of working in clinical practice, a regular survey of registrants is carried out. This year's survey had the following aims:

- Compare with results from the 2016 and 2021 survey to help identify any trends and changes over time
- Ask additional questions to gain greater insight into the optical workforce, including hours worked, job satisfaction, and future career plans
- Achieve a robust and representative response to the survey to provide a confident level of analysis

Enventure Research, an independent research agency, was appointed to deliver this survey. This report details the findings of this research.

## Methodology

### Questionnaire design

A questionnaire was designed by the GOC and Enventure Research, including a mix of previously used questions to allow for benchmarking and new questions to cover new topics. The questionnaire took approximately 8-10 minutes for registrants to complete. For reference, a copy of the questionnaire can be found in **Appendix A**.

### Promotion of the survey

The survey was securely hosted online and personalised invitations to take part were emailed to all GOC registrants with a valid email address. In total, 29,953 registrants were invited to take part. Those who did not respond received up to four reminder emails encouraging them to take part.

An open-access link to the survey was also promoted by the GOC and stakeholder organisations via email newsletters and social media. Respondents who took part via the open-access link were asked to provide their registration number to access the survey to verify their registration and ensure no duplicate responses were received.

### Survey response

The survey was live between 22 March and 26 April 2022. During this time, 4,102 responses were received, representing a 14% response rate.

## Interpretation of the findings

### Weighting

As the survey was completed by a sample of GOC registrants, and not the entire population of registered optical professionals, the data has been weighted to ensure that certain subgroups are not over or under represented and that the data is as close to the GOC registrant profile as possible.



Weighting adjusts the proportions of certain groups within a sample to match more closely to the proportions in the target population.

The sample has been weighted by registration type (optometrist, dispensing optician, student optometrist, student dispensing optician), based on an up to date version of the GOC register. All survey results presented within this report are based on the weighted data.

## Sampling confidence interval

As the online survey was completed by a sample of GOC registrants and not the entire registrant population, all results are subject to sampling tolerances. However, as a large number of responses were received, the confidence interval for analysis (also known as the margin of error) is narrow.

Based on a total population of approximately 30,000 registrants and 4,102 survey responses, when interpreting the results to a question which all respondents answered, with a response of 50% there is a 95% chance that this result would not vary by more than +/- 1.4 percentage points (48.6% to 51.4%) had the result been obtained from the entire registrant population.

## Subgroup analysis

Subgroup analysis has been undertaken to explore the results provided by different groups of GOC registrants, such as registration type, length of registration, workplace setting, location, and key demographics including gender, age group, ethnicity, and disability status. This analysis has only been carried out where the sample size is seen to be sufficient for comment. Where sample sizes were not large enough, subgroups have been combined to create larger groups. This analysis is presented in charts, tables, and commentary where statistically significant differences between subgroups have been found.

## Interpretation of survey data

This report contains various tables and charts. In some instances, the responses may not add up to 100%. There are several reasons why this might happen:

- The question may have allowed each respondent to give more than one answer
- Only the most common responses may be shown in the table or chart
- Individual percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number so the total may come to 99% or 101%
- A response of between 0% and 0.4% will be shown as 0%

For the analysis of certain questions, response options have been grouped together to provide an overall level. For example, in some instances 'strongly agree' and 'agree' have been grouped and shown as 'total agree'. Where these combined percentages do not equal the overall level reported (being 1% higher or lower), this is due to percentages being rounded to the nearest whole number.

For the analysis of open-ended (free-text) responses, verbatim comments were read in detail and a coding frame was developed for each question based on themes emerging. This then allowed for categorisation of the themes emerging in the comments, which are presented as analysis.

To provide the GOC with insight to inform future workforce planning, certain survey results have been scaled up to the number of optical professionals currently on the GOC's register, converting the results into approximate registrant numbers. Please note that the numbers presented in this report are only approximations, are subject to sampling confidence intervals, and are shown to provide a general idea of the number of GOC registrants who may have answered in a particular way, if everyone on the register had responded to the survey question.

Throughout this report, those who took part in the survey are referred to as 'respondents'.



# Research Findings

## Survey respondent profile

The following charts present the weighted profile of survey respondents, including their role, length of time on the GOC register, working status, number of hours worked, workplace setting, involvement in locum working and the delivery of enhanced eye care services, and location.

The full demographic profile of respondents can be found in **Appendix B**.

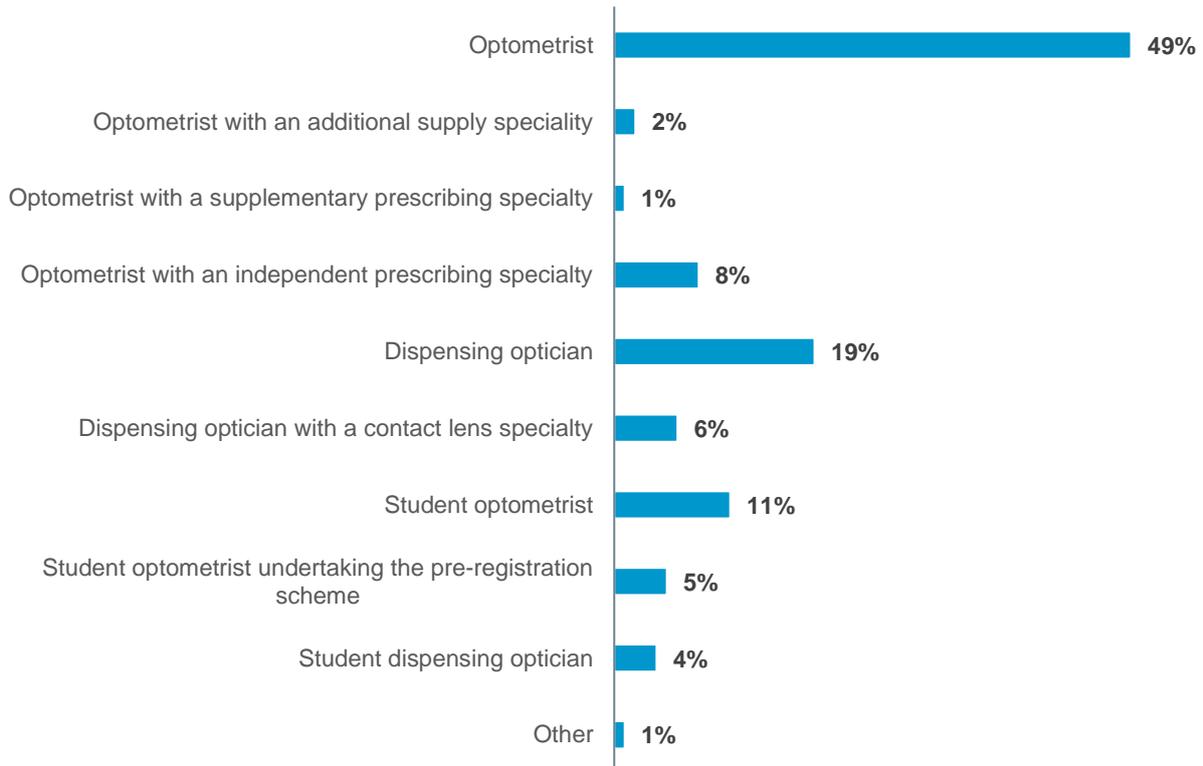
### Registration

Respondents were able to select the role or roles that applied to them. A total of 57% were in optometrist roles, including optometrists (49%), optometrists with an additional supply specialty (2%), optometrists with a supplementary prescribing specialty (1%) and optometrists with an independent prescribing specialty (8%). A quarter of respondents were registered as dispensing opticians (25%), including 19% who selected dispensing optician and 6% who had a contact lens specialty.

A total of 16% indicated that they were student optometrists and a further 4% were student dispensing opticians.

**Figure 1 – Role**

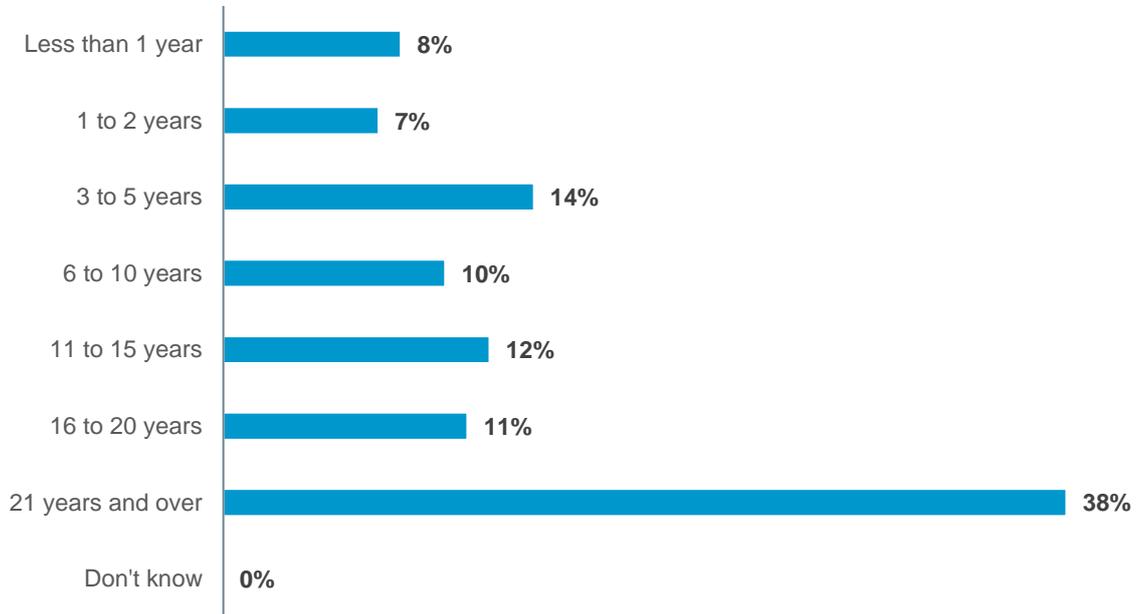
Base: All respondents (4,102)



Although a mix of length of time on the GOC register was represented across survey respondents, the largest proportion had been registered for 21 years and over (38%).

**Figure 2 – Approximately how long have you been on the GOC register?**

Base: All respondents (4,102)

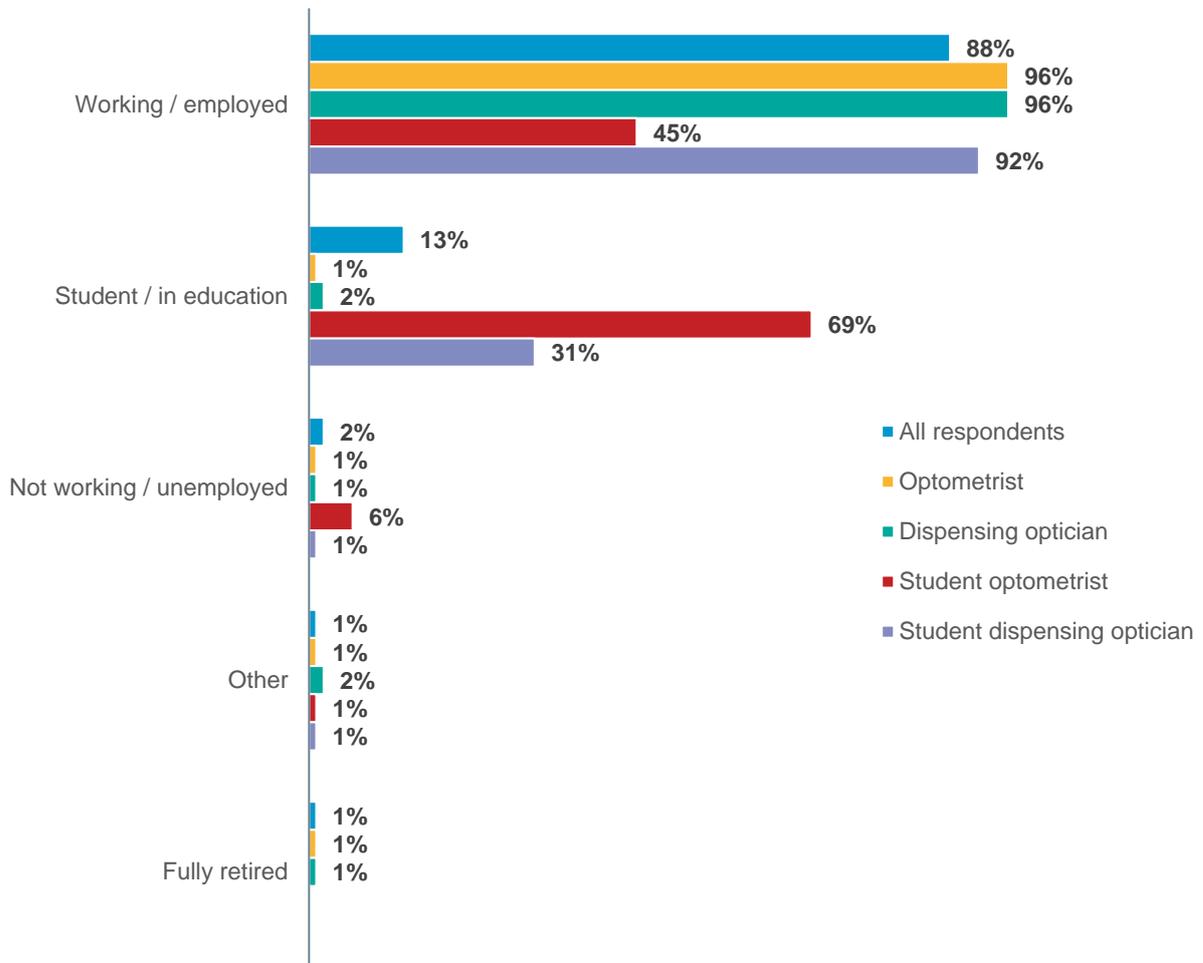


### Working status and number of hours worked

The majority of respondents were working (88%). A further 13% were students/in education, which was significantly more common amongst student opticians (69%). The majority of student dispensing opticians indicated that they were working/employed (92%).

**Figure 3 – Which of these best describes your current working status?**

Base: All respondents (4,102); optometrist (2,334); dispensing optician (1,009); student optometrist (644); student dispensing optician (180)



Those who were working were asked to indicate the number of hours they worked in a typical week to allow the proportions of full-time (35+ hours) and part-time (<35 hours) workers to be established. Overall, based on the number of hours provided, respondents were equally split between those who worked full-time (50%) and those who worked part-time (50%).

When scaling this result up to the total number of working registrants (approx. 26,400 based on 82% of the total 30,000 registrant population), this indicates that approximately 13,200 registrants worked full-time and 13,200 worked part-time.

**Figure 4 – Working status scaled up to approximate registrant numbers**

Base: Working registrants – Survey result (3,164); Registrant database (26,400)

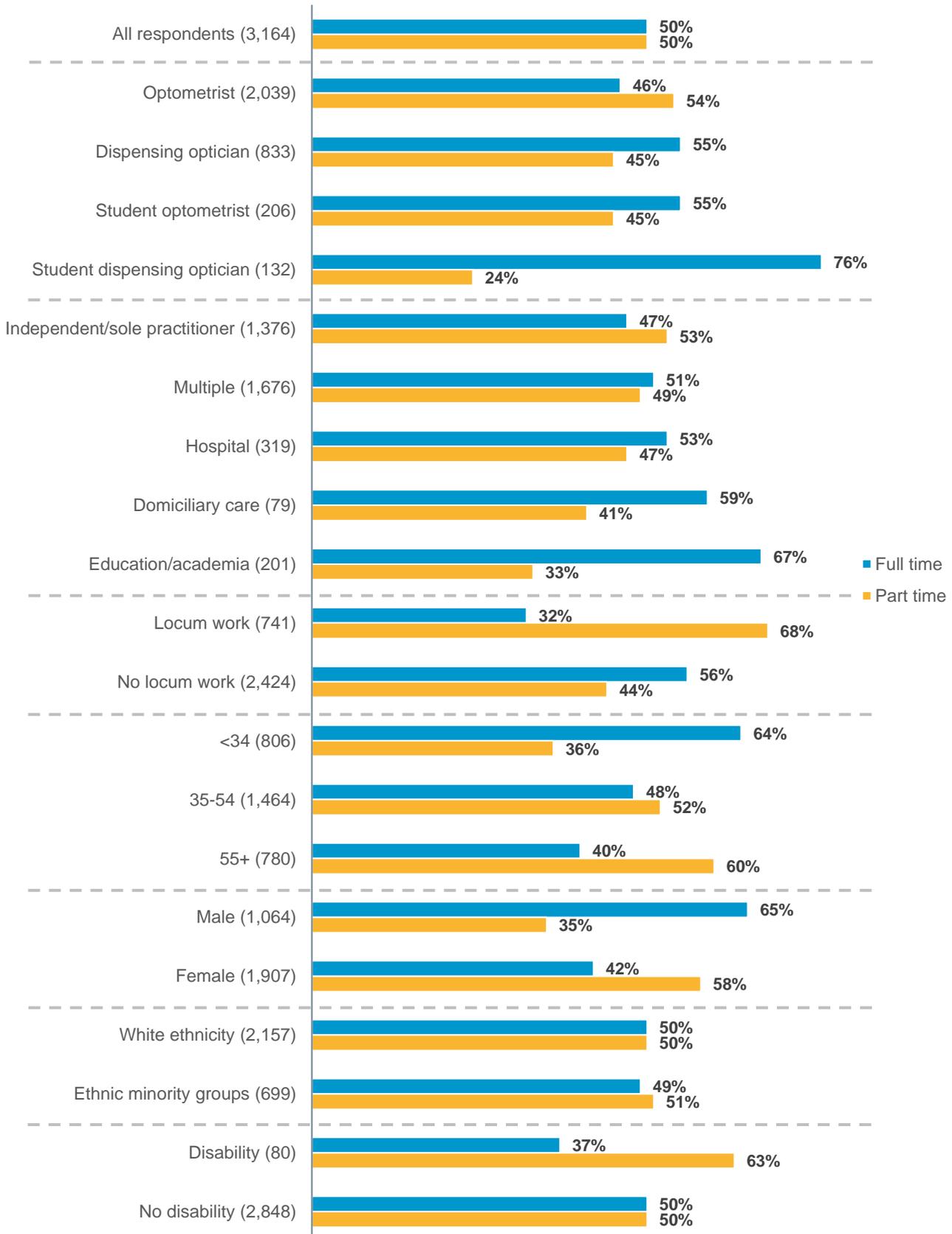
Working status	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Full-time (35+ hours)	50%	13,200
Part-time (<35 hours)	50%	13,200



The chart below shows this result split by registration type, workplace setting, locum working, age group, gender, ethnicity, and disability.

**Figure 5 – Full-time/part-time working by registration type, workplace setting, locum working, age group, gender, ethnicity, and disability**

Base: Shown in chart



Respondents provided the approximate number of hours they worked in a typical week in each different workplace setting. The table below shows the mean (average) number of hours worked in each setting, calculated as 30.2 hours overall per week.

The table also shows mean number of hours worked by optometrists and dispensing opticians in each workplace setting.

**Figure 6 – Approximate number of hours worked in a typical week across workplace settings and registration type**

Base: Those currently working who provided a response (3,164); optometrist (2,039); dispensing optician (833)

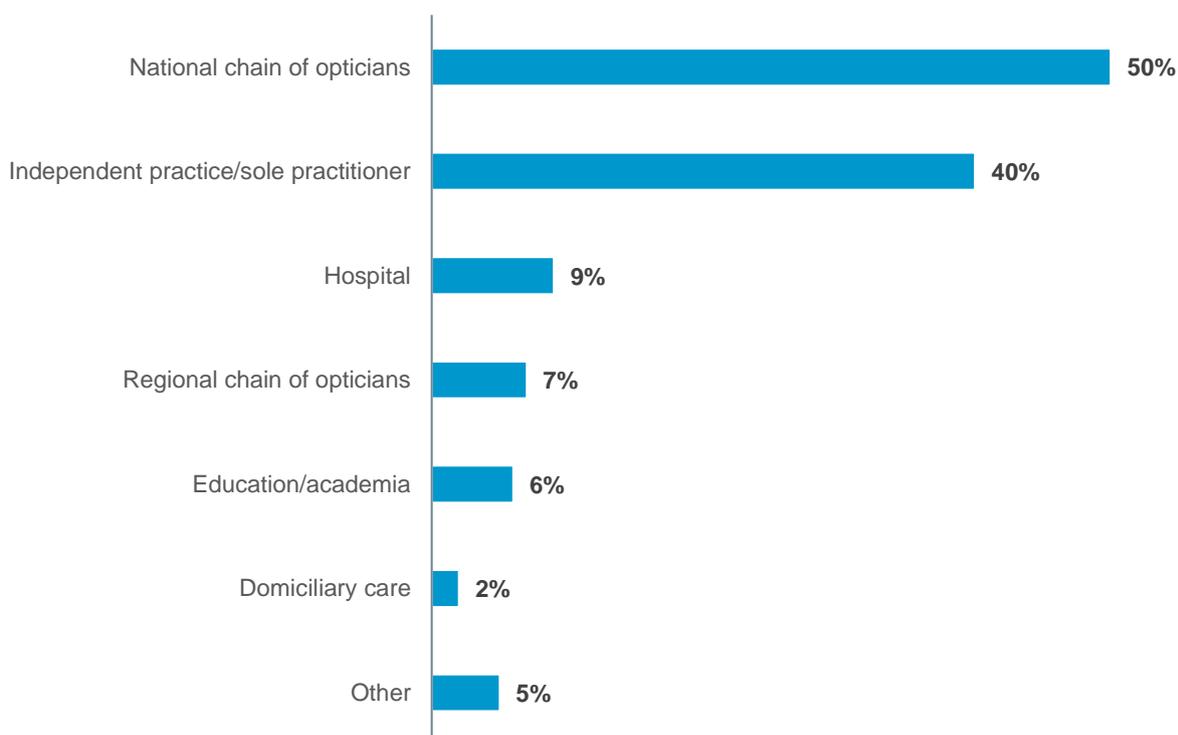
Workplace setting	Number of responses	Overall	Optometrist	Dispensing optician
Independent opticians/sole practitioner	1,368	26.5	24.4	30.8
National chain of opticians	1,501	26.5	25.2	28.2
Regional chain of opticians	214	22.2	19.4	27.7
Hospital	315	20.2	20.3	15.5
Domiciliary care	79	17.7	17.6	18.1
Education/academia	197	20.3	20.4	22.1
Other	144	19.9	17.0	27.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,164</b>	<b>30.2</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>31.2</b>

### Workplace setting, locum working, and enhanced eye care services

Almost half of working respondents worked for a *national chain optician* (50%), closely followed by 40% who worked for an *independent practice* or were a *sole practitioner*.

**Figure 7 – Where do you currently work?**

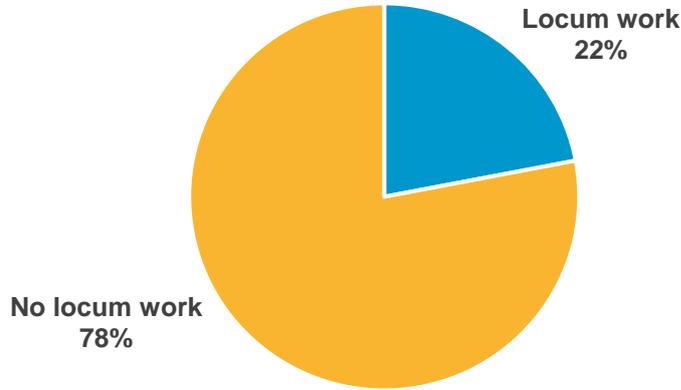
Base: Those currently working (3,647)



Just over one in five working respondents said they worked as a locum (22%). Although collected via a differently worded question in 2021, when indirectly compared this represents an increase from 15% in 2021 to 22% in 2022 (+7 percentage points).

**Figure 8 – Do you work as a locum?**

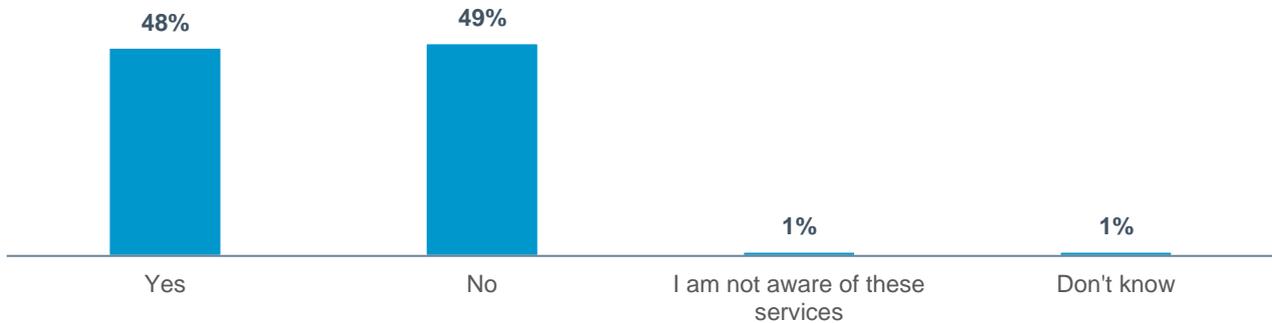
Base: Those currently working (3,647)



Almost half of respondents were involved in delivering enhanced eye care services (48%). This was more common amongst optometrists (57%) when compared with dispensing opticians (34%).

**Figure 9 – Are you currently involved in delivering enhanced eye care services (e.g. providing patients with care beyond the remit of a routine sight test, such as Minor Eye Conditions Service (MECS) or Low Vision Service Wales (LVSW))?**

Base: Those currently working (3,647)

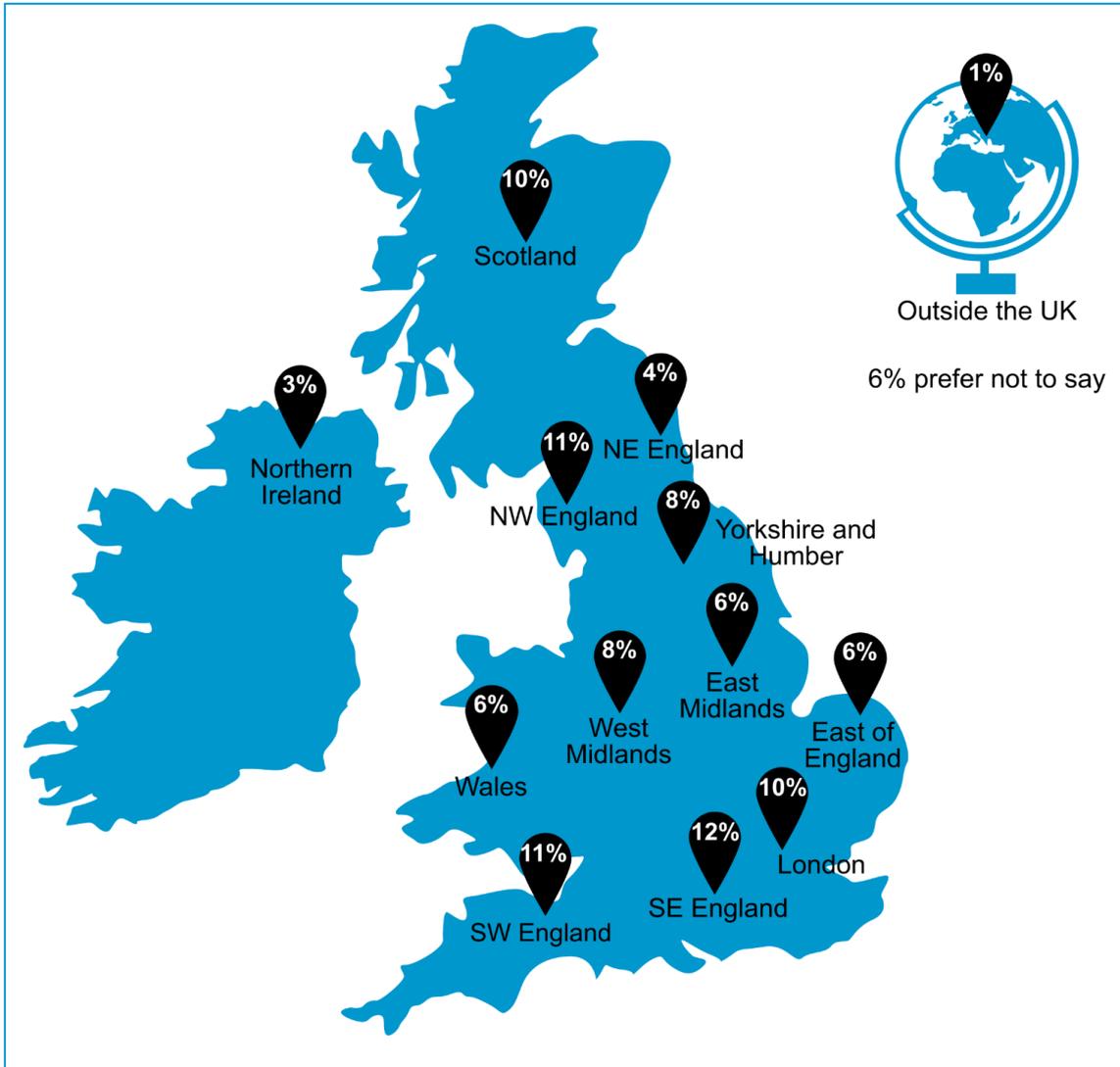


## Location

The map below shows where survey respondents were located across the UK. In total, 80% were in England, with 10% in Scotland, 6% in Wales and 3% in Northern Ireland.

**Figure 10 – Location by UK region**

Base: All respondents (4,102)

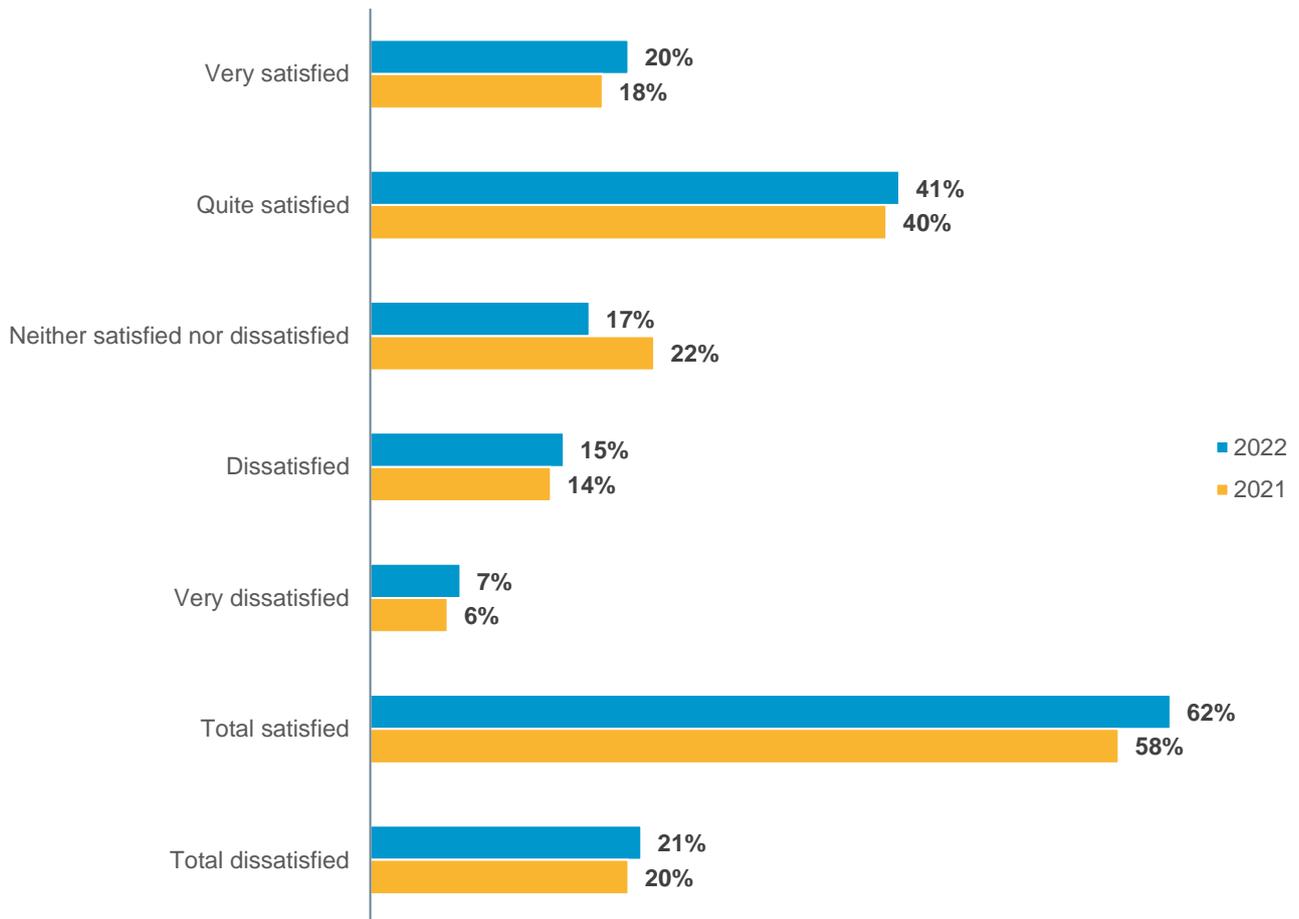


## Job satisfaction

In total, 62% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their role or job over the last 12 months, including 41% who were *quite satisfied* and 20% who were *very satisfied*. One in five respondents, however, were dissatisfied (21%), and a further 17% were *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*.

**Figure 11 – Thinking about the last 12 months, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your role/job?**

Base: Those currently working excluding ‘not applicable’ responses 2022 (3,628); 2021 (4,378)



### 2021/2022 comparison

Compared with results from 2021, there has been a small increase in overall satisfaction from 58% in 2021 to 62% in 2022 (+4 percentage points).

When scaling this result up to the total number of registrants (approx. 30,000), this indicates that approximately 18,600 registrants felt satisfied with their role or job over the last 12 months, and around 6,300 felt dissatisfied.

**Figure 12 – Job satisfaction scaled up to approximate registrant numbers**

Base: Survey result (3,628); Registrant database (30,000)

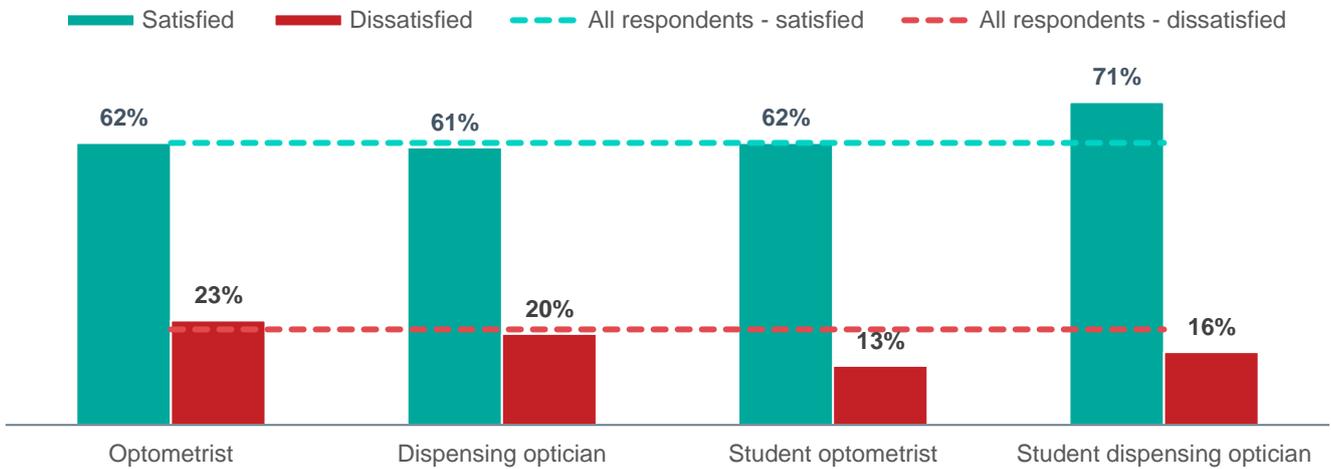
Level of satisfaction with role/job over last 12 months	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Total satisfied	62%	18,600
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	17%	5,100
Total dissatisfied	21%	6,300



**Analysis by registration type shows** that optometrists were slightly more likely to answer that they were dissatisfied with their job or role over the last 12 months (23%), whereas student dispensing opticians were more likely to answer that they were satisfied (71%).

**Figure 13 – Job satisfaction by registration type**

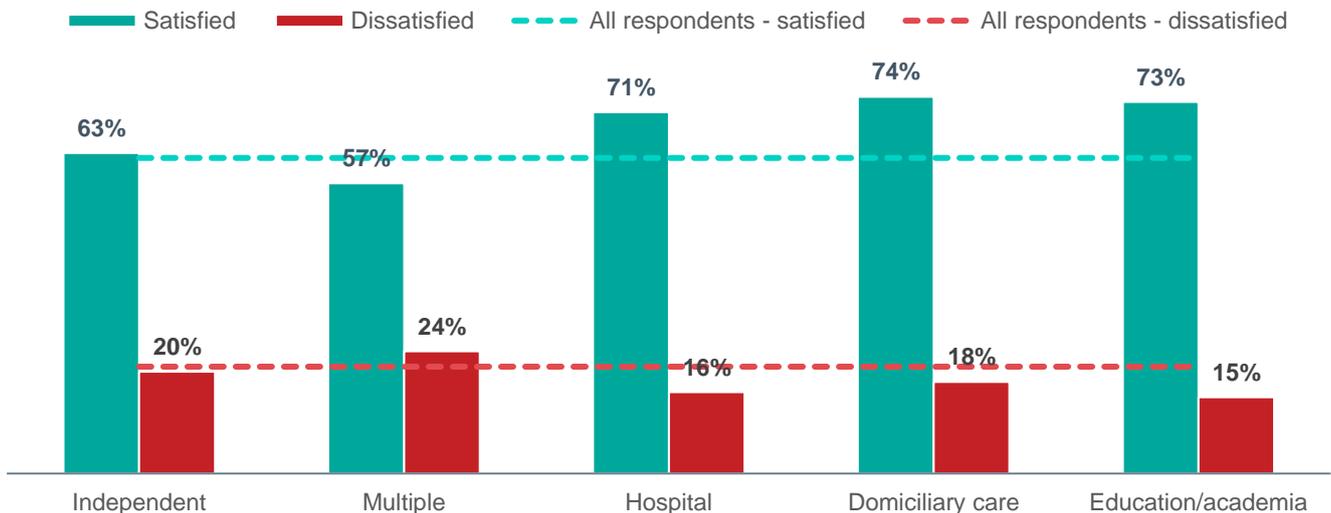
Base: Optometrist (2,252); dispensing optician (974); student optometrist (292); student dispensing optician (165)



**Analysis by workplace setting highlights** that those who worked in a hospital (71%), in domiciliary care (74%), or in education/academia (73%) were more likely to be satisfied with their role or job when compared with those working for a multiple optician (57%). The highest level of dissatisfaction was recorded for those working for a multiple optician (24%).

**Figure 14 – Job satisfaction by workplace setting**

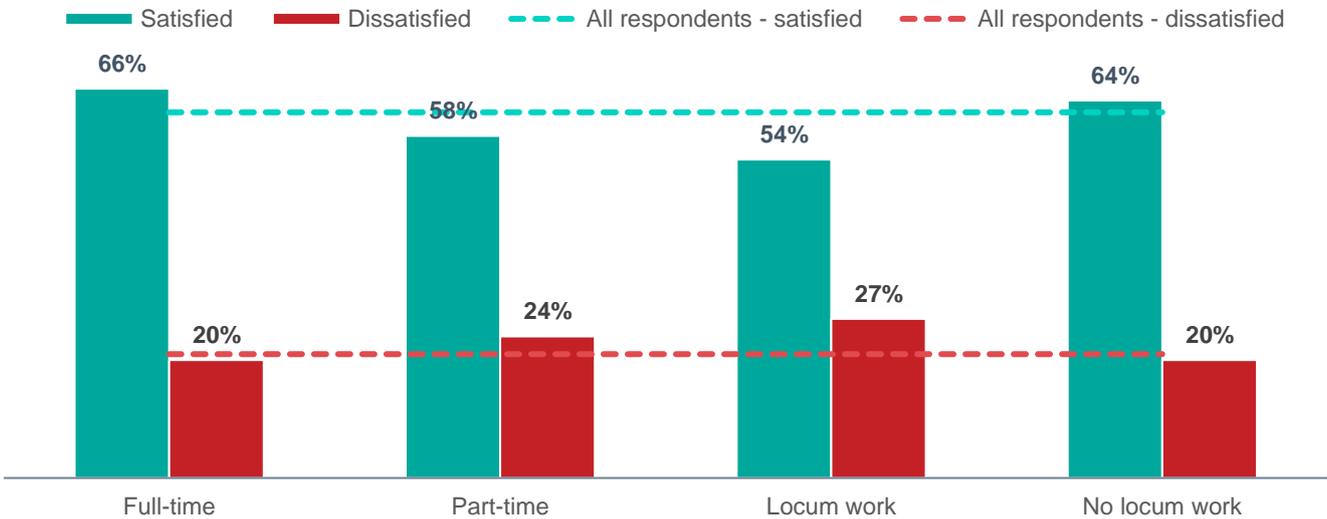
Base: Independent (1,462); multiple (2,031); hospital (327); domiciliary care (81); education/academia (202)



**Analysis by working status** shows that those who worked full-time were more likely to be satisfied (66%) when compared with those working part-time (58%), who were more likely to be dissatisfied (24%). Those who worked as locums were also more likely to be dissatisfied (27%) when compared with those who did no locum work (20%).

**Figure 15 – Job satisfaction by working status and locum working**

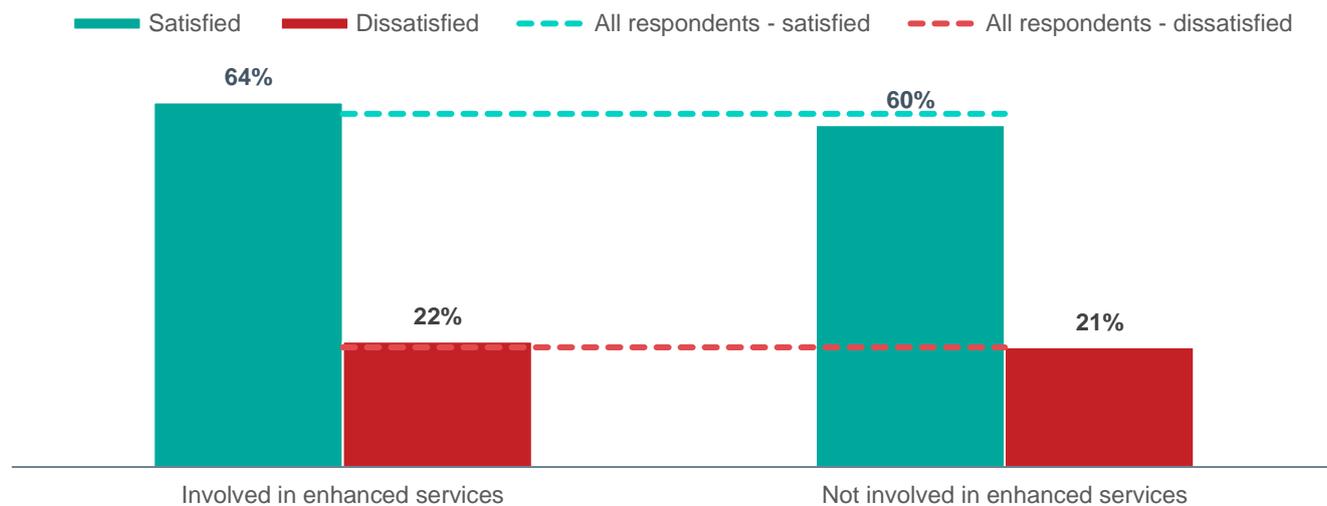
Base: Full-time (1,583); part-time (1,568); locum work (784); no locum work (2,844)



**Analysis by involvement in the delivery of enhanced eye care services** shows that those who were involved were more likely to be satisfied with their role or job (64%) when compared with those who were not (60%). However, almost the same proportion answered that they were dissatisfied, highlighting that those who were not involved in the delivery of enhanced eye care services were more likely to answer that they were ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’ (19%) when compared with those who were involved (15%).

**Figure 16 – Job satisfaction by involvement in enhanced eye care services**

Base: Involved in enhanced eye care services (1,749); not involved (1,791)



**Analysis by location** shows that the highest level of satisfaction was recorded in Wales (73%). Dissatisfaction was highest amongst those who worked in London (24%), where satisfaction was lowest (57%).

**Figure 17 – Job satisfaction by location**

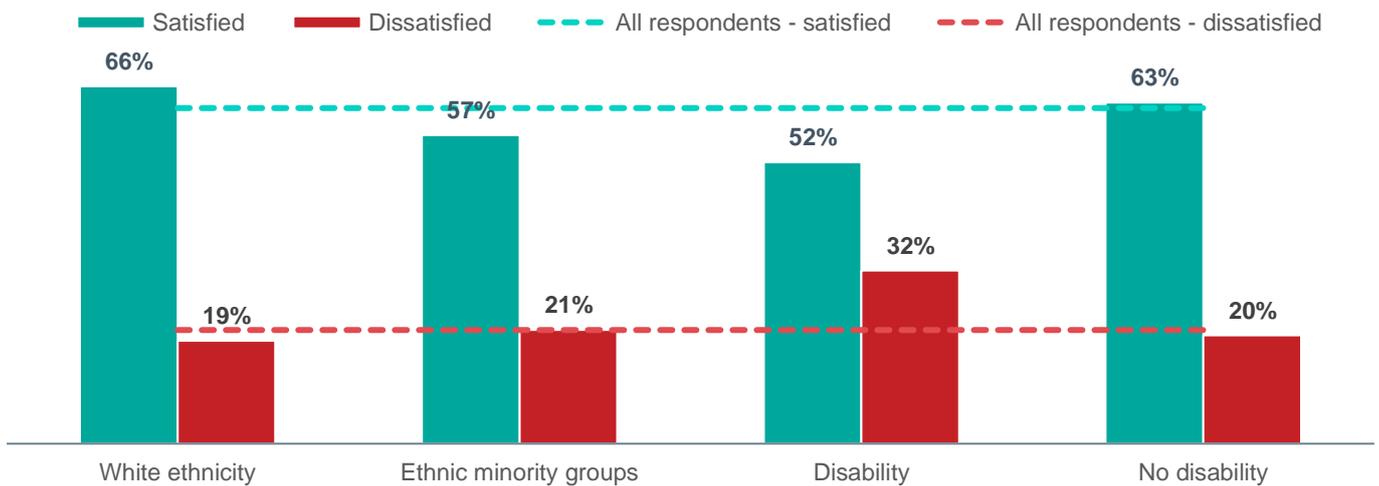
Base: North (763); Midlands and East (726); London (345); South (852); England (2,687); Wales (195); Scotland (371); Northern Ireland (111)



**Analysis by demographics** highlights some difference in satisfaction, with those from ethnic minority groups less likely to be satisfied (57%) when compared with those of White ethnicity (66%), and those with a disability more likely to be dissatisfied (32%) when compared with those who did not have a disability (20%). No significant differences were noted by gender or age group.

**Figure 18 – Job satisfaction by location**

Base: White ethnicity (2,400); ethnic minority groups (861); disability (92); no disability (3,268)



## Exploring job satisfaction

To gain more insight into job satisfaction, respondents were asked to explain their answer in a few short words or sentences. These free-text responses have been thematically coded for analysis and are presented in the following tables, split between those who were satisfied, dissatisfied, and neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

### Reasons for being satisfied

The most common explanation suggested by respondents for being satisfied with their job or role was that it was *enjoyable/rewarding*. A wide range of other reasons were also provided, including that their job offered *varied/interesting work*, and that they were *able to deliver quality care/had more clinical time*.

It is important to note that, whilst mostly positive, some negative explanations were also provided alongside their positive explanations by those who were satisfied with their job/role, such as *busy/increasing workload/pressure* and *Covid challenges/restrictions/risks*.

### Figure 19 – Explanations provided for being very/quite satisfied with job/role (provided by 30+ respondents)

Base: Those very/quite satisfied with job/role who provided a response (1,618)

Explanation	Number	%
Enjoyable/rewarding	568	35%
Varied/interesting work	223	14%
Able to deliver quality care/more clinical time	126	8%
Busy/increasing workload/pressure	109	7%
Covid challenges/restrictions/risks	104	6%
Flexible/good working balance	100	6%
Enjoy working with patients/public	80	5%
Feel valued/appreciated	71	4%
Good employer/company/manager	69	4%
Well run practice/good working environment	66	4%
Good team/supportive colleagues	61	4%
Professional freedom/autonomy	60	4%
Recently changed jobs - happier in new role	58	4%
Access to training/development opportunities	52	3%
Stress/anxiety	52	3%
Enjoy working in independent practice	49	3%
Poor pay/lack of reward	45	3%
Able to use skills/training	44	3%
No pressure/manageable workload	44	3%
Practice owner/director	40	2%
Okay/content/satisfied/no issues	39	2%
Opportunities for career progression	32	2%
Increased admin/paperwork	32	2%



### Reasons for being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

A mix of both positive and negative explanations was provided by respondents who said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied in their job role, tending to focus more on the negatives. For example, the most common explanations related to *busy/increasing workload pressure, Covid challenges/restrictions/risks, poor pay/lack of reward, and stress/anxiety*.

#### Figure 20 – Explanations provided for being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with job/role (provided by 20+ respondents)

Base: Those neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with job/role who provided a response (443)

Explanation	Number	%
Busy/increasing workload/pressure	75	17%
Covid challenges/restrictions/risks	66	15%
Poor pay/lack of reward	40	9%
Enjoyable/rewarding/job satisfaction	39	9%
Stress/anxiety	32	7%
Sales pressure/retail focus	30	7%
Feel underappreciated/undervalued	28	6%
Mixed experience - some good some bad	28	6%
Bored/repetitive work/not challenged	24	5%
Changes to profession/training	24	5%
Few progression opportunities	23	5%
Poor NHS funding/insufficient fees	22	5%
Patient attitudes/expectations/behaviours	21	5%
Unsupportive employer/poor working conditions	20	5%
Lack of support/protection from GOC	20	5%

### Reasons for being dissatisfied

The most common explanation suggested by respondents for being dissatisfied with their job or role was *busy/increasing workload/pressure*. Large proportions of respondents also suggested *poor pay/lack of reward, sales pressure/retail focus, feeling underappreciated/undervalued, and unsupportive employer/poor working conditions*.

#### Figure 21 – Explanations provided for being very/quite dissatisfied with job/role

Base: Those very/quite dissatisfied with job/role who provided a response (747)

Explanation	Number	%
Busy/increasing workload/pressure	235	31%
Poor pay/lack of reward	133	18%
Sales pressure/retail focus	122	16%
Feel underappreciated/undervalued	100	13%
Unsupportive employer/poor working conditions	96	13%
Covid challenges/restrictions/risks	84	11%
Stress/anxiety	81	11%
Lack of support/protection from GOC	69	9%
Short appointments/lack of clinic time	61	8%
Patient attitudes/expectations/behaviours	50	7%
Poor NHS funding/insufficient fees	49	7%



Explanation	Number	%
Staffing issues/lack of staff	46	6%
Changes to profession/training	45	6%
Wider NHS challenges/backlogs/waiting times	42	6%
Few progression opportunities	41	5%
Increased admin/paperwork	39	5%
Long hours/unpaid overtime/want to work less	37	5%
No job satisfaction/unhappy in profession	36	5%
Unable to fully use qualifications/skills	23	3%
Underappreciation/poor treatment of dispensing opticians	23	3%
Bored/repetitive work/not challenged	23	3%
Online retailers/unlicensed sales	22	3%
Influence of/pressure from multiples	20	3%

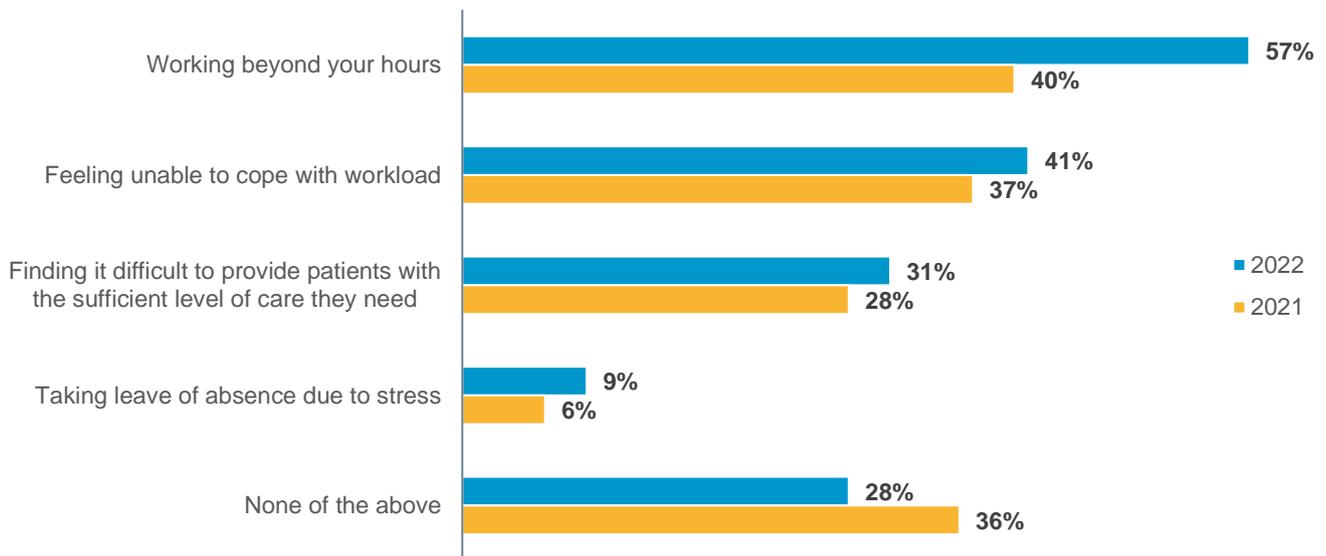


## Working conditions

Almost three in five respondents said that they had experienced *working beyond their hours* in the last 12 months (57%). Large proportions also said they had felt *unable to cope with their workload* (41%) or had found it *difficult to provide patients with the sufficient level of care they need* (31%). A small proportion of respondents said they had *taken a leave of absence due to stress* in the last 12 months (9%).

**Figure 22 – In the last 12 months, have you experienced any of the following?**

Base: Those currently working 2022 (3,647); 2021 (4,479)



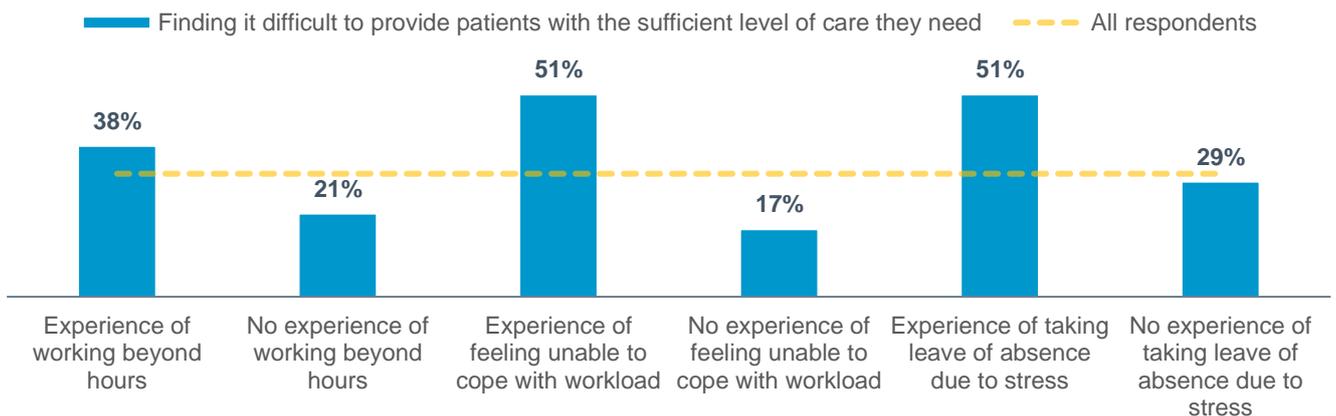
### 2021/2022 comparison

The proportion of respondents reporting negative impacts on their working conditions has increased between 2021 and 2022, most notably for those who said they were *working beyond their hours*, which has increased from 40% in 2021 to 57% in 2022 (+17 percentage points).

**Analysis within the responses to this question** highlights that respondents who *reported working beyond their hours, feeling unable to cope with their workload, and taking a leave of absence due to stress* were more likely to also report that they had found it *difficult to provide patients with the sufficient level of care they need*, when compared with those who had no experience of these things within the last 12 months.

**Figure 23 – Finding it difficult to provide patients with the sufficient level of care they need by experience of other working conditions**

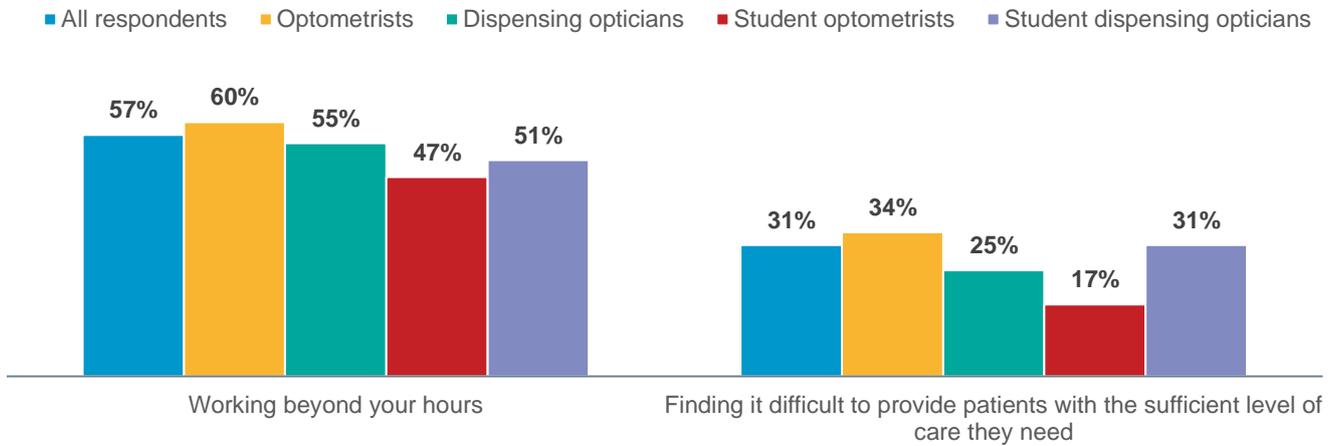
Base: Experience of working beyond hours (2,083) / no experience (1,536); experience of feeling unable to cope with workload (1,493) / no experience (2,154); experience of taking leave of absence due to stress (321) / no experience (3,326)



**Analysis by registration type shows that** optometrists were more likely to indicate that they were *working beyond their hours* (60%) or were finding it *difficult to provide patients with the sufficient level of care they need* (34%) when compared with other registration types.

**Figure 24 – Working conditions by registration type**

Base: Optometrist (2,262); dispensing optician (982); student optometrist (292); student dispensing optician (165)

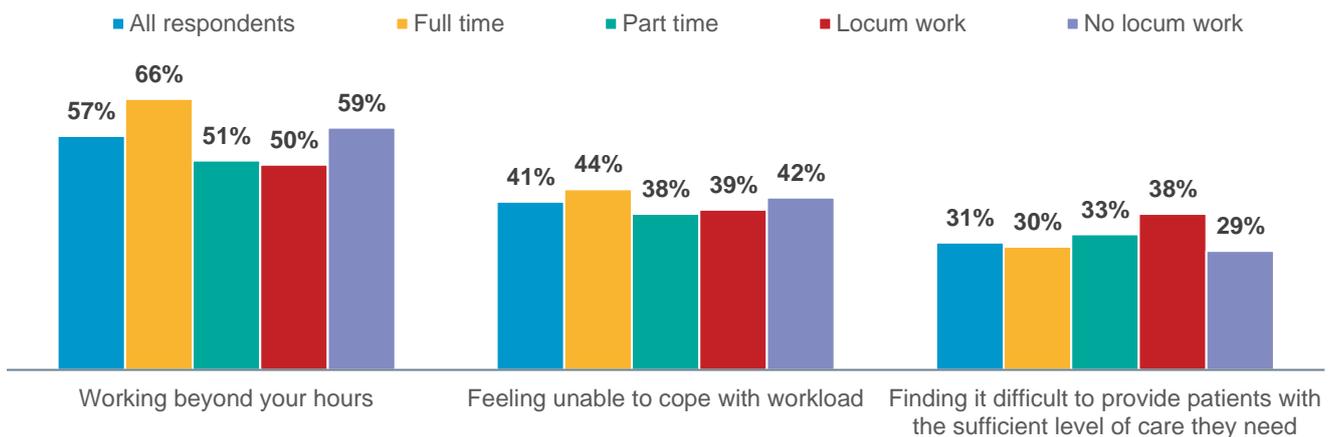


**Analysis by working status** shows that those who worked full-time were more likely to state that they had experienced *working beyond their hours* (66%) or had felt *unable to cope with their workload* (44%) when compared with those who worked part-time (51% and 38% respectively). Those who worked part-time were more likely to indicate that they had *found it difficult to provide patients with the sufficient level of care they need* (33%) when compared with those who worked full-time (30%).

**Analysis by locum working** indicates that those who did not work as locums were more likely to report that they were *working beyond their hours* (59%) when compared with locum workers (50%), whereas locum workers were more likely to state that they found it *difficult to provide patients with the sufficient level of care they need* (38%) when compared with those who did not work as locums (29%).

**Figure 25 – Working conditions by working status and locum working**

Base: Full-time (1,586); part-time (1,578); locum work (786); no locum work (2,861)

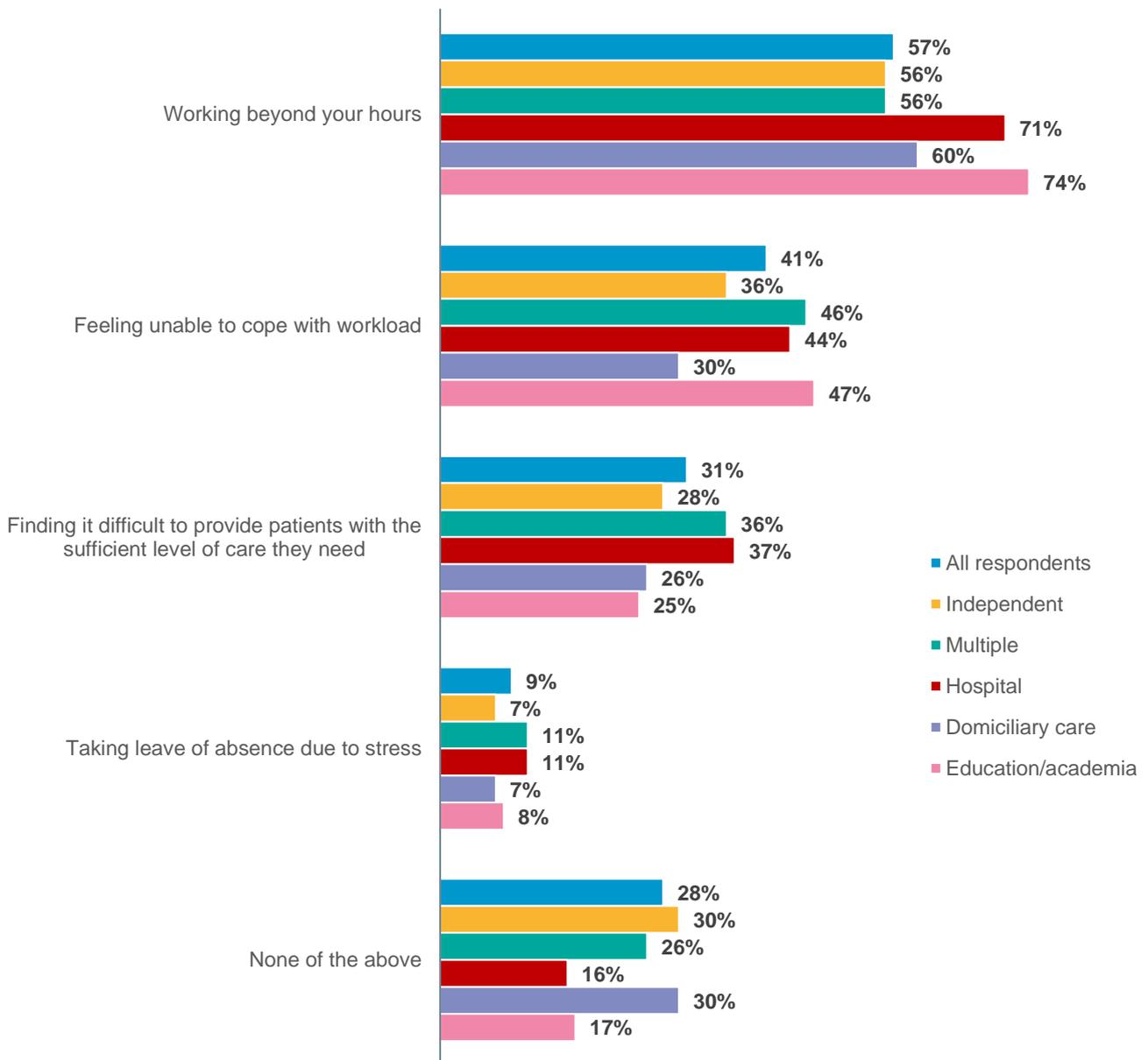


**Analysis by workplace setting** highlights that those who worked in a hospital setting or in education/academia were more likely to indicate that they had been *working beyond their hours* (71% and 74% respectively) when compared with those working in other settings.

Those who worked for a multiple optician, in a hospital, or in education/academia were more likely to answer that they had felt *unable to cope with their workload* (46%, 44% and 47% respectively) when compared with those working in other settings. Larger proportions of those who worked for a multiple optician or in a hospital said that they had found it *difficult to provide patients with the sufficient level of care they needed* (36% and 37% respectively) when compared with those who worked in other settings.

**Figure 26 – Working conditions by workplace setting**

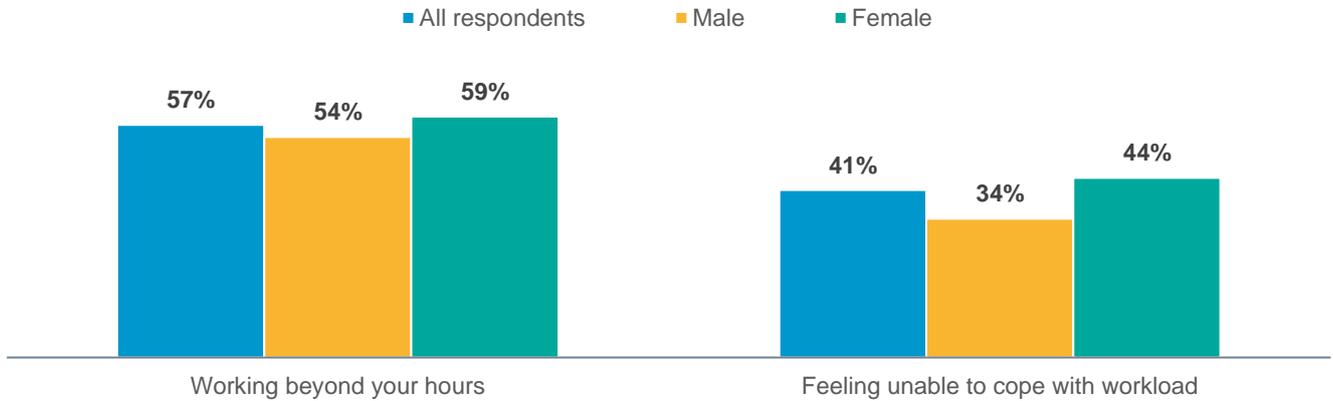
Base: Independent/sole practitioner (1,467); multiple (2,037); hospital (328); domiciliary care (81); education/academia (204)



**Analysis by gender** shows that female respondents were more likely to indicate that they were *working beyond their hours* (59%) or were *feeling unable to cope with their workload* (44%) when compared with male respondents (54% and 34% respectively).

**Figure 27 – Working conditions by gender**

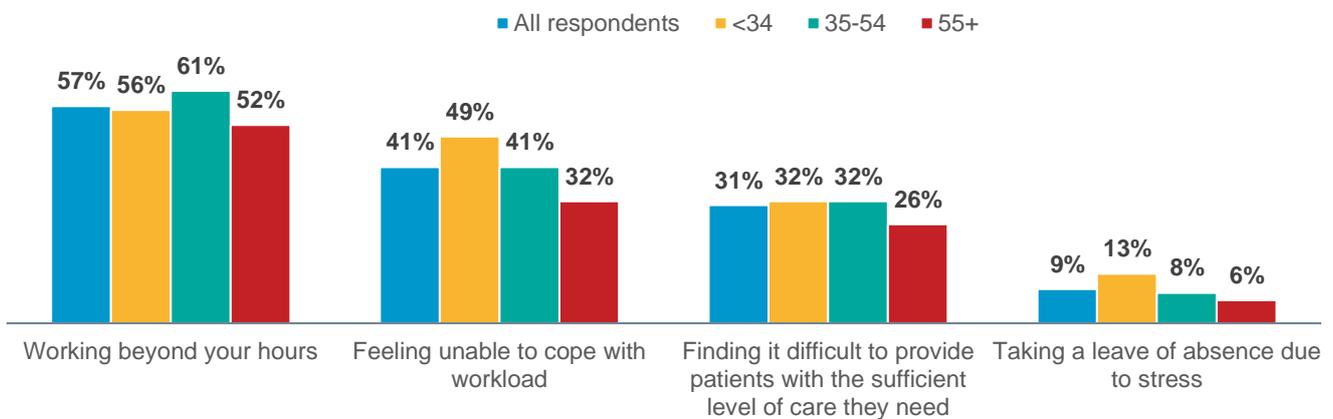
Base: Male (1,198); female (2,230)



**Analysis by age group** shows that *working beyond your hours* was more common amongst those aged 35-54 (61%), whereas *feeling unable to cope with workload* and *taking a leave of absence due to stress* were selected by a larger proportions of those aged <34 (49% and 13% respectively).

**Figure 28 – Working conditions by age group**

Base: Aged <34 (998); 35-54 (1,636); 55+ (881)



**Analysis by ethnicity** highlights that those of White ethnicity were more likely to state that they were *working beyond their hours* (60%) when compared with those from minority ethnic groups (49%).

**Analysis by disability** shows that those who had a disability were more likely to indicate that they had *taken a leave of absence due to stress* (18%) when compared with those who did not have a disability (8%).

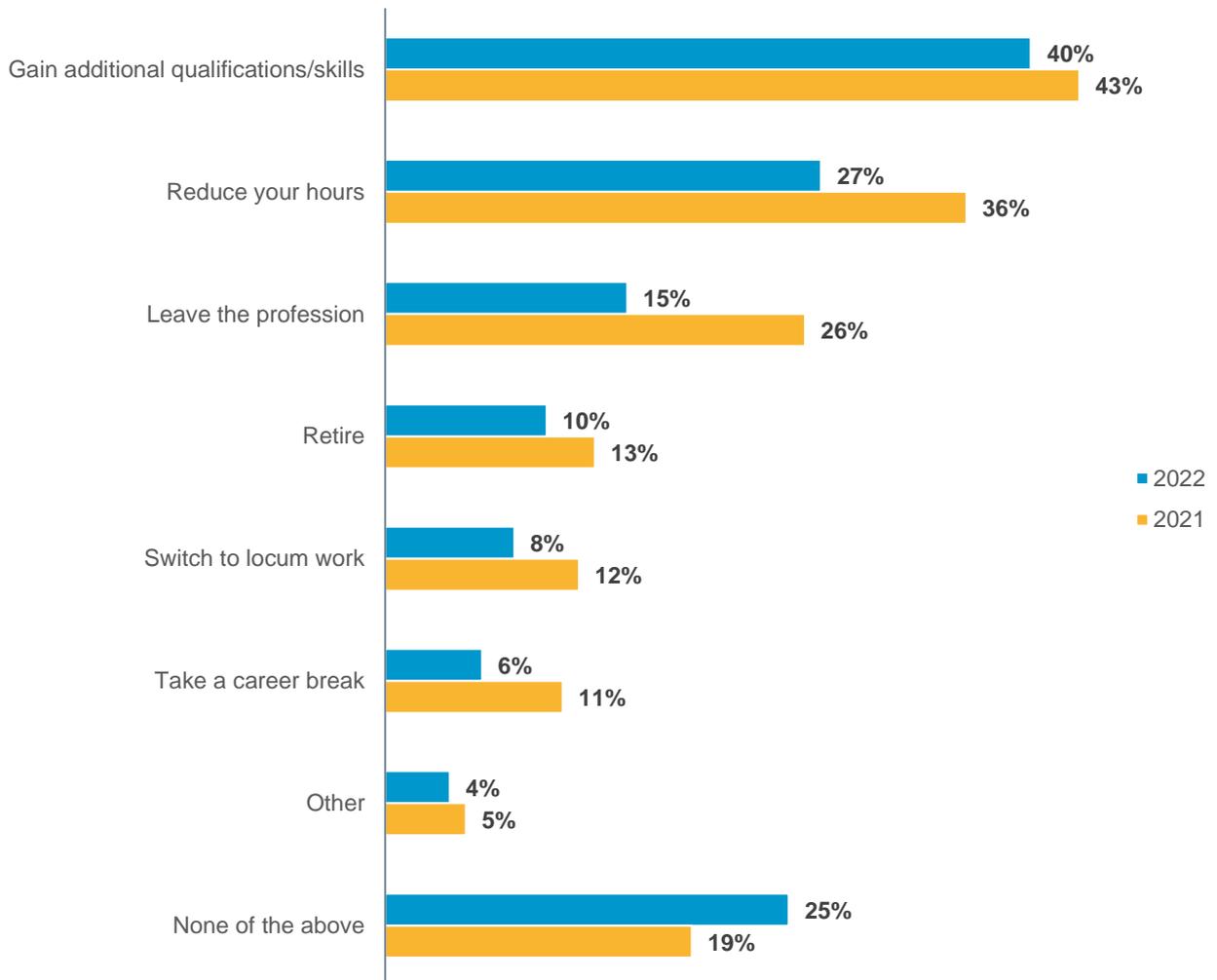


## Plans for the future

When asked about their career plans over the next 12 to 24 months, the largest proportion of respondents said that they planned to *gain additional qualifications or skills* (40%), followed by 27% who planned to *reduce their hours*. One in seven respondents said that they planned to *leave the profession* (15%), and smaller proportions indicated they planned to *retire* (10%), *switch to locum work* (8%) or *take a career break* (6%).

**Figure 29 – Are you considering making any of the following changes to your career over the next 12-24 months?**

Base: Those currently working 2022 (3,647); 2021 (4,479)



### 2021/2022 comparison

A similar proportion of respondents indicated that they planned to *gain additional qualifications or skills* in 2021 (43%) and 2022 (40%). However, when compared to 2021, this year smaller proportions of respondents said that they planned to *reduce their hours* (-9 percentage points) or *leave the profession* (-11 percentage points).



The table below presents this result scaled up to the total approximate number of registrants, based on a total population of approximately 30,000. This shows that approximately 12,000 registrants planned to *gain additional qualifications or skills* over the next 12 to 24 months. However, it also highlights that approximately 8,100 registrants plan to *reduce their hours*, and that 4,500 plan to *leave the profession*. Please note that, as this survey question was multiple-choice, the total number of registrants will exceed 30,000.

**Figure 30 – Future career changes over the next 12-24 months scaled up to approximate registrant numbers**

Base: Survey result - All respondents excluding those fully retired and 'not applicable' responses (3,647); Registrant database (30,000)

Future career change over next 12-24 months	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Gain additional qualifications/skills	40%	12,000
Reduce your hours	27%	8,100
Leave the profession	15%	4,500
Retire	10%	3,000
Switch to locum work	8%	2,400
Take a career break	6%	1,800
Other	4%	1,200
None of the above	25%	7,500

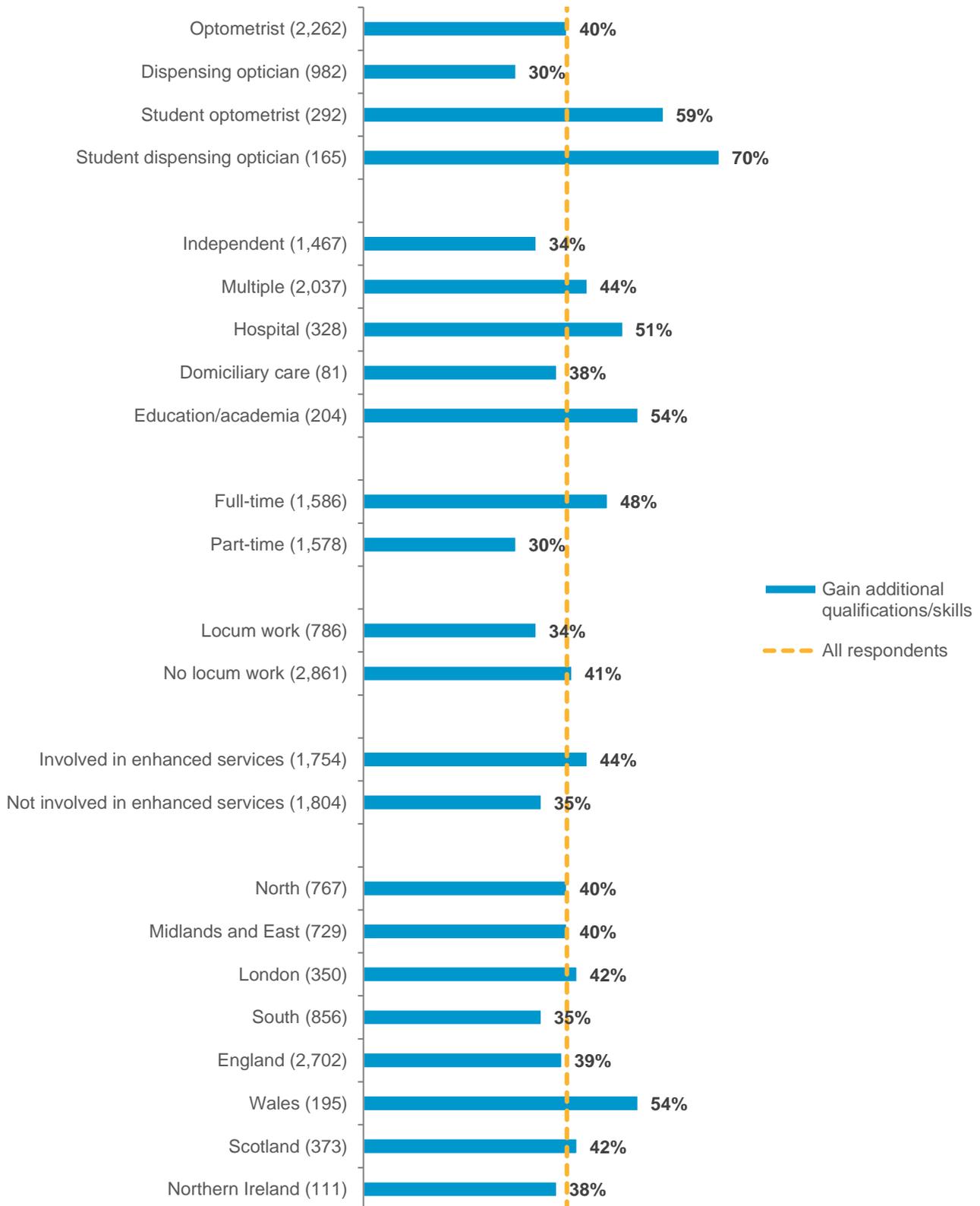


## Plans to gain additional qualifications/skills

The chart below presents subgroup analysis for those who planned to gain additional qualifications or skills over the next 12 to 24 months by registration type, workplace setting, working status, locum working, involvement in enhanced services, and location.

**Figure 31 – Plans to gain additional qualifications/skills by registration type, workplace setting, working status, locum working, involvement in enhanced services, and location**

Base: shown in chart



Subgroups more likely to indicate that they planned to gain additional qualifications or skills included those who:

- Were student optometrists (59%) and student dispensing opticians (70%) when compared with optometrists (40%) and dispensing opticians (30%)
- Worked in a hospital (51%) or in education/academia (54%), particularly when compared with those who worked for an independent optician (34%)
- Worked full-time (48%) when compared with those who worked part-time (30%)
- Did not work as a locum (41%) when compared with those who did (34%)
- Were involved in the delivery of enhanced eye care services (44%) when compared with those who were not (35%)
- Lived in Wales (54%) when compared with other locations

### Explanations provided

Respondents were asked to explain why they planned to gain additional qualifications or skills over the next 12 to 24 months. Free-text responses have been thematically coded for analysis and are presented below.

Aside from the obvious response of wishing to gain knowledge/skills, common responses included *to deliver better care/help more patients*, *to expand scope of practice/deliver more services*, and *career progression/to increase opportunities*.

### Figure 32 – Explanations provided for planning to gain additional qualifications/skills

Base: Those who provided a response (1,216)

Explanation	Number	%
To gain knowledge/skills	254	21%
To deliver better care/help more patients	180	15%
To expand scope of practice/deliver more services	165	14%
Career progression/to increase opportunities	164	14%
To qualify/complete a qualification	158	13%
To achieve Independent Prescribing/become a prescriber	157	13%
To specialise/provide specialist service	146	12%
To keep up/skills becoming expected	129	11%
To change job role/career	85	7%
To provide more community-based services	73	6%
To do more varied/interesting work	67	6%
Professional development/improvement	61	5%
Enjoy learning/studying	44	4%
Interested in topic	42	3%
To increase salary/earn more	42	3%
Relevant/required for job role	32	3%
Personal development	32	3%
To increase job satisfaction	28	2%
To increase confidence	21	2%
To improve management skills	21	2%
To benefit the business/add value	16	1%

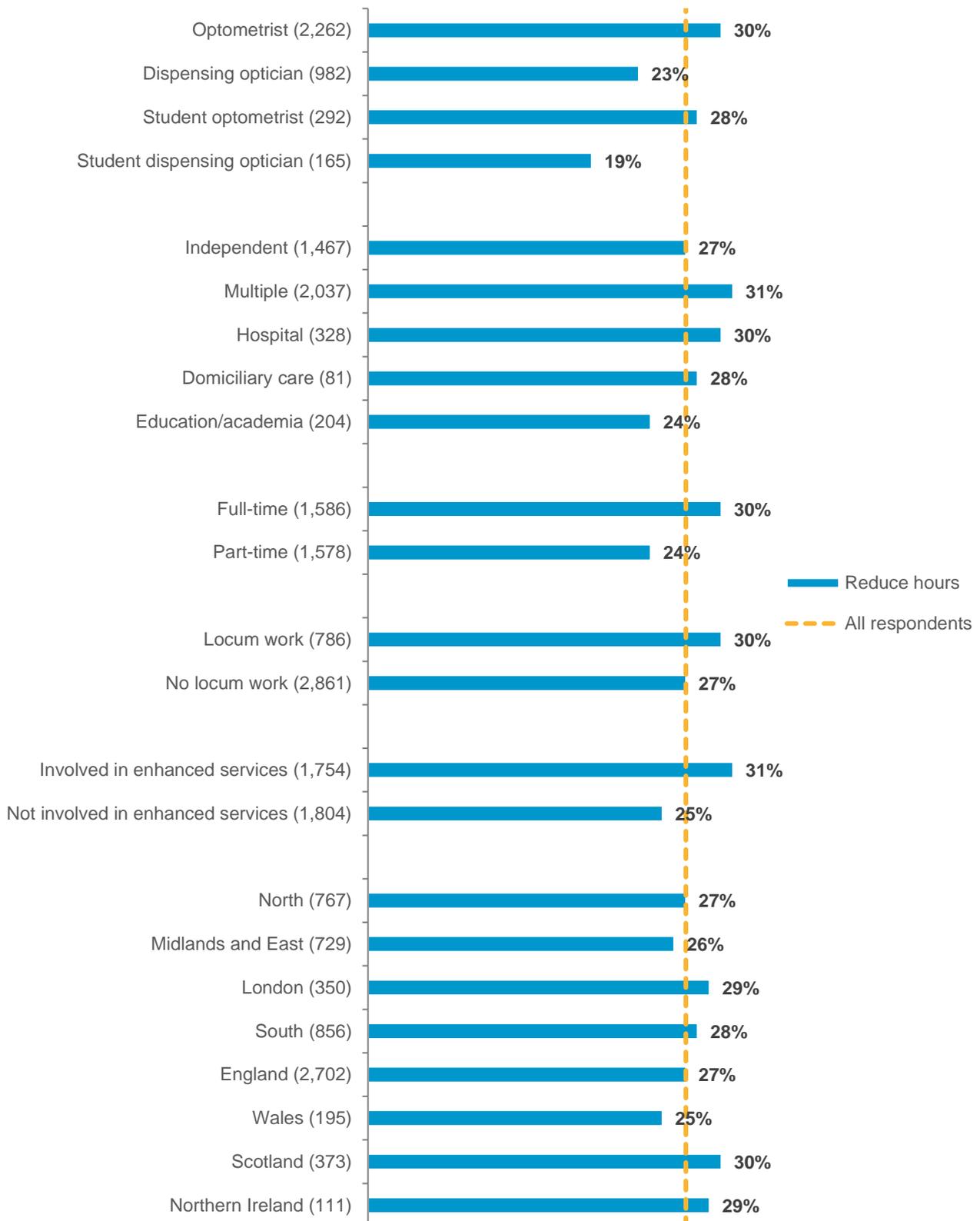


## Plans to reduce hours

The chart below presents subgroup analysis of those who planned to reduce their hours over the next 12 to 24 months by registration type, workplace setting, working status, locum working, involvement in enhanced services, and location.

**Figure 33 – Plans to reduce hours by registration type, workplace setting, working status, locum working, involvement in enhanced services, and location**

Base: shown in chart



Subgroups more likely to indicate that they planned to reduce their hours included those who:

- Were optometrists (30%) when compared with dispensing opticians (23%)
- Worked for a multiple opticians (31%) when compared with those who worked for an independent opticians/sole practitioner (27%) or in education/academia (24%)
- Worked full-time (30%) when compared with those who worked part-time (24%)
- Worked as a locum (30%) when compared with those who did not (27%)
- Were involved in the delivery of enhanced eye care services (31%) when compared with those who were not (25%)

### Explanations provided

Respondents were asked to explain why they planned to reduce their hours over the next 12 to 24 months. Free-text responses have been thematically coded for analysis and are presented below.

The most commonly suggested explanations related to *stress/burnout/fatigue*, *to improve work-life balance*, and *workload/pressures/targets*.

### Figure 34 – Explanations provided for planning to reduce hours

Base: Those who provided a response (822)

Explanation	Number	%
Stress/burnout/fatigue	255	31%
To improve work-life balance	218	27%
Workload/pressure/targets	142	17%
Age/approaching retirement	117	14%
More free time/time for other interests	79	10%
Want to work fewer hours/days	62	8%
Family/caring responsibilities	43	5%
Lack of job satisfaction/unhappy at work	35	4%
Low salary/underpaid	33	4%
Assessing career/exploring new options	30	4%
To study/gain new qualifications	26	3%
Illness/health condition	21	3%
Poor working conditions	21	3%
Lack of support	21	3%
Feel undervalued/underappreciated	20	2%
Negative changes to the profession/training	16	2%
Personal circumstances/other commitments	15	2%
Pregnancy/maternity leave	13	2%
Inflexible role/want more flexibility	11	1%
Patient demands/expectations	9	1%
Changing priorities	8	1%
Don't need to work full-time/financially stable	6	1%

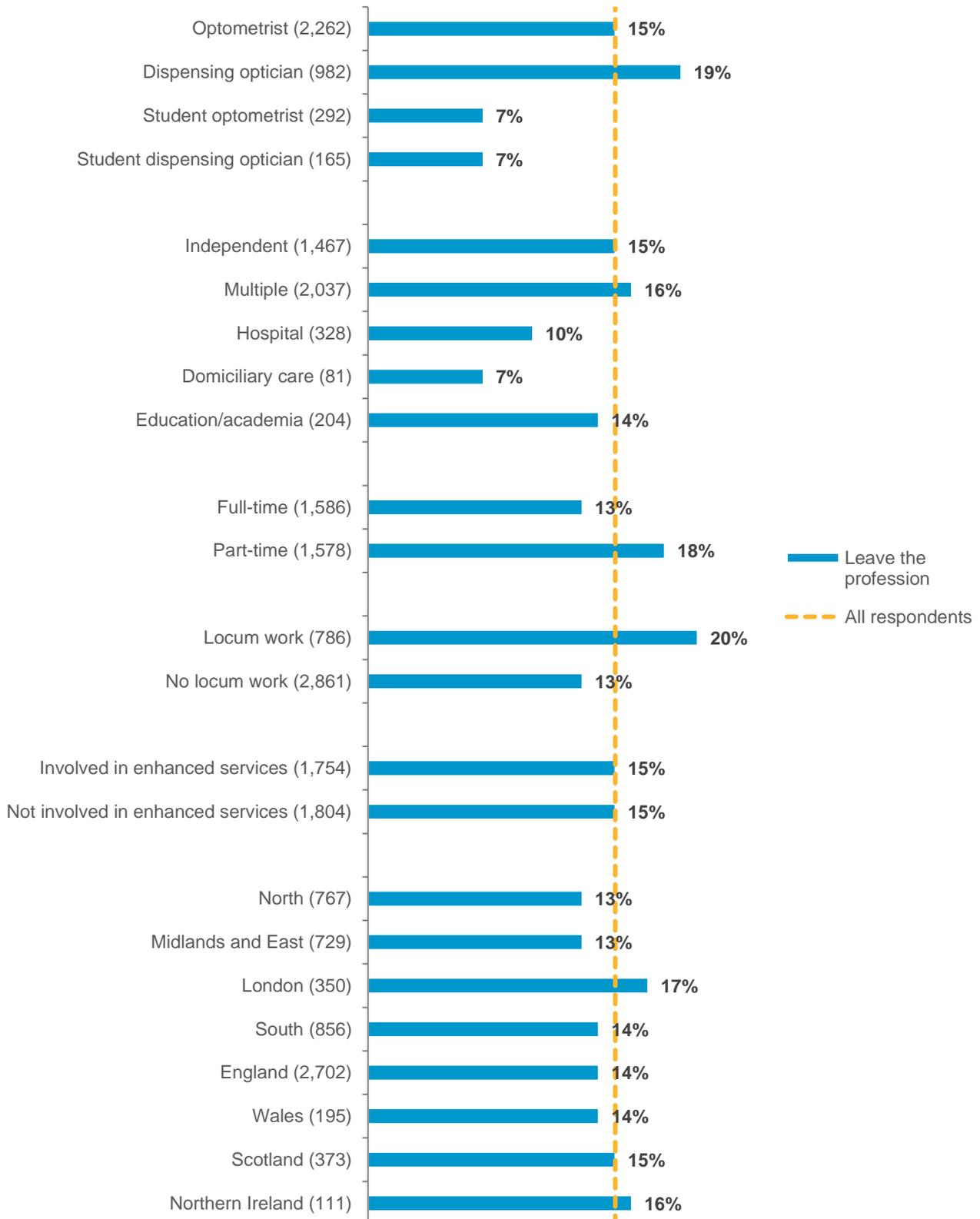


## Plans to leave the profession

The chart below presents subgroup analysis of those who planned to leave the profession during the next 12 to 24 months by registration type, workplace setting, working status, locum working, involvement in enhanced services, and location.

**Figure 35 – Plans to leave the profession by registration type, workplace setting, working status, locum working, involvement in enhanced services, and location**

Base: shown in chart



Subgroups more likely to indicate that they planned to leave the profession included those who:

- Were dispensing opticians (19%) when compared with optometrists (15%)
- Worked for an independent opticians/sole practitioner (15%) or multiple opticians (16%) when compared with those who worked in a hospital (10%) or in domiciliary care (7%)
- Worked part-time (18%) when compared with those who worked full-time (13%)
- Worked as a locum (20%) when compared with those who did not (13%)

### Explanations provided

Respondents were asked to explain why they planned to leave the profession over the next 12 to 24 months. Free-text responses have been thematically coded for analysis and are presented below. The most commonly suggested explanations related to *low salary/being underpaid*, *workload/pressure*, *stress/burnout/fatigue*, and *lack of job satisfaction/enjoyment*.

### Figure 36 – Explanations provided for planning to leave the profession

Base: Those who provided a response (482)

Explanation	Number	%
Low salary/underpaid	123	25%
Workload/pressure	110	23%
Stress/burnout/fatigue	84	17%
Lack of job satisfaction/enjoyment	74	15%
Sales focus/commercial pressure	65	14%
Want to change career	65	13%
Patient attitudes/behaviours	44	9%
Undervalued profession	41	9%
Lack of support from employer	40	8%
Lack of support from GOC	37	8%
Poor regulation of profession	37	8%
Negative changes to the profession/job role	36	7%
Lack of progression/no future career	32	7%
CPD changes/demands	26	5%
Age/planning to retire	26	5%
Poor working conditions	24	5%
Ready for a change	20	4%
Dispensing opticians undervalued/unsupported	19	4%
Fear of litigation/FTP	15	3%
Long working hours	14	3%
Want more flexibility	12	2%
Over-regulation/bureaucracy	12	2%
Poor work-life balance	12	2%
High fees/registration cost	11	2%
Changes to training/apprenticeship	8	2%
Family/caring responsibilities	6	1%
Poor health	4	1%

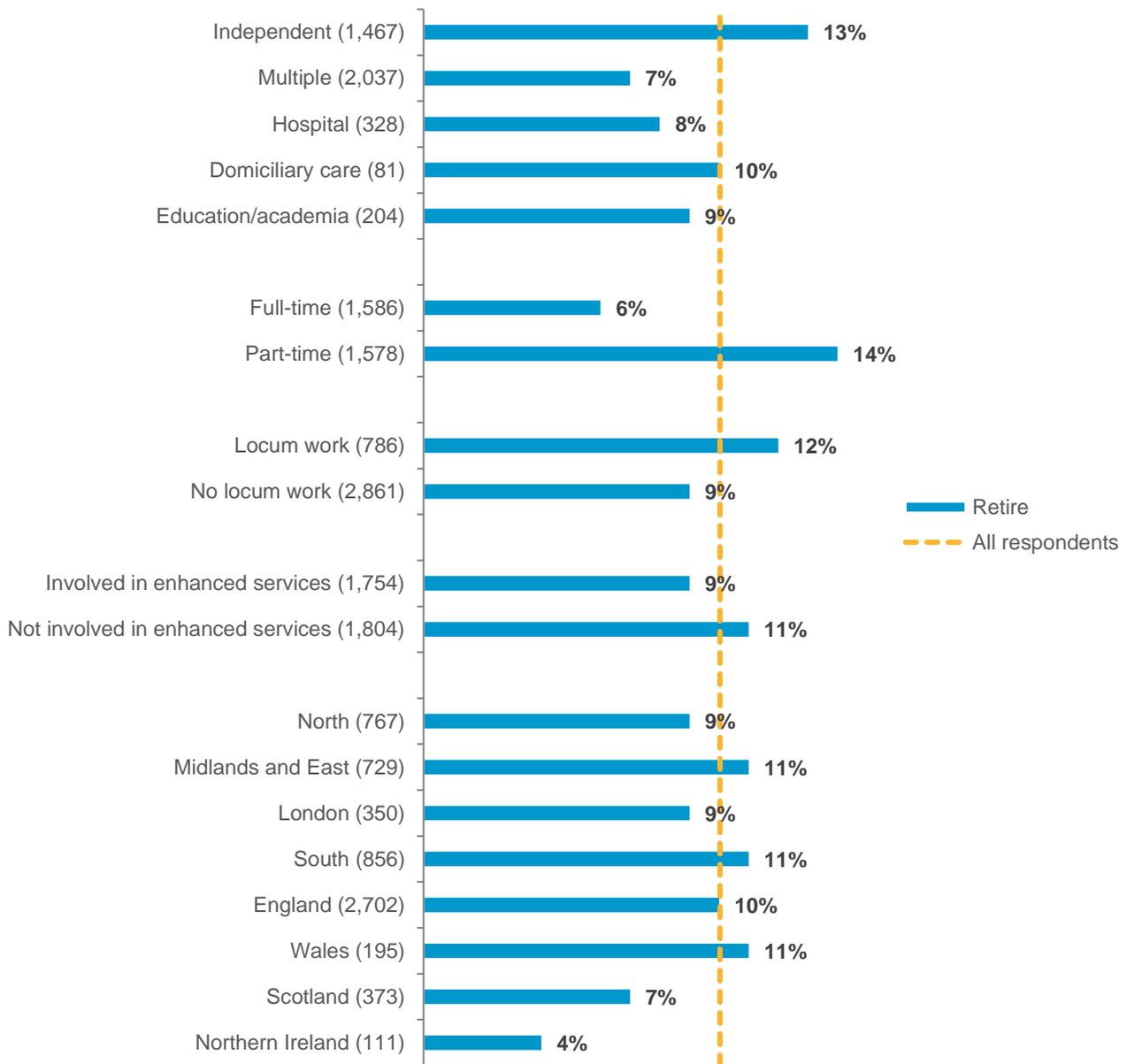


## Plans to retire

The chart below presents analysis of those who planned to retire during the next 12 to 24 months by workplace setting, working status, locum working, involvement in enhanced services, and location.

**Figure 37 – Plans to retire by workplace setting, working status, locum working, involvement in enhanced services, and location**

Base: shown in chart



Subgroups more likely to indicate that they planned to retire included those who:

- Worked for an independent opticians/sole practitioner (13%) when compared with those who worked for a multiple opticians (7%) or in a hospital (8%)
- Worked part-time (14%) when compared with those who worked full-time (6%)
- Worked as a locum (12%) when compared with those who did not (9%)
- Were not involved in enhanced services (11%) when compared with those who were (9%)

Equal proportions of optometrists and dispensing opticians indicated that they planned to retire (11%).

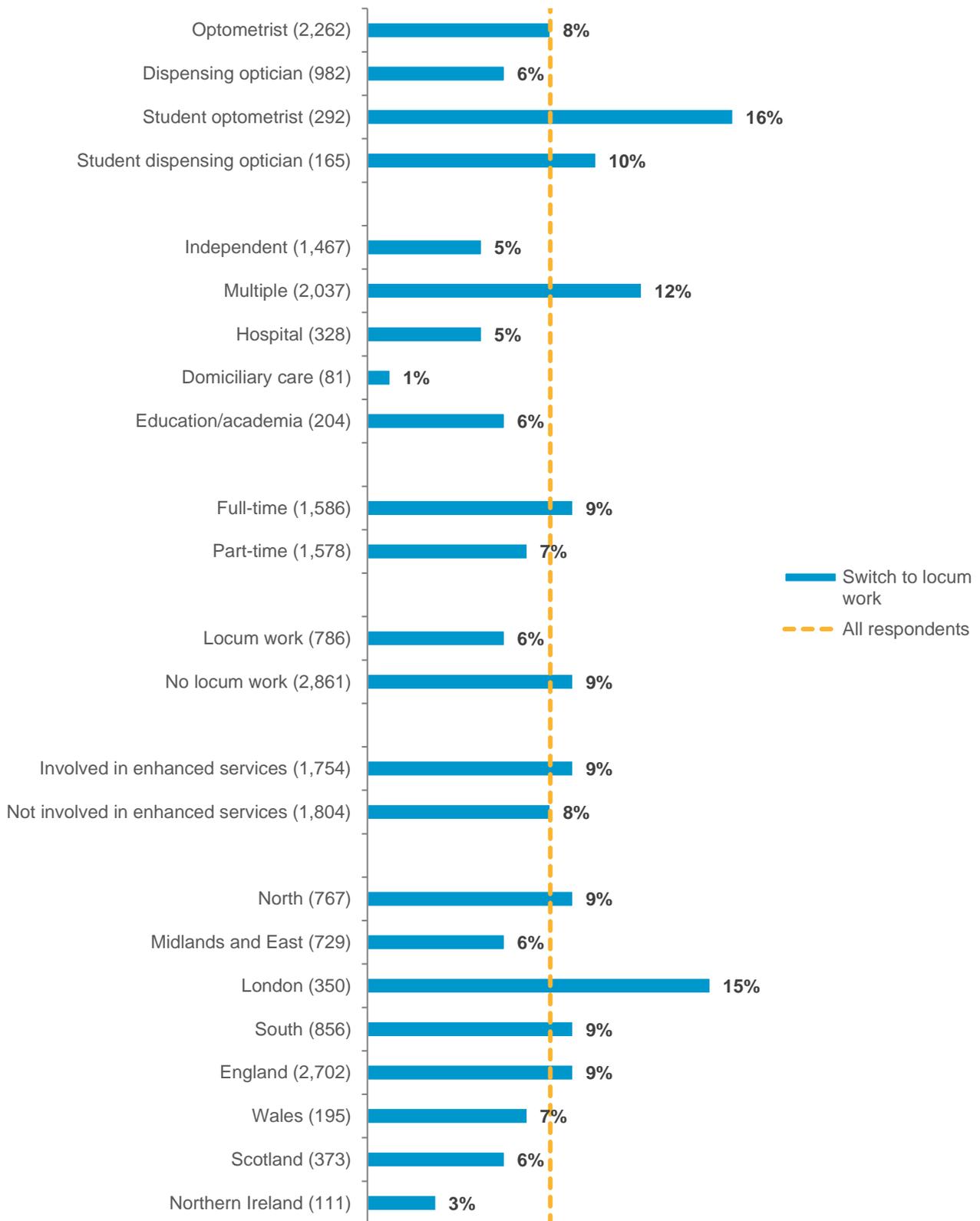


### Plans to switch to locum work

The chart below presents subgroup analysis of those who planned to switch to locum work during the next 12 to 24 months by registration type, workplace setting, working status, locum working, involvement in enhanced services, and location.

**Figure 38 – Plans to switch to locum work by registration type, workplace setting, working status, locum working, involvement in enhanced services, and location**

Base: shown in chart



Subgroups more likely to indicate that they planned to switch to locum work included those who:

- Were student optometrists (16%) when compared with optometrists (8%) and dispensing opticians (6%)
- Worked for a multiple opticians (12%) when compared with all other workplace settings
- Lived in London (15%) when compared with other locations

### Explanations provided

Respondents were asked to explain why they planned to switch to locum work over the next 12 to 24 months. Free-text responses have been thematically coded for analysis and are presented below.

The most commonly suggested explanations related to *more flexibility, being better paid, less stress/pressure/responsibility, and more independence/choice/control*.

#### Figure 39 – Explanations provided for planning to switch to locum work

Base: Those who provided a response (264)

Explanation	Number	%
More flexibility	103	39%
Better paid	102	39%
Less stress/pressure/responsibility	56	21%
More independence/control/choice	46	17%
Better hours/working pattern	37	14%
Better work-life balance	32	12%
Able to work less/take more time off	25	10%
More varied/interesting work	25	10%
Dislike/unhappy in current role	16	6%
Better treatment/working conditions	11	4%
Changing personal circumstances	6	2%
Approaching retirement	4	2%

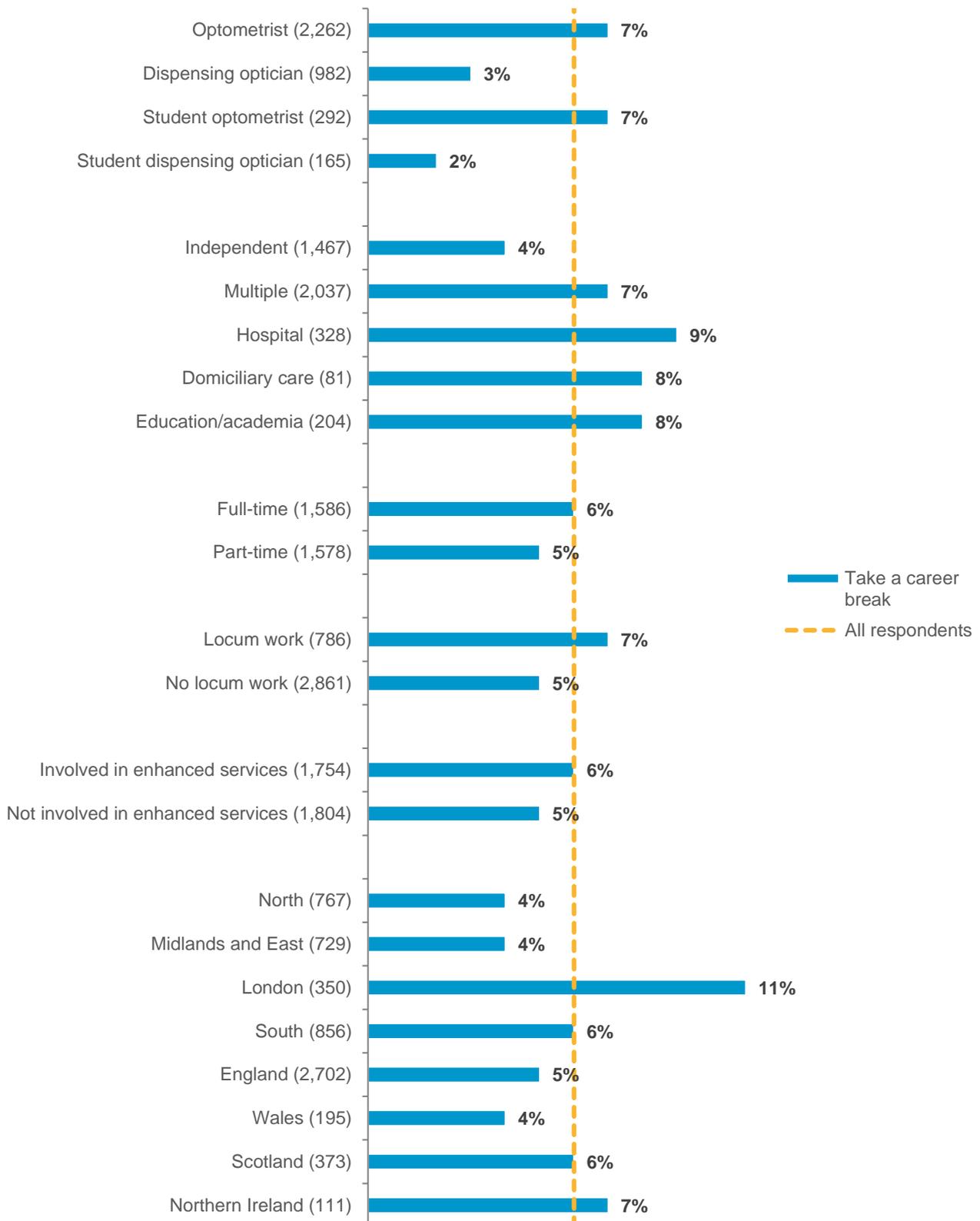


## Plans to take a career break

The chart below presents subgroup analysis of those who planned to take a career break during the next 12 to 24 months by registration type, workplace setting, working status, locum working, involvement in enhanced services, and location.

**Figure 40 – Plans to take a career break by registration type, workplace setting, working status, locum working, involvement in enhanced services, and location**

Base: shown in chart



Subgroups more likely to indicate that they planned to take a career break included those who:

- Were optometrists (7%) or student optometrists (7%) when compared with dispensing opticians (3%) and student dispensing opticians (2%)
- Worked for a multiple opticians (7%), in a hospital (9%), or in education/academia (8%) when compared with those who worked for an independent opticians/sole practitioner (4%)
- Worked as a locum (7%) when compared with those who did not (5%)
- Lived in London (11%) when compared with other locations

### Explanations provided

Respondents were asked to explain why they planned to take a career break over the next 12 to 24 months. Free-text responses have been thematically coded for analysis and are presented below.

The most commonly suggested explanations related to *stress/burnout/fatigue*, *assessing career/exploring new options*, and *workload/pressures/targets*.

#### Figure 41 – Explanations provided for planning to take a career break

Base: Those who provided a response (168)

Explanation	Number	%
Stress/burnout/fatigue	52	31%
Assessing career/exploring new options	36	21%
Workload/pressure/targets	28	17%
Need a break/to relax/to recharge	23	13%
Lost enthusiasm/disillusioned with profession	21	13%
Low salary/underpaid	14	9%
Want a change/to pursue other interests	14	9%
Aiming to improve work-life balance	14	9%
Feeling undervalued	10	6%
Poor working conditions	10	6%
Lack of support from GOC	9	5%
Family/caring responsibilities	7	4%
Want to travel	6	4%
Health condition/recovery from illness	5	3%
Pregnancy/maternity leave	5	3%
To gain extra qualifications/skills	4	2%
Want to start a family	3	2%
Personal reasons/other commitments	2	1%



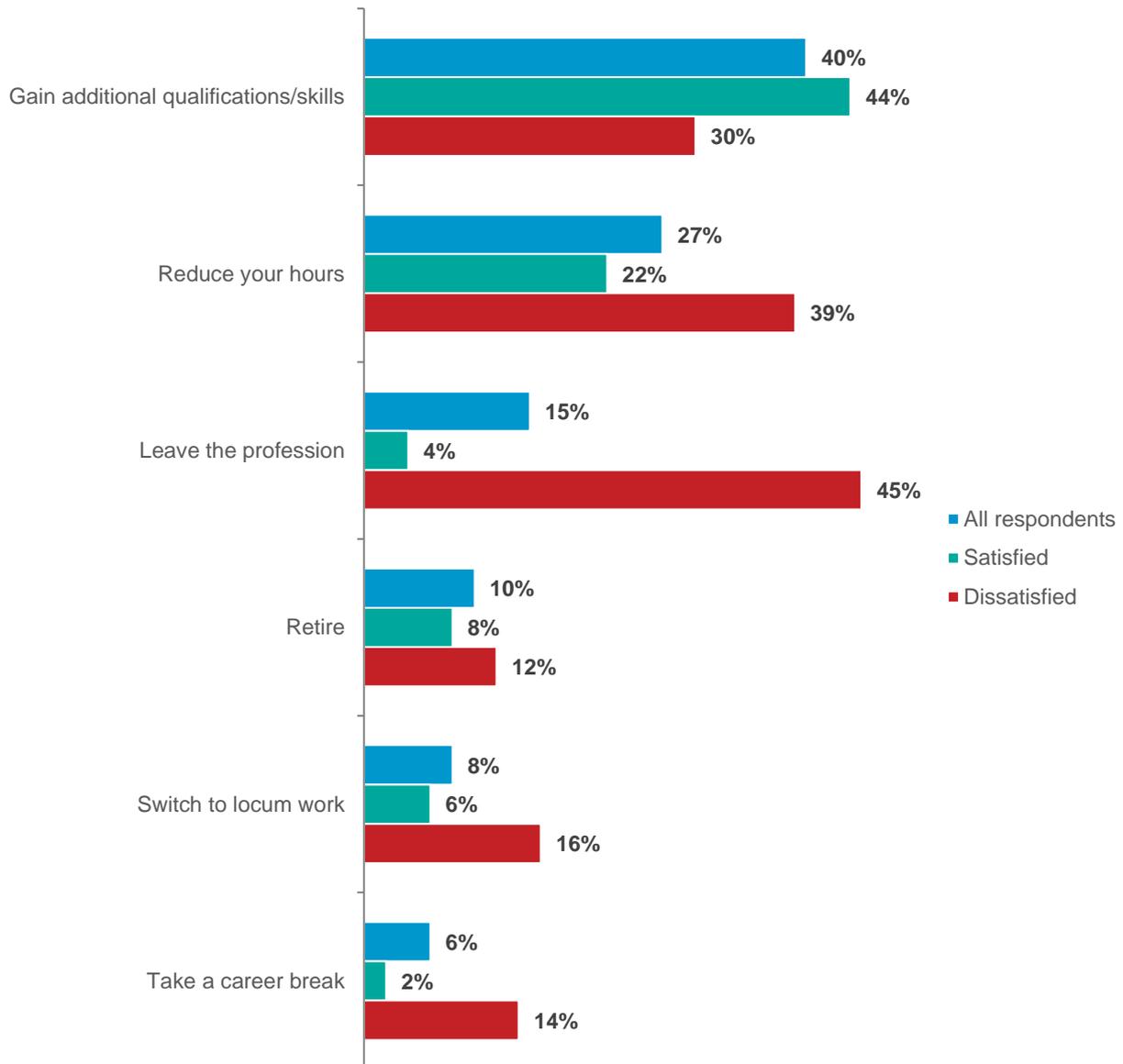
## Analysing future plans by job satisfaction

Respondents' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their current role or job over the last 12 months has an impact on their future career plans for the next 12-24 months. As shown in the chart below, those who were satisfied with their role/job were more likely to plan to *gain additional qualifications/skills* (44%) when compared with those who were dissatisfied (30%).

Conversely, those who were dissatisfied were more likely to plan to *reduce their hours* (39%), *leave the profession* (45%), *retire* (12%), *switch to locum work* (16%), and *take a career break* (14%), when compared with those who were satisfied (22%, 4%, 8%, 6%, and 2% respectively).

**Figure 42 – Future plans by role/job satisfaction**

Base: All respondents excluding those fully retired (3,647); satisfied (2,246); dissatisfied (772)



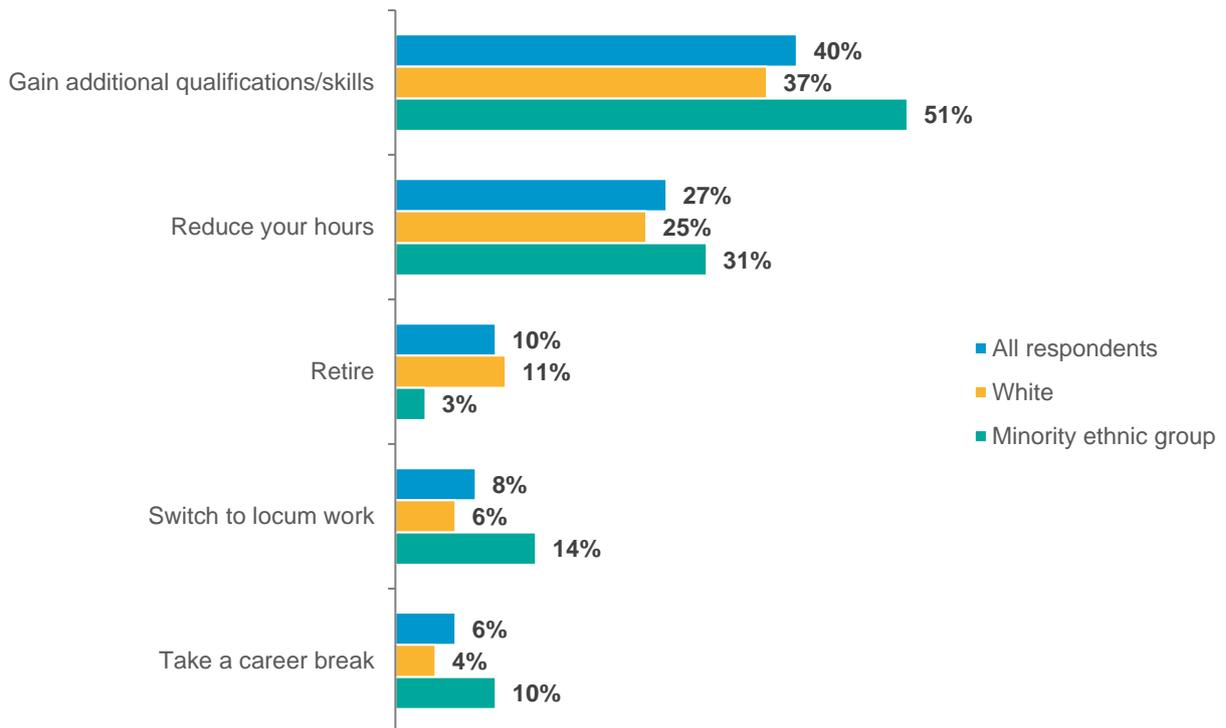
## Analysing future plans by demographics

**Analysis by gender** highlights that a larger proportion of female respondents planned to *gain additional qualifications/skills* (43%) when compared with male respondents (35%), whereas a larger proportion of male respondents planned to *retire* (13%) when compared with female respondents (7%).

**Analysis by ethnicity** highlights that respondents from minority ethnic groups were more likely to indicate that they planned to *gain additional qualifications/skills* (51%), *reduce their hours* (31%), *switch to locum work* (14%), and *take a career break* (10%) when compared with those of White ethnicity. A larger proportion of those of White ethnicity said they planned to *retire* (11%) when compared with those from minority ethnic groups (3%).

### Figure 43 – Future plans by ethnicity

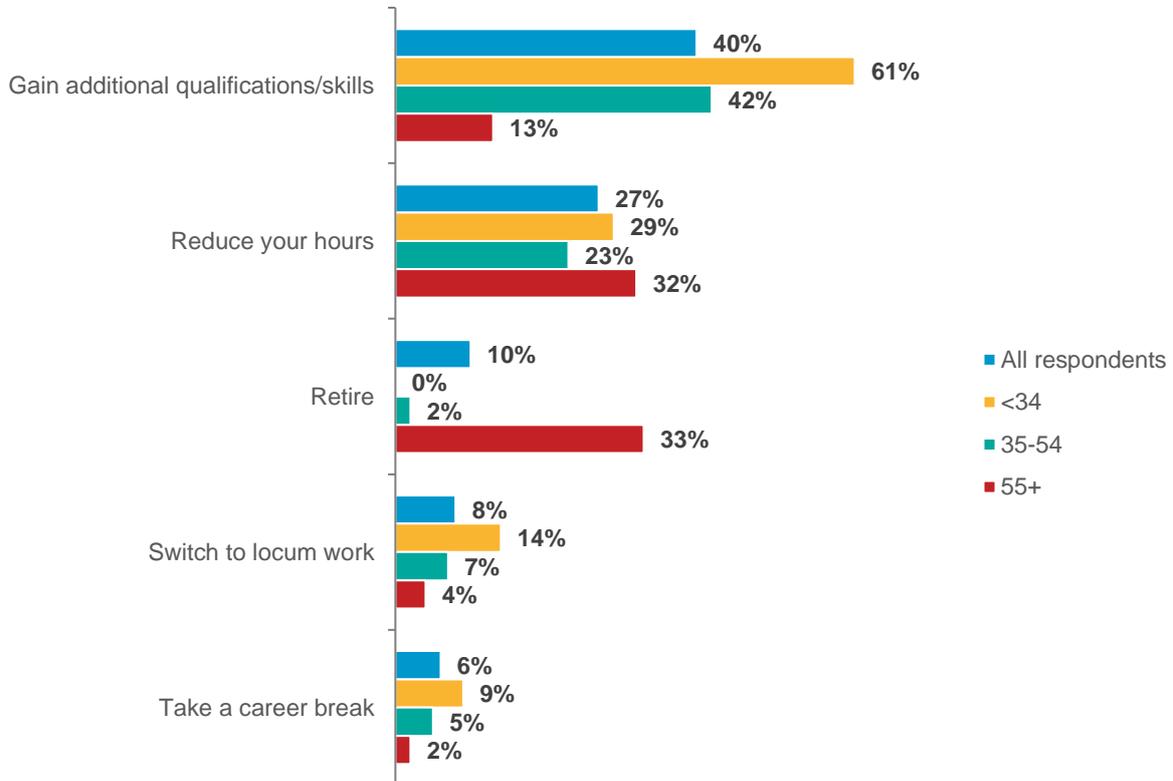
Base: All respondents excluding those fully retired (3,647); White (2,409); minority ethnic group (865)



**Analysis by age group** highlights that respondents aged <34 and 35-54 were more likely to indicate that they planned to *gain additional qualifications/skills* (61% and 42% respectively) when compared to those aged 55+ (13%). Those from the youngest age group of <34 were also more likely to state that they planned to *switch to locum work* (14%) and *take a career break* (9%) when compared with older respondents. As could be expected, larger proportions of those aged 55+ said they planned to *retire* (33%) or *reduce their hours* (32%).

**Figure 44 – Future plans by age group**

Base: All respondents excluding those fully retired (3,647); Aged <34 (998); 35-54 (1,636); 55+ (881)



## Perspectives of the General Optical Council

### Meeting strategic objectives

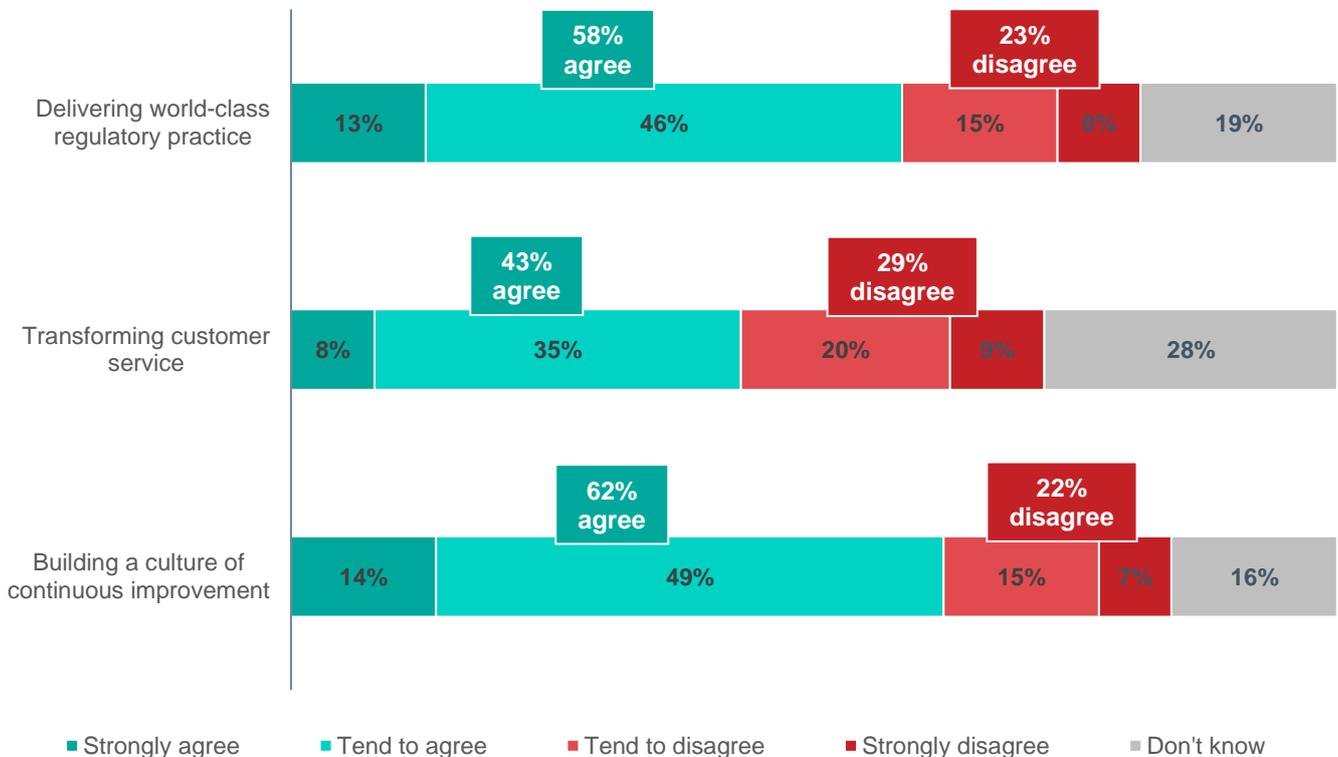
Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that the GOC is meeting its three strategic objectives set out in its Strategic Plan 2020-25.

Almost two thirds agreed that the GOC is *building a culture of continuous development* (62%), followed by 58% who agreed that it is *delivering world-class regulatory practice*. Less than half of respondents agreed that the GOC is *transforming customer service* (43%).

Large proportions of respondents indicated that they did not know whether the GOC was meeting the strategic objectives of *transforming customer service* (28%) and *delivering world-class regulatory practice* (19%), which may explain why agreement with these objectives is lower.

**Figure 45 – For each of the aims below, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the GOC is meeting its three strategic objectives outlined in its Strategic Plan 2020-25?**

Base: All respondents (4,102)



### 2021/2022 comparison

When compared with the 2021 survey results, although levels of agreement for each objective have decreased slightly, rather than levels of disagreement increasing, the proportion of respondents who answered ‘don’t know’ has grown.

**Figure 46 – Perspectives of the GOC – 2021/2022 comparison (% agree)**

Base: All respondents 2021 (4,880); 2022 (4,102)

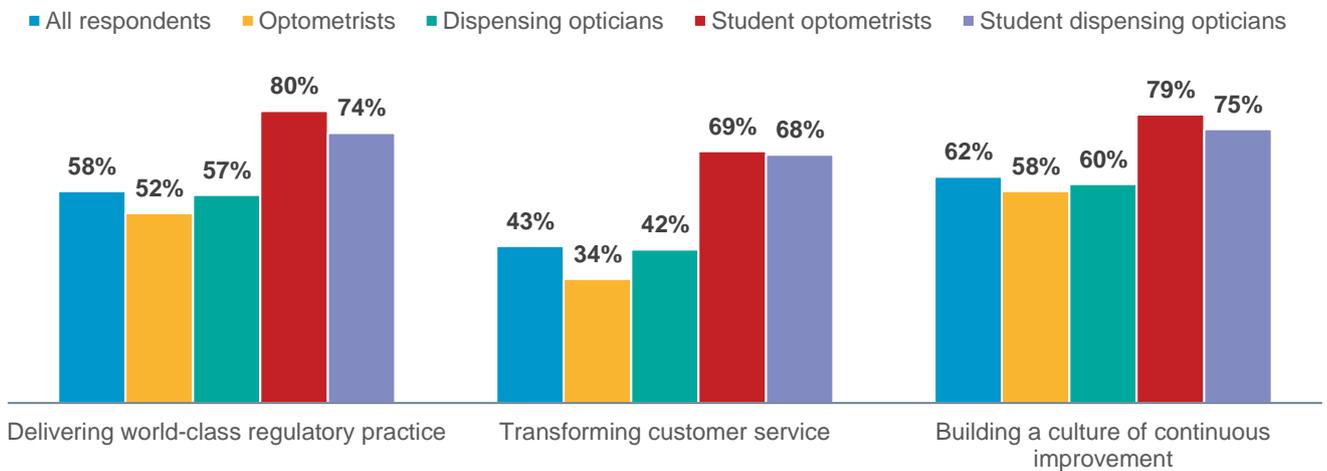
Strategic objective	Response	2021	2022	Difference
Delivering world-class regulatory practice	Agree	62%	58%	-4
	Disagree	26%	23%	-3
	Don't know	12%	19%	+7



Strategic objective	Response	2021	2022	Difference
Transforming customer service	Agree	49%	43%	-6
	Disagree	30%	29%	-1
	Don't know	21%	28%	+7
Building a culture of continuous improvement	Agree	65%	62%	-3
	Disagree	24%	22%	-2
	Don't know	11%	16%	+5

**Analysis by registration type** highlights that student optometrists and student dispensing opticians were more likely to agree that the GOC is meeting all three of its strategic objectives when compared with optometrists and dispensing opticians.

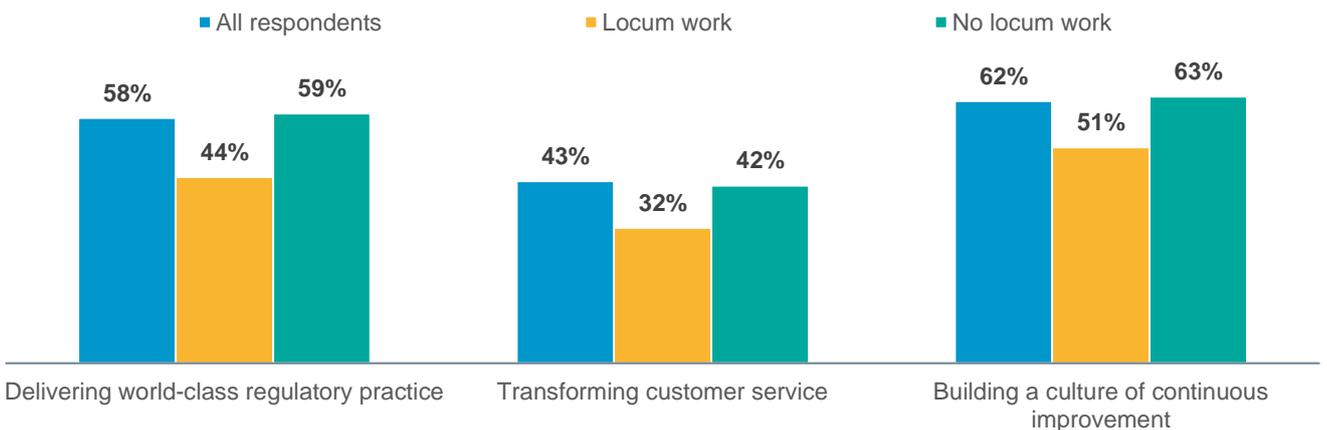
**Figure 47 – Agreement that the GOC is meeting its strategic objectives by registration type**  
 Base: All respondents (4,102); optometrist (2,334); dispensing optician (1,009); student optometrist (644); student dispensing optician (180)



Linked to registration type, a similar pattern can be seen when looking at **age and length of time on the GOC register**, where younger respondents (<35) and those who had been on the register for a shorter length of time (<5 years) were more likely to agree that the GOC is meeting its strategic objectives.

**Analysis by locum working** shows that those who did no locum work were more likely to agree that the GOC is meeting its strategic objectives when compared with those who worked as locums.

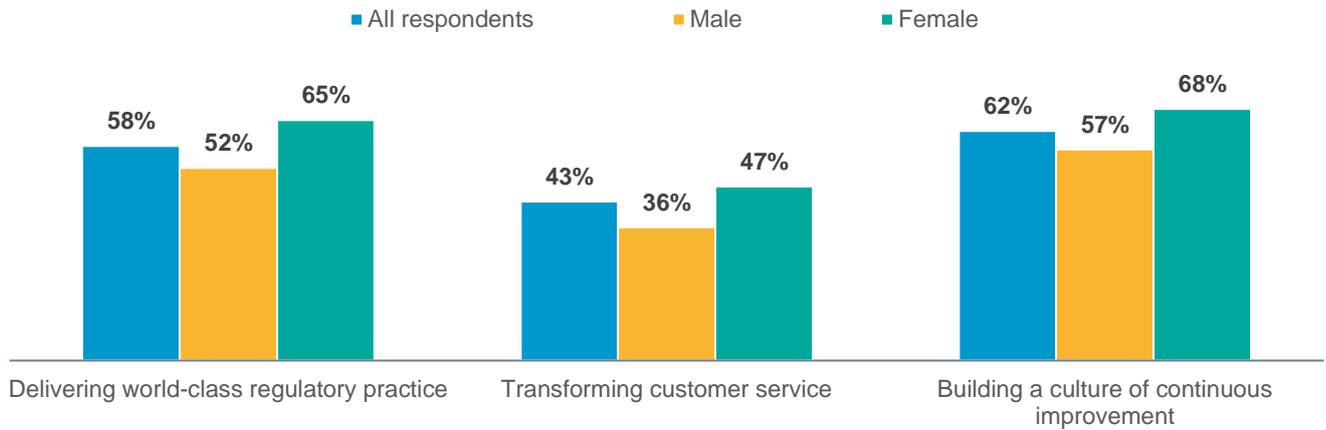
**Figure 48 – Agreement that the GOC is meeting its strategic objectives by locum working**  
 Base: All respondents (4,102); locum work (784); no locum work (2,844)



**Analysis by gender** highlights that female respondents were more likely to agree that the GOC is meeting its strategic objectives when compared with male respondents.

**Figure 49 – Agreement that the GOC is meeting its strategic objectives by gender**

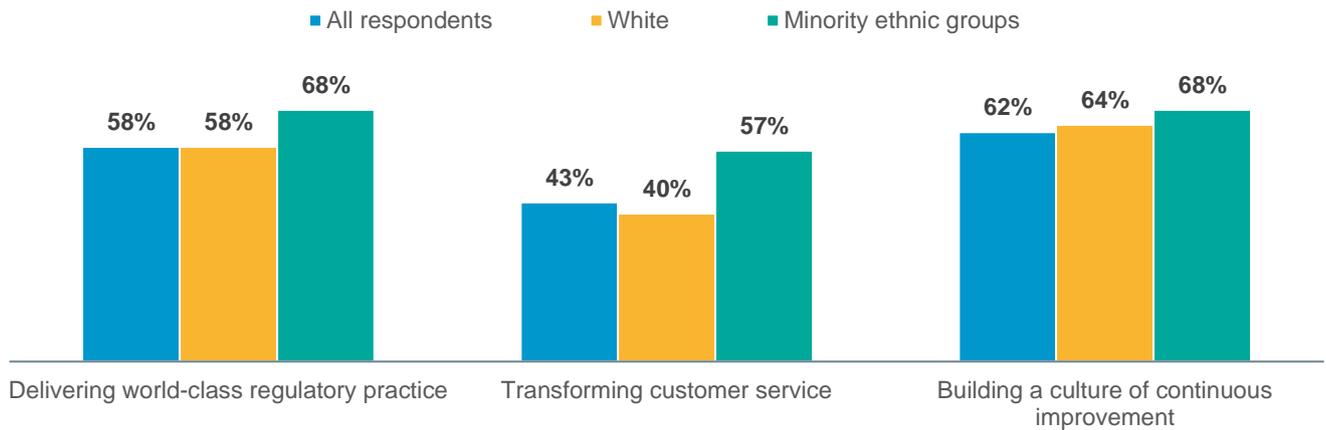
Base: All respondents (4,102); male (1,325); female (2,537)



**Analysis by ethnicity** highlights that those from minority ethnic groups were more likely to agree that the GOC is meeting its strategic objectives when compared with those of White ethnicity.

**Figure 50 – Agreement that the GOC is meeting its strategic objectives by ethnicity**

Base: All respondents (4,102); White (2,543); minority ethnic groups (1,149)



## The roles and responsibilities of the GOC

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the GOC. The largest level of agreement was recorded in response to the statement *the GOC sets fair standards for the profession* (76%), followed by 71% who agreed that *the GOC ensures the quality of optical education* (74%).

Two thirds of respondents agreed that *the GOC promotes equality, diversity and inclusion in its work* (66%), but a large proportion answered ‘don’t know’ (27%).

Agreement was much lower for the statement *the GOC charges registration fees which are reasonable* (49%), to which almost the same proportion disagreed (43%).

Whilst only 40% agreed that *the GOC is fair to registrants when taking action through fitness to practise*, almost half answered that they did not know in response to this statement (45%), a much larger proportion when compared with the other statements.

**Figure 51 – For each of the following statements please say to what extent you agree or disagree**  
 Base: All respondents (4,102)



### 2021/2022 comparison

There is mostly consistency when comparing this year’s results with those collected in 2021, with only small increases and decreases recorded. The most noticeable difference can be seen where the level of agreement that *the GOC is fair to registrants when taking action through the fitness to practise process* has fallen from 46% to 40% (-6 percentage points), and the proportion who answered ‘don’t know’ has increased from 36% to 45% (+9 percentage points).

**Figure 52 – Perspectives of the GOC – 2021/2021 comparison (% agree)**

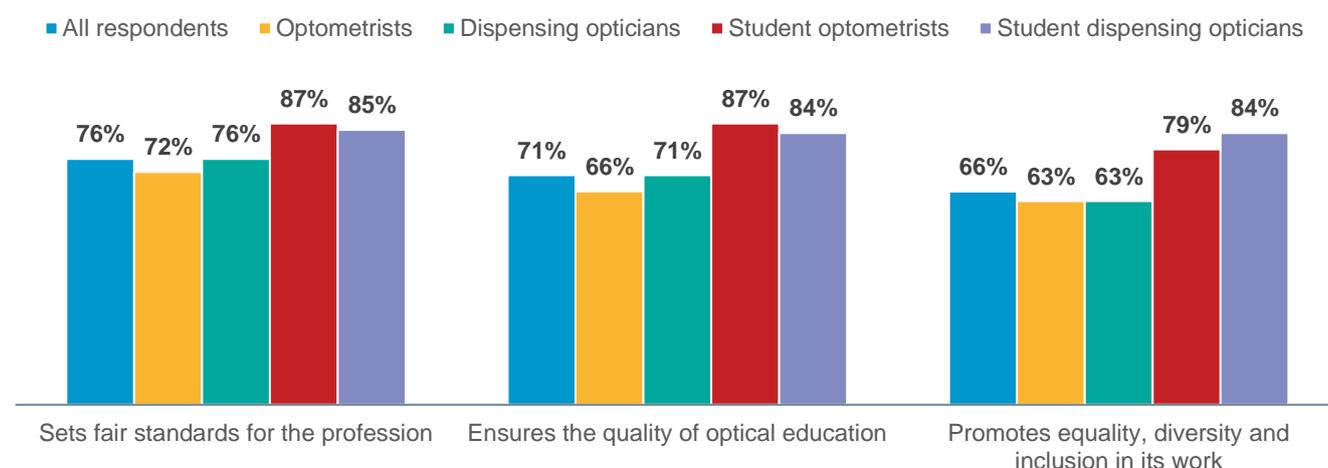
Base: All respondents 2021 (4,880); 2022 (4,102)

Statement	Response	2021	2022	Difference
The GOC sets fair standards for the profession	Agree	77%	76%	-1
	Disagree	18%	17%	-1
	Don’t know	5%	7%	+2
The GOC ensures the quality of optical education	Agree	74%	71%	-3
	Disagree	21%	21%	-
	Don’t know	5%	8%	+3
The GOC charges registration fees which are reasonable	Agree	48%	49%	+1
	Disagree	46%	43%	-3
	Don’t know	6%	8%	+2
The GOC is fair to registrants when taking action through the fitness to practise process	Agree	46%	40%	-6
	Disagree	18%	15%	-3
	Don’t know	36%	45%	+9

**Analysis by registration type** highlights that dispensing opticians were more likely to agree that the GOC *sets fair standards for the profession* (76%) and *ensures the quality of optical education* (71%) when compared with optometrists (72% and 66% respectively). However, larger proportions of student optometrists and student dispensing opticians agreed with both these statements, as well as *the GOC promotes equality, diversity and inclusion in its work* when compared with both optometrists and dispensing opticians.

**Figure 53 – Agreement that the GOC sets fair standards for the profession / ensures the quality of optical education / promotes equality, diversity and inclusion in its work by registration type**

Base: All respondents (4,102); optometrist (2,334); dispensing optician (1,009); student optometrist (644); student dispensing optician (180)



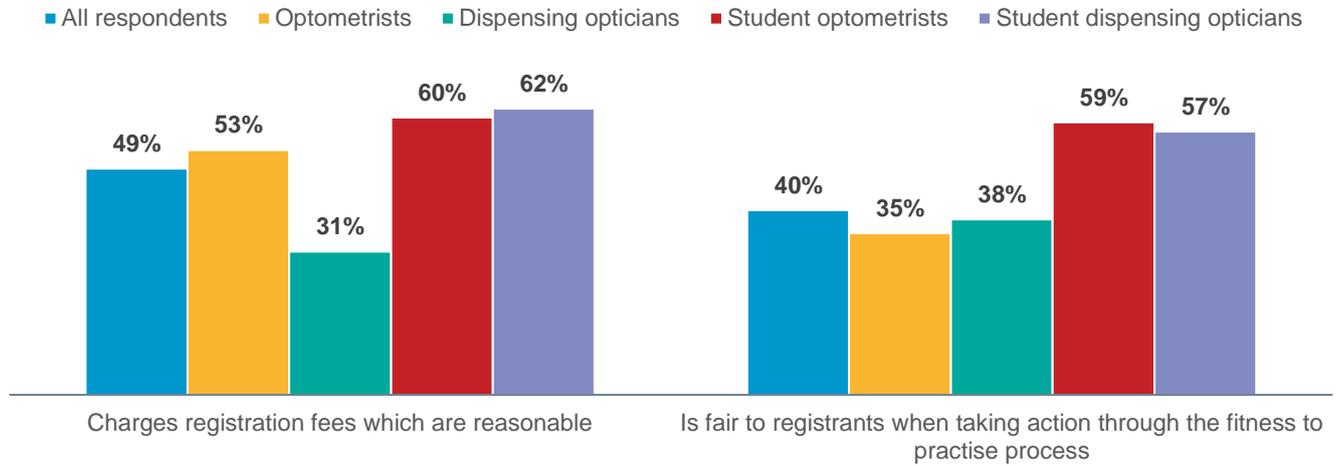
Dispensing opticians were much less likely to agree that *the GOC charges registration fees which are reasonable* (31%) when compared with all other registration types. Optometrists and dispensing opticians were less likely to agree that *the GOC is fair to registrants when taking action through the*



fitness to practise process (35% and 38% respectively), when compared with student optometrists (59%) and student dispensing opticians (57%).

**Figure 54 – Agreement that the GOC charges registration fees which are reasonable / is fair to registrants when taking action through the fitness to practise process by registration type**

Base: All respondents (4,102); optometrist (2,334); dispensing optician (1,009); student optometrist (644); student dispensing optician (180)



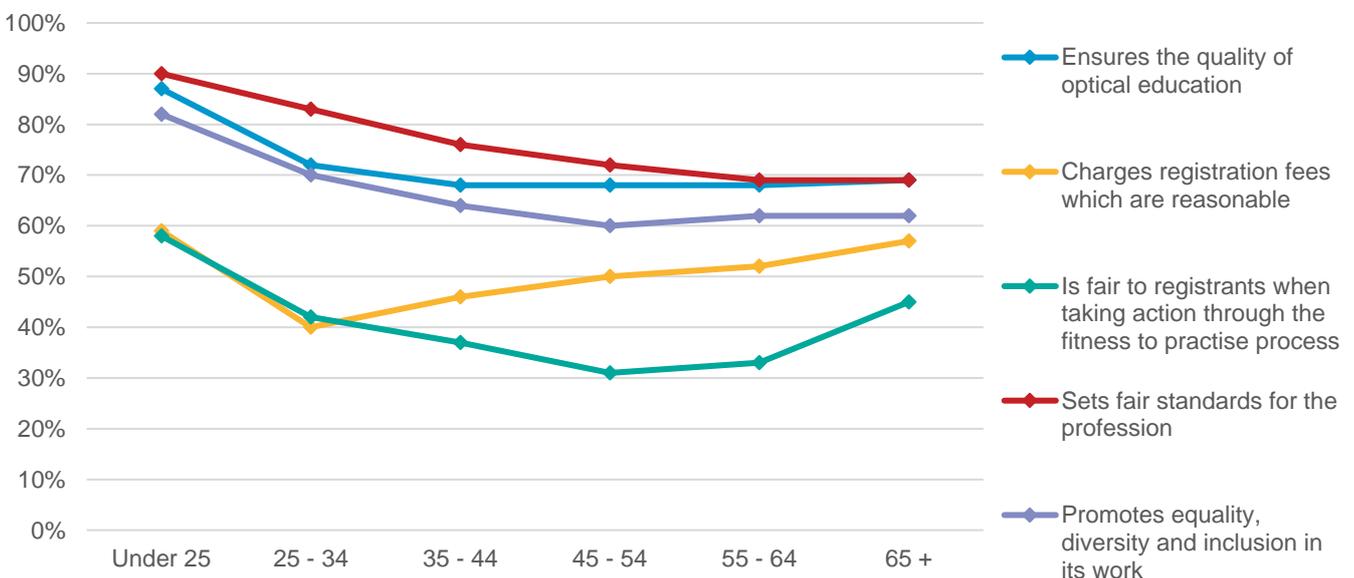
Subgroups more likely to disagree that the GOC charges registration fees which are reasonable (43% overall) included:

- Dispensing opticians (63%) when compared with other registration types
- Those who worked full-time (46%) when compared with those who worked part-time (42%)
- Those who worked as locums (50%) when compared with those who did not (43%)

**Analysis by age group** shows that younger respondents are more likely to agree with each statement about the GOC, particularly that the GOC ensures the quality of optical education, when compared with older respondents. Those aged 25-34 were less likely to agree that the GOC charges registration fees which are reasonable when compared with other age groups, as were those aged 43-54 and 55-64 in response to the statement that the GOC is fair to registrants when taking action through the fitness to practise process.

**Figure 55 – Agreement with statements about the GOC’s roles and responsibilities by age group**

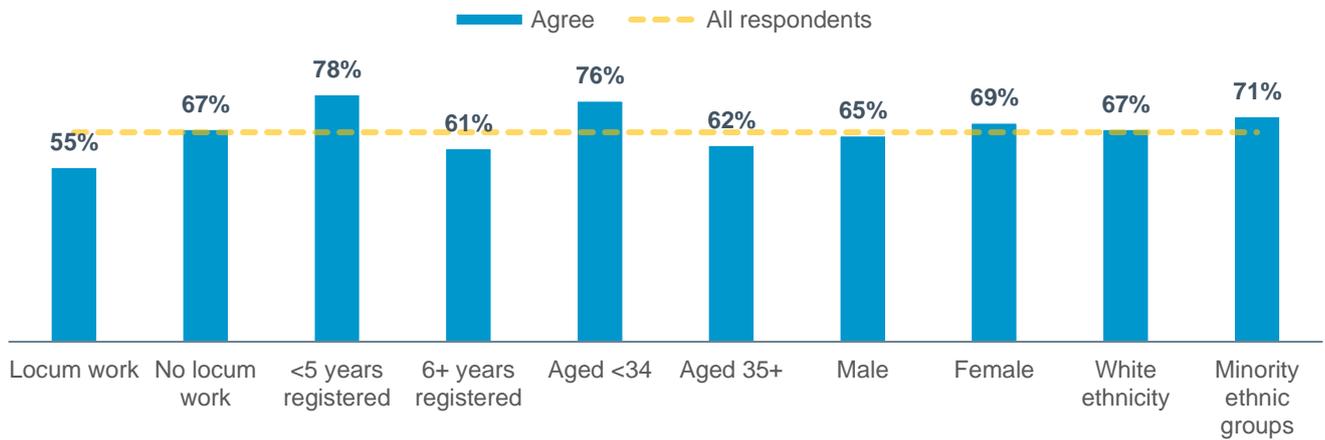
Base: Under 25 (548); 25-34 (803); 35-44 (922); 45-54 (757); 55-64 (723); 65+ (205)



The statement *the GOC promotes equality, diversity and inclusion in its work* was a new addition to the 2022 survey. In addition to dispensing opticians, those who did no locum work, newer registrants with under five years on the GOC register, younger respondents, female respondents, and those from minority ethnic groups were more likely to agree with this statement.

**Figure 56 – Agreement that the GOC promotes equality, diversity and inclusion by locum working, length of registration, age, gender, and ethnicity (% agree)**

Base: Locum work (786); no locum work (2,861); <5 years registered (1,199); 6+ years registered (2,889); aged <34 (1,352); aged 35+ (2,607); male (1,325); female (2,537); White ethnicity (2,543); Minority ethnic groups (1,149)



## Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

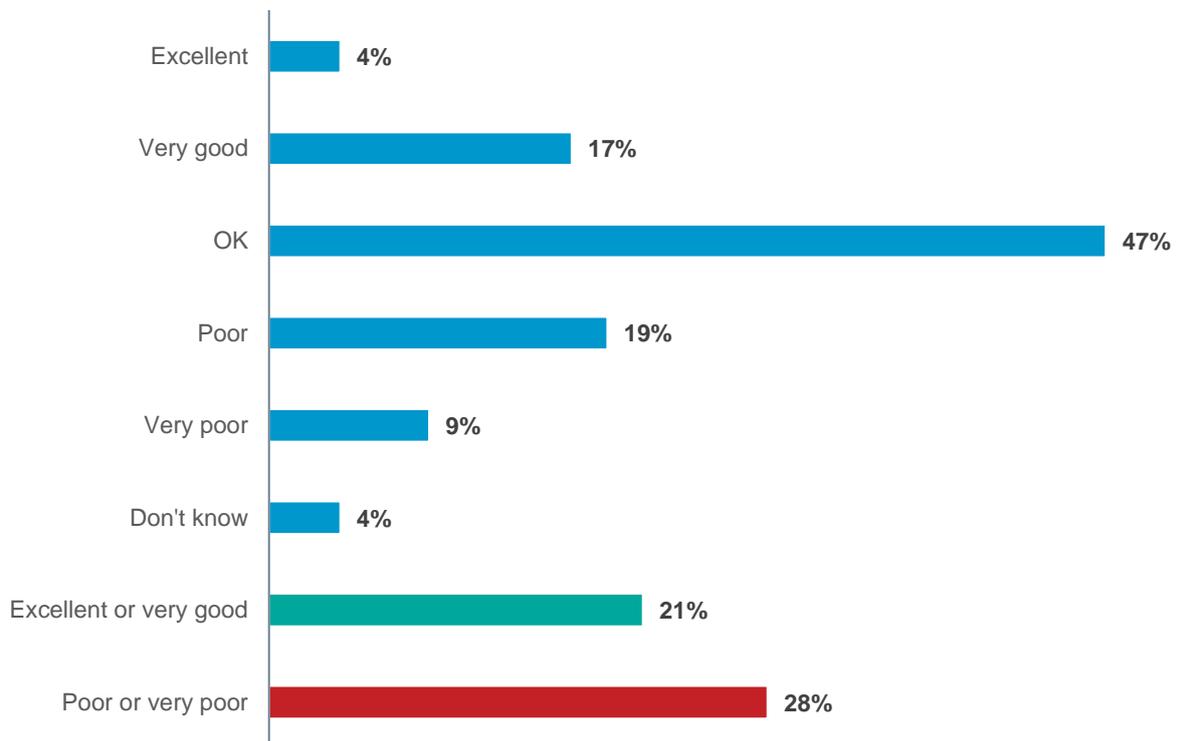
### Understanding the requirements of the new scheme

On 1 January 2022, the GOC changed to a system of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), with new requirements for registrants.

Almost half of optometrist and dispensing optician respondents rated their understanding of the requirements of the new CPD scheme as *OK* (47%). In total, 21% rated their understanding as *very good* or *excellent*, but a slightly larger proportion rated their understanding as *poor* or *very poor* (28%).

**Figure 57 – How would you rate your understanding of the requirements of the new CPD scheme?**

Base: Optometrists and dispensing opticians (3,335)



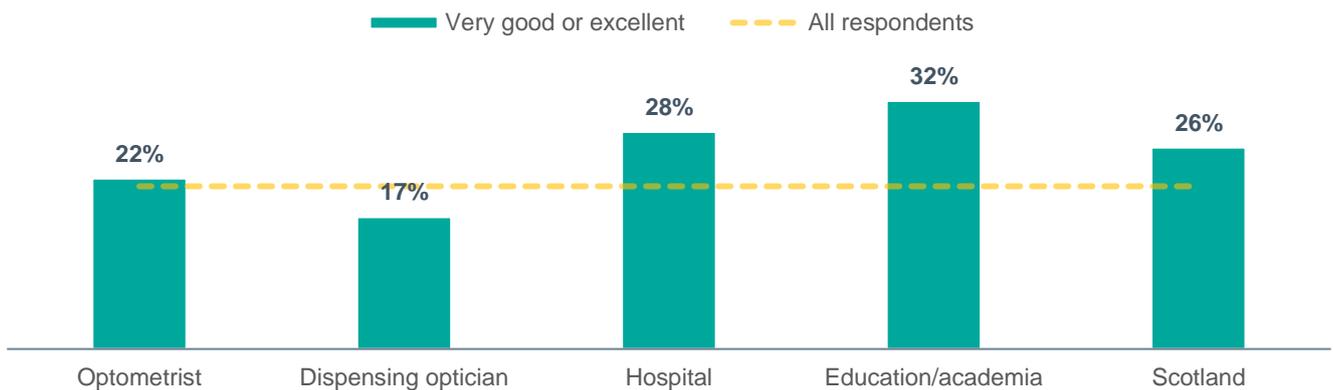
**Analysis by registration type** shows that optometrists were more likely to rate their understanding as *very good or excellent* (22%) when compared with dispensing opticians (17%).

**Analysis by workplace setting** shows that those who worked in a hospital or in education/academia were more likely to rate their understanding as *very good or excellent* (28% and 32% respectively) when compared with other workplace settings.

**Analysis by location** shows that those in Scotland were more likely to rate their understanding as *very good or excellent* (26%) when compared with other UK devolved nations.

**Figure 58 – Rating understanding of the Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians as very good or excellent by working status and workplace setting**

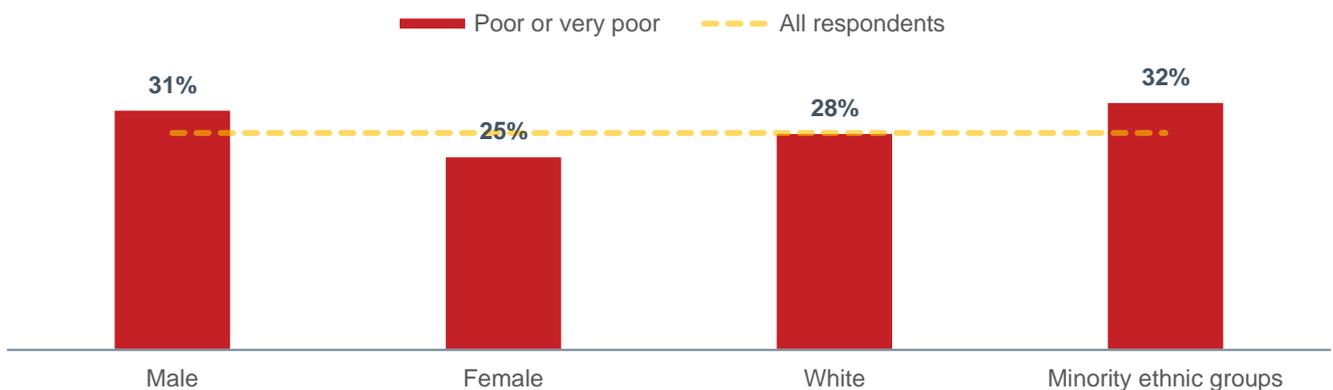
Base: Optometrist (2,334); dispensing optician (1,009); hospital (326); education/academic (198); Scotland (345)



**Analysis by demographics** shows that male respondents were more likely to rate their understanding as *poor or very poor* (31%) when compared with female respondents (25%), as were those from minority ethnic groups (32%) when compared with those of White ethnicity (28%).

**Figure 59 – Rating understanding of the Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians as poor or very poor by gender and ethnicity**

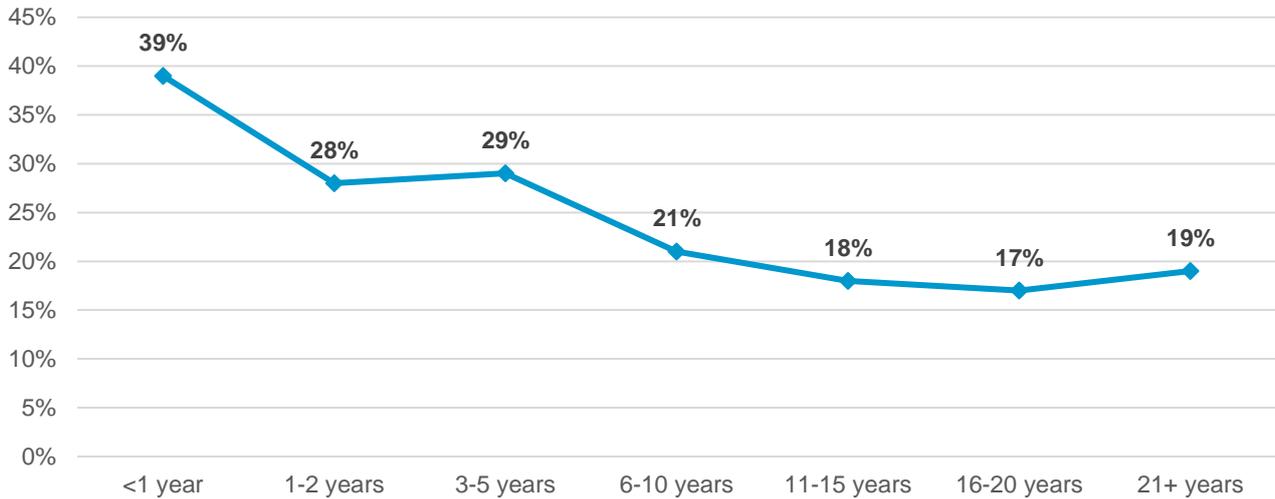
Base: Male (1,129); female (1,996); White (2,293); minority ethnic groups (696)



**Analysis by length of time on the GOC register** highlights a clear trend, where the proportion of those who rate their understanding as *very good* or *excellent* falls steadily from 39% for those who had been on the register for less than a year to 17% for those who have been on the register for 16 to 20 years.

**Figure 60 – Rating understanding of the requirements of the new CPD scheme by length of time on the register**

Base: <1 year (77); 1-2 years (88); 3-5 years (305); 6-10 years (397); 11-15 years (471); 16-20 years (436); 21+ years (1,554)

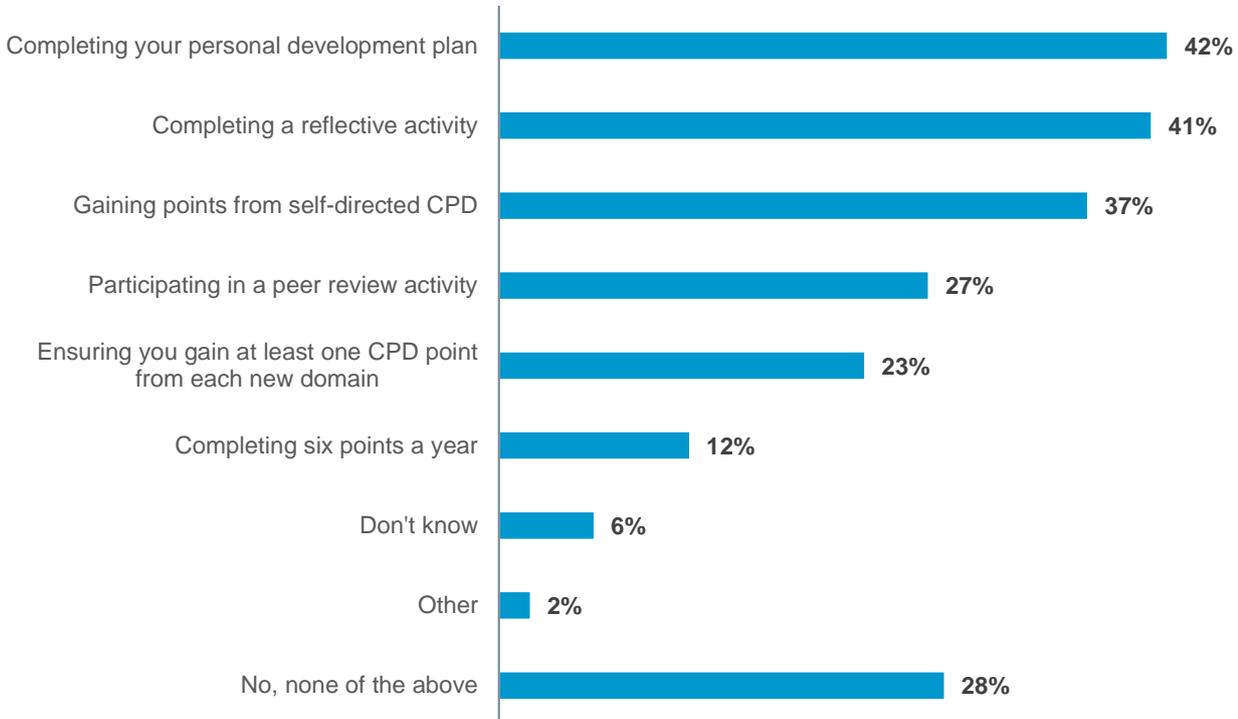


## Further information

Information around *completing your personal development plan* (42%), *completing a reflective activity* (41%), and *gaining points from self-directed CPD* (37%) were the most popular suggestions for further information to help understand CPD requirements. Over a quarter said they did not want any further information (28%).

**Figure 61 – Would you like further information in any of the following areas to help you understand your CPD requirements?**

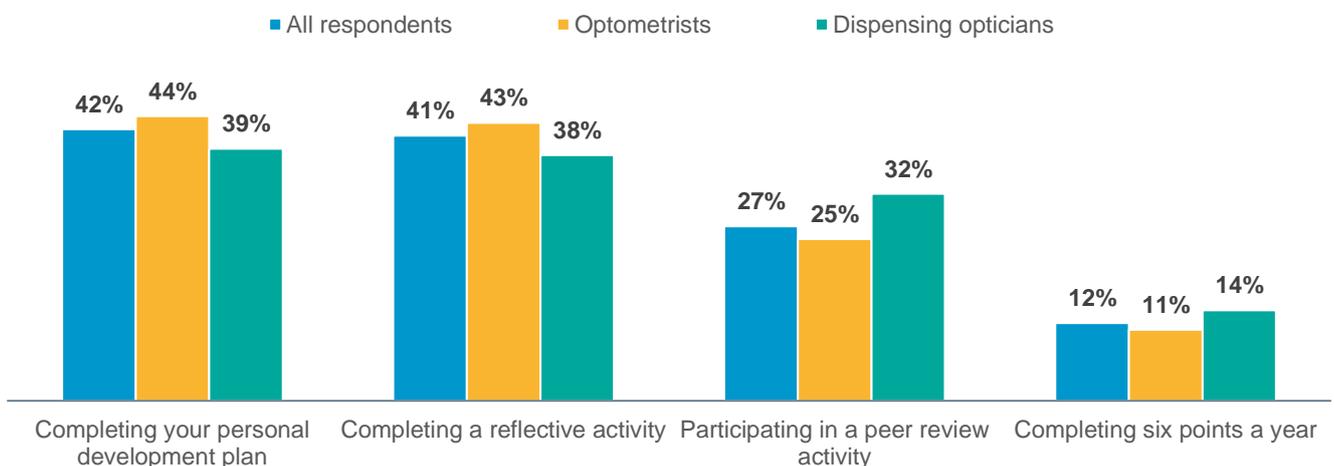
Base: Optometrists and dispensing opticians (3,335)



**Analysis by registration type** shows that optometrists were more likely to select information in *completing your personal development plan* and *completing a reflective activity* when compared with dispensing opticians. Conversely, larger proportions of dispensing opticians selected *participating in a peer review activity* and *completing six points a year* when compared with optometrists.

**Figure 62 – Suggestions for further information to help understand CPD requirements by registration type**

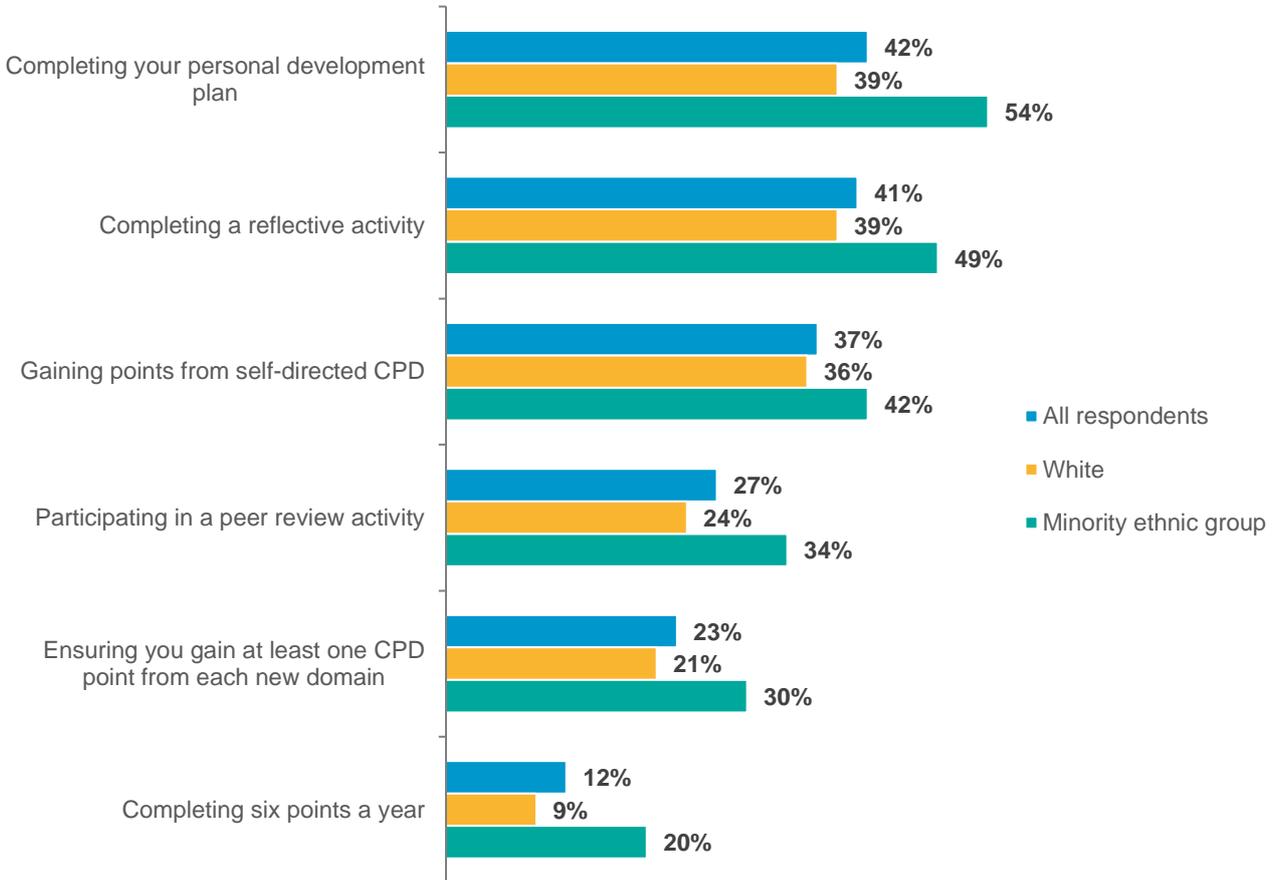
Base: All respondents (3,335); optometrist (2,334); dispensing optician (1,009)



**Analysis by ethnicity** highlights respondents from minority ethnic groups were more likely to indicate that they would like all options for further information to help understand the CPD requirements when compared with respondents of White ethnicity.

**Figure 63 – Suggestions for further information to help understand CPD requirements by ethnicity**

Base: All respondents (3,335); White (2,239); minority ethnic group (696)



## Communication

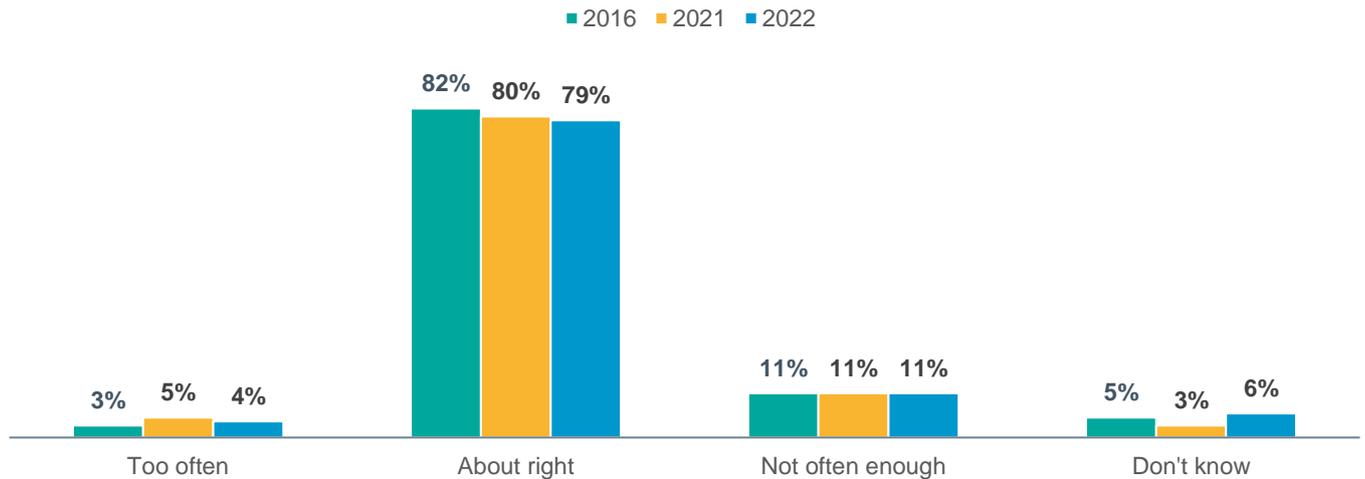
### Frequency of communication

The vast majority of respondents described the frequency of communication from the GOC as *about right* (79%). One in nine felt that the frequency was *not enough* (11%), and just 6% that it was *too often*.

This year’s results continue to show general consistency with previous years, with only minimal changes noted.

**Figure 64 – How would you describe the frequency that the GOC communicates with you?**

Base: All respondents – 2016 (4,139); 2021 (4,880); 2022 (4,102)



**Analysis by registration type** highlights that a larger proportion of dispensing opticians said they thought the frequency of communication was *not often enough* (13%) when compared with optometrists (9%).

**Analysis by ethnicity** highlights that a larger proportion of those from minority ethnic groups said they thought the frequency of communication was *not often enough* (13%) when compared with those of White ethnicity (9%).

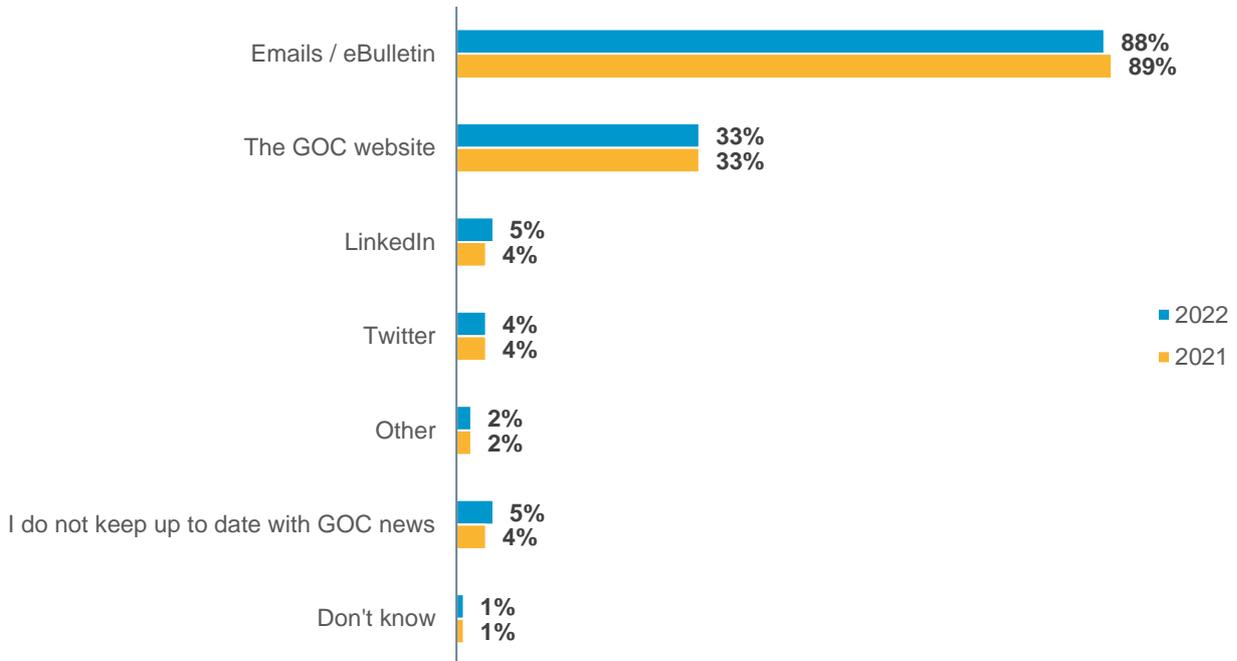


## Keeping up to date

By far the most popular way of keeping up to date with GOC news was via emails/eBulletin (88%). A third suggested that they kept up to date via the GOC website (33%). Smaller proportions said that they kept up to date via LinkedIn (5%) and Twitter (4%). Just 5% said that they do not keep up to date with GOC news. Results from this year are very similar to last year.

**Figure 65 – How do you keep up to date with GOC news?**

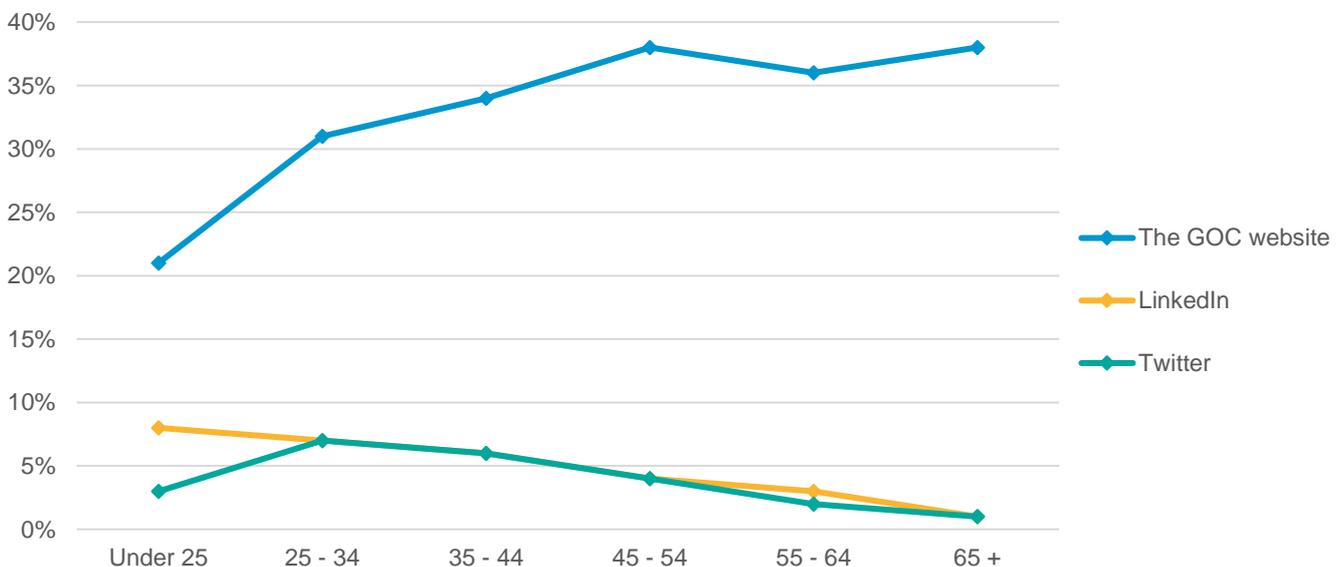
Base: All respondents (4,880)



**Analysis by age group** shows that use of the GOC website to keep up to date with GOC news increases with age, from 21% for those aged under 25 to 38% for those aged 65+. Although still low, keeping up to date via LinkedIn and Twitter is more commonplace amongst younger age groups, particularly when compared with those aged 55+.

**Figure 66 – Keeping up to date with GOC news by age group**

Base: Under 25 (548); 25-34 (803); 35-44 (922); 45-54 (757); 55-64 (723); 65+ (205)

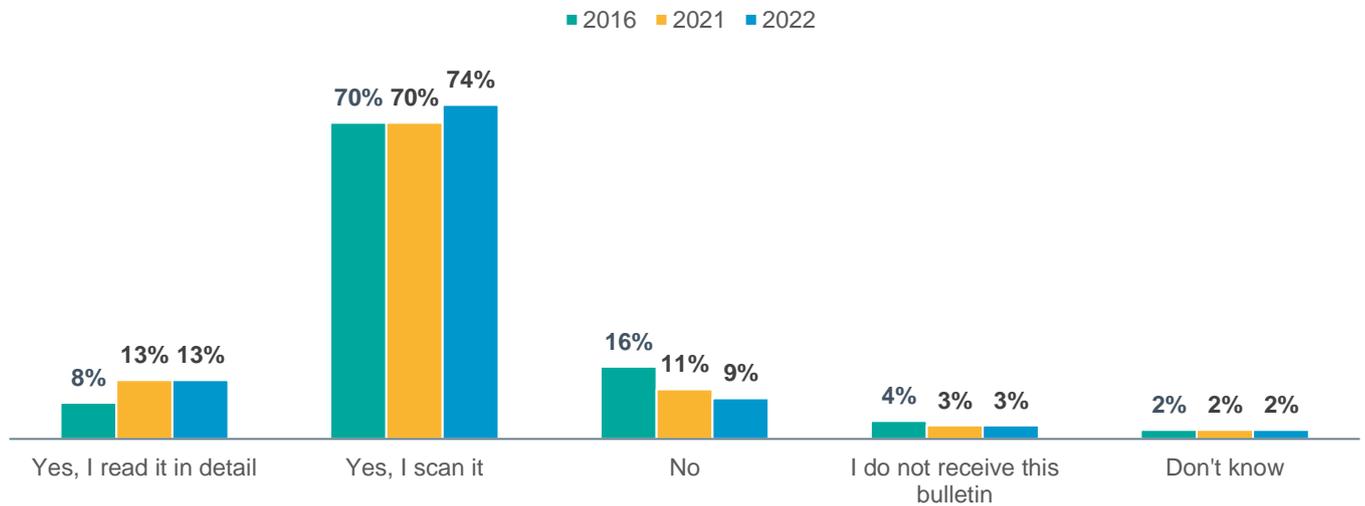


## Email bulletins

In total, 86% of respondents said that they read the GOC eBulletin, including 74% who said they *scan it* and 13% who *read it in detail*, representing a small increase in readership when compared with the 2021 survey results (83%), and a more significant increase since 2016 (78%).

**Figure 67 – Do you read the GOC eBulletin?**

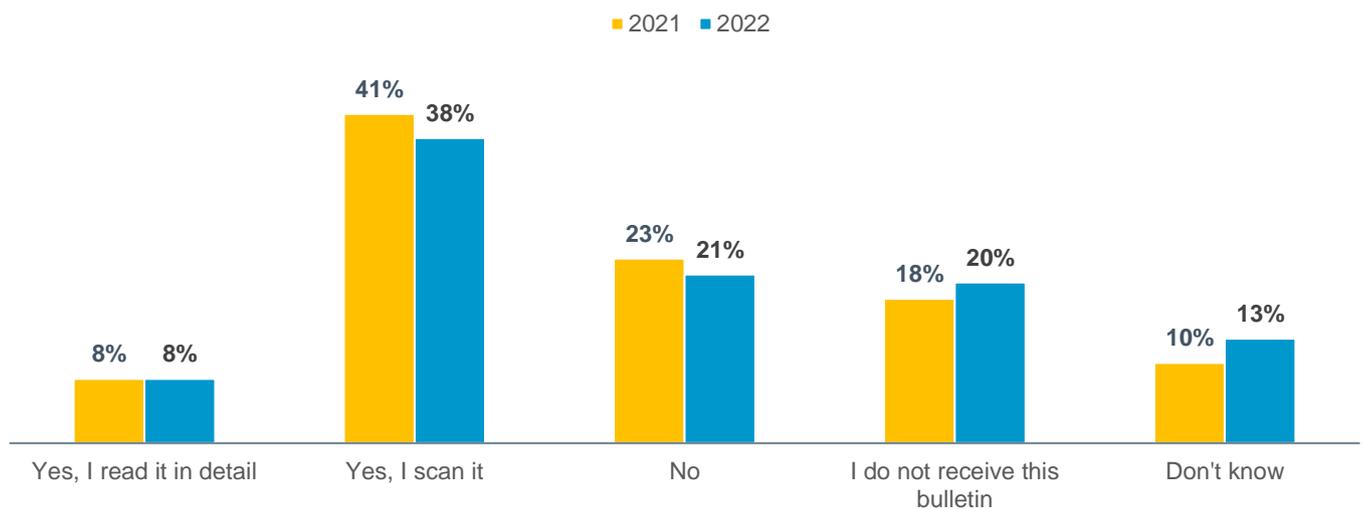
Base: All respondents 2021 (4,880); 2022 (4,102)



In contrast to the GOC eBulletin, a smaller proportion of respondents said that they read the FTP Focus learning bulletin (46%), comprising 38% who said they *scan it* and 8% who *read it in detail*, representing a small decrease in readership when compared with the 2021 results (49%). Respondents were more likely to answer that they did not receive the FTP Focus learning bulletin (20%) when compared with the GOC eBulletin (3%).

**Figure 68 – Do you read the FTP Focus learning bulletin?**

Base: All respondents 2021 (4,880); 2022 (4,102)

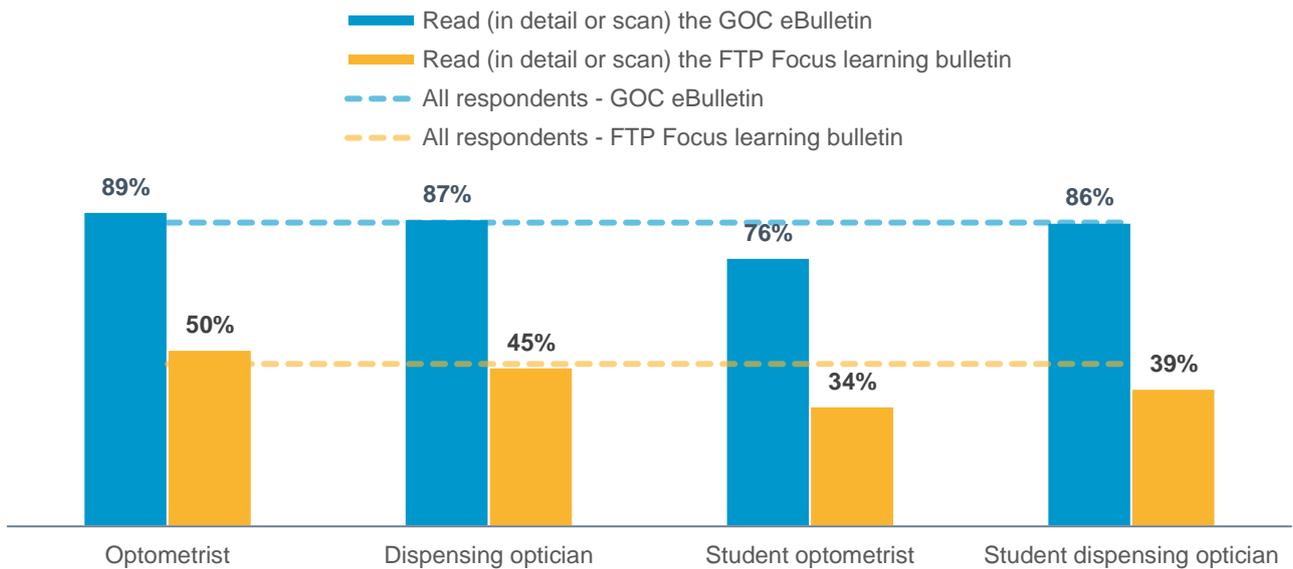


**Analysis by registration type** highlights that optometrists, dispensing opticians, and student dispensing opticians were more likely to read (either in detail or scan) the GOC eBulletin when compared with student optometrists.

Optometrists were more likely to read (either in detail or scan) the FTP Focus learning bulletin when compared with other registration types, particularly student optometrists.

**Figure 69 – Readership (in detail or scan) of GOC bulletins by registration type**

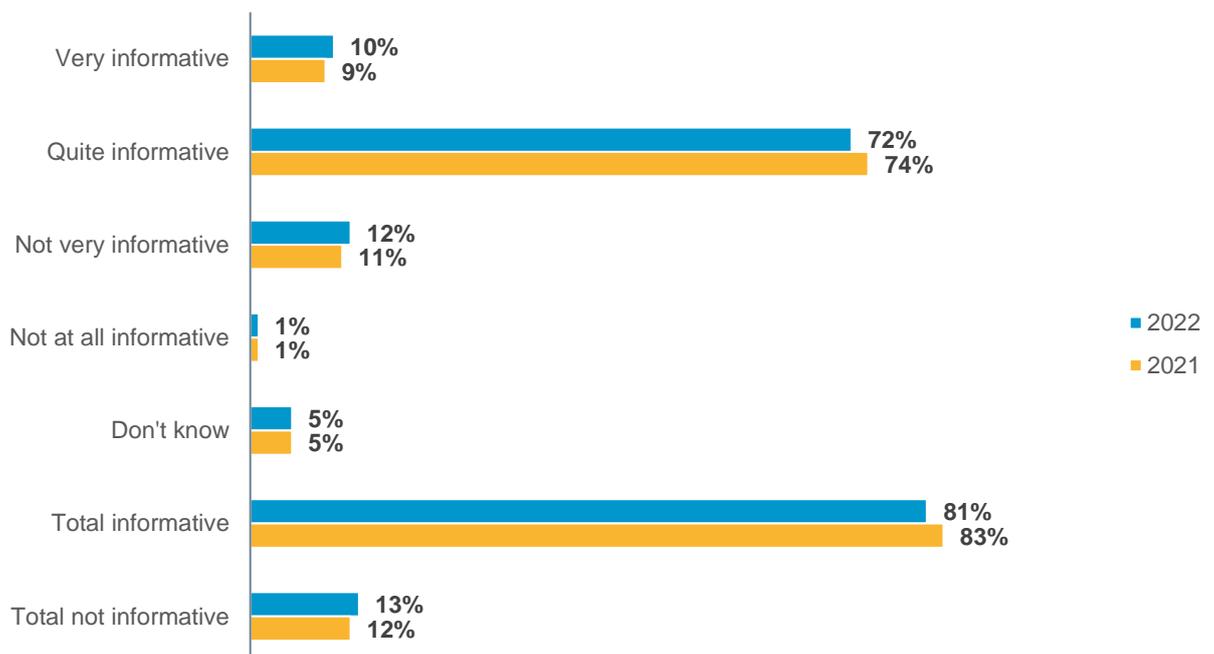
Base: Optometrist (2,334); dispensing optician (1,009); student optometrist (644); student dispensing optician (180)



A total of 81% said they found the GOC eBulletin informative, with the majority of respondents specifying that they found it *quite informative* (72%), in line with results from 2021.

**Figure 70 – How informative do you find the GOC eBulletin?**

Base: Those who read the GOC eBulletin 2021 (4,069); 2022 (3,530)

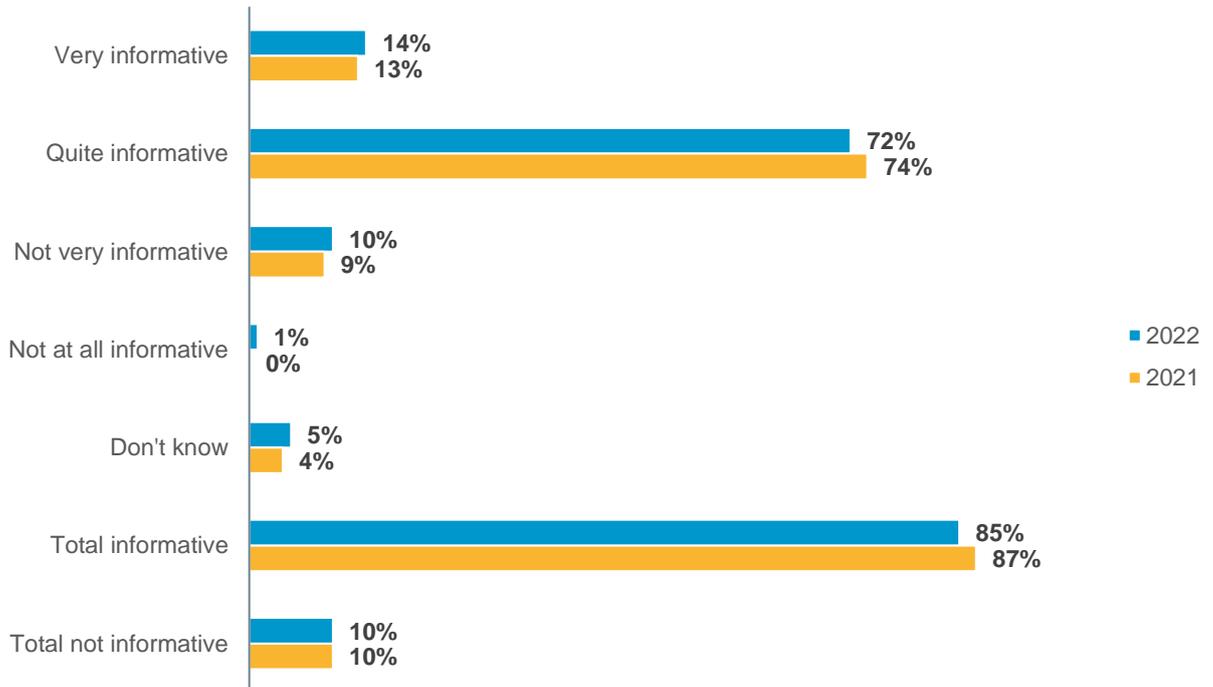


**Analysis by registration type** shows that larger proportions of student optometrists and student dispensing opticians said they found the GOC eBulletin *informative* (87% and 86% respectively) when compared with optometrists (81%) and dispensing opticians (79%), despite student optometrists being less likely to read it.

A total of 85% said they found the FTP Focus learning bulletin informative, with the majority of respondents specifying that they found it *quite informative* (72%), again in line with the results from 2021.

**Figure 71 – How informative do you find the FTP Focus learning bulletin?**

Base: Those who read the FTP Focus learning bulletin 2021 (2,367); 2022 (1,884)



Again, despite being less likely to read it, **analysis by registration type** shows that a larger proportion of student optometrists said they found the FTP Focus learning bulletin *informative* (91%) when compared with optometrists (85%), dispensing opticians (83%), and student dispensing opticians (86%).

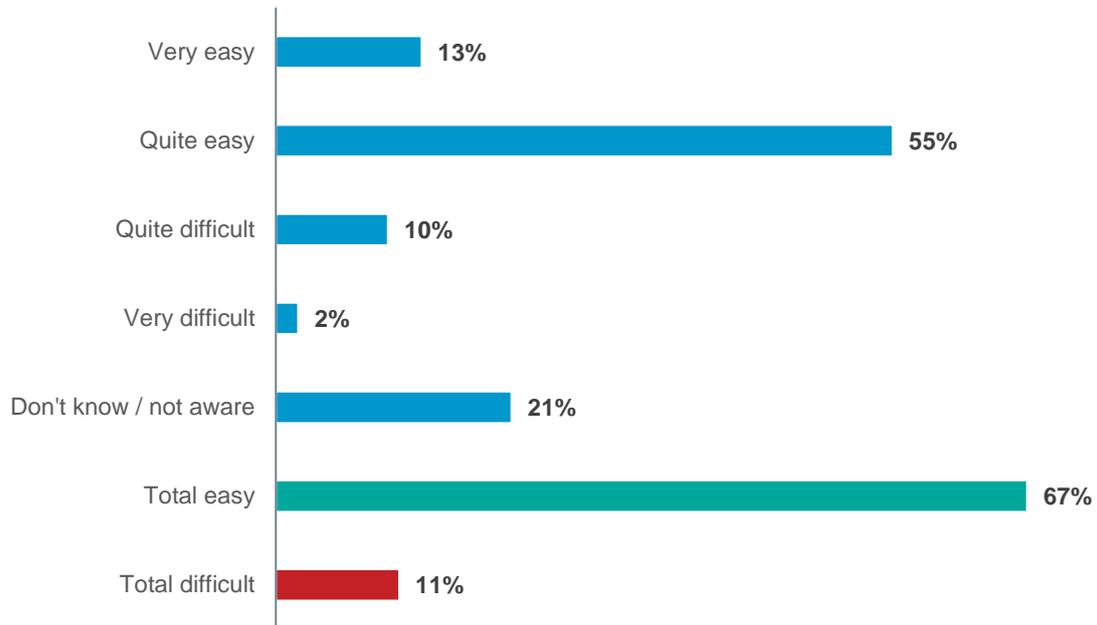


## The GOC website

As the GOC had recently updated its website, all respondents were asked how easy or difficult they found it to navigate. The majority said they found it *easy* (67%), and just 11% found it *difficult*. However, a large proportion of respondents answered *don't know/not aware* (21%).

**Figure 72 – How easy or difficult do you find the new GOC website to navigate?**

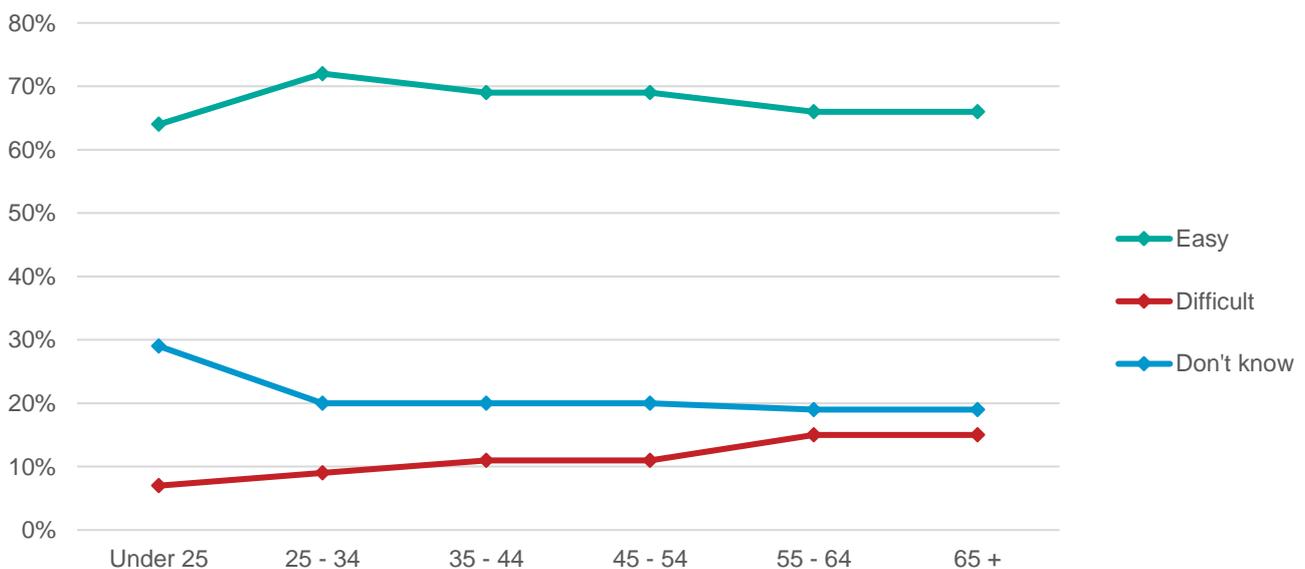
Base: All respondents (4,102)



**Analysis by age group** shows that older respondents aged 55+ were more likely to indicate that they found the GOC website *difficult* to navigate (15%), whereas younger respondents aged 25-34 were more likely to find it *easy* (71%). A larger proportion of the youngest respondents aged under 25 answered *don't know/not aware* (31%) when compared with those aged 25+ (20%).

**Figure 73 – Ease/difficulty of navigating the GOC website by age group**

Base: Under 25 (548); 25-34 (803); 34-44 (922); 45-54 (757); 55-64 (723); 65+ (205)



## Speaking up

### Speaking up: guidance for registrants

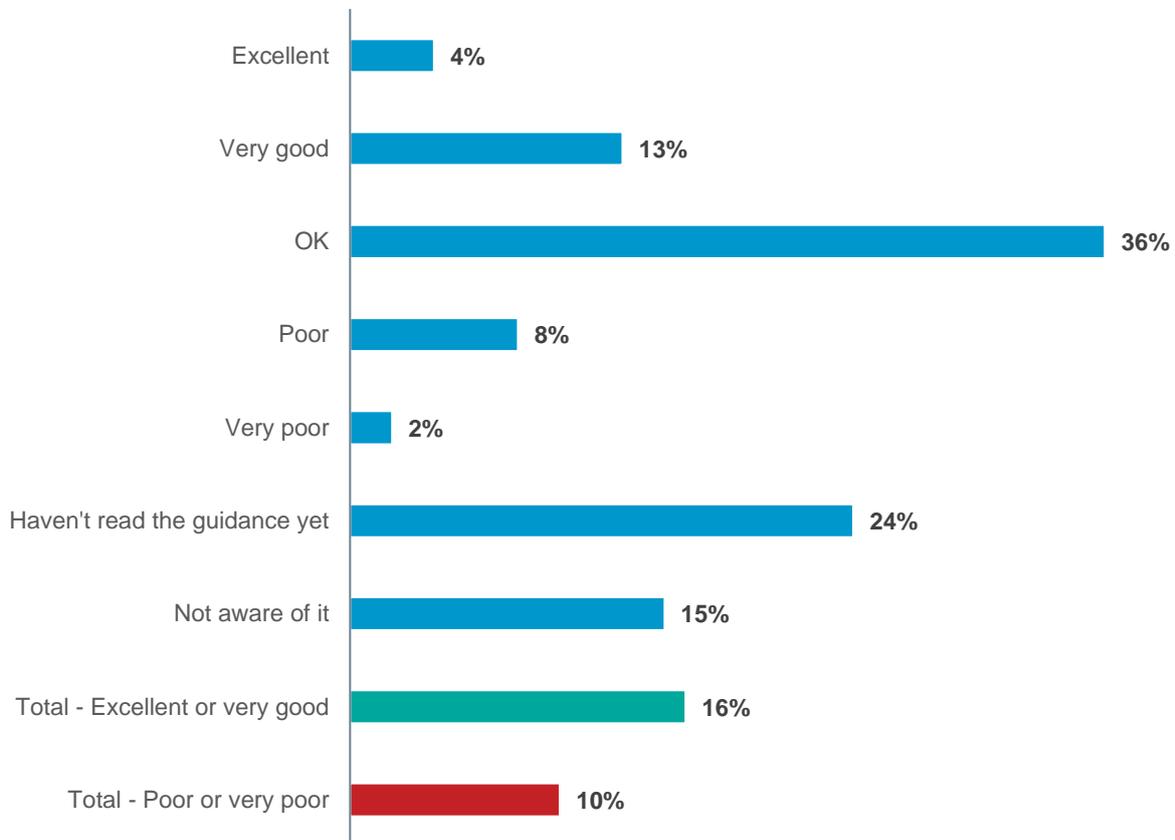
The GOC introduced ‘Speaking up: guidance for registrants’ in October 2021. The guidance helps registrants understand their professional requirement to speak up about, for example, concerns where patient or public safety are, or may be, at risk.

When asked to rate their understanding of this guidance, the largest proportion answered *OK* (36%). A total of 16% rated their understanding as *excellent* (4%) or *very good* (13%), and a total of 23% rated their understanding as *poor* (8%) or *very poor* (2%).

However, a quarter of respondents indicated that they had not yet read the guidance (24%), and a further 15% said they were not aware of it.

**Figure 74 – How would you rate your understanding of the ‘Speaking up: guidance for registrants’ published in October 2021?**

Base: All respondents excluding fully retired (4,055)

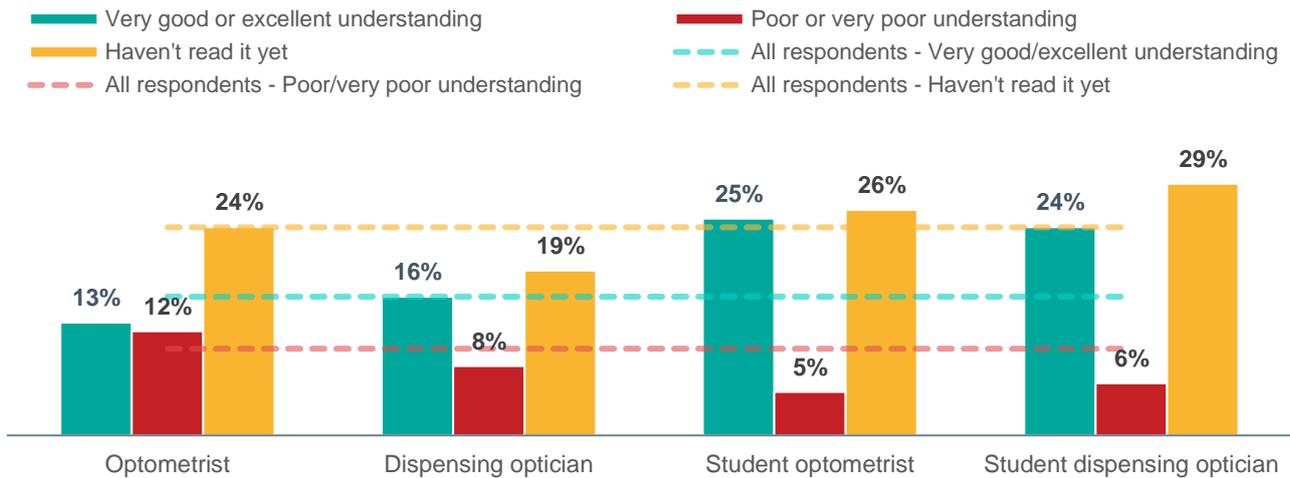


**Analysis by registration type** highlights that student optometrists and student dispensing opticians were more likely to describe their understanding of the ‘Speaking up’ guidance as *very good or excellent* (25% and 24% respectively) when compared with optometrists and dispensing opticians (13% and 16% respectively). However, student optometrists and student dispensing opticians were also more likely to indicate that they *hadn’t read the guidance yet* (26% and 29% respectively), particularly when compared with dispensing opticians (19%).

Optometrists were more likely to rate their understanding as *poor or very poor* (12%) when compared with all other registration types.

**Figure 75 – Understanding of the ‘Speaking up’ guidance by registration type**

Base: Optometrist (2,300); dispensing optician (995); student optometrist (644); student dispensing optician (180)

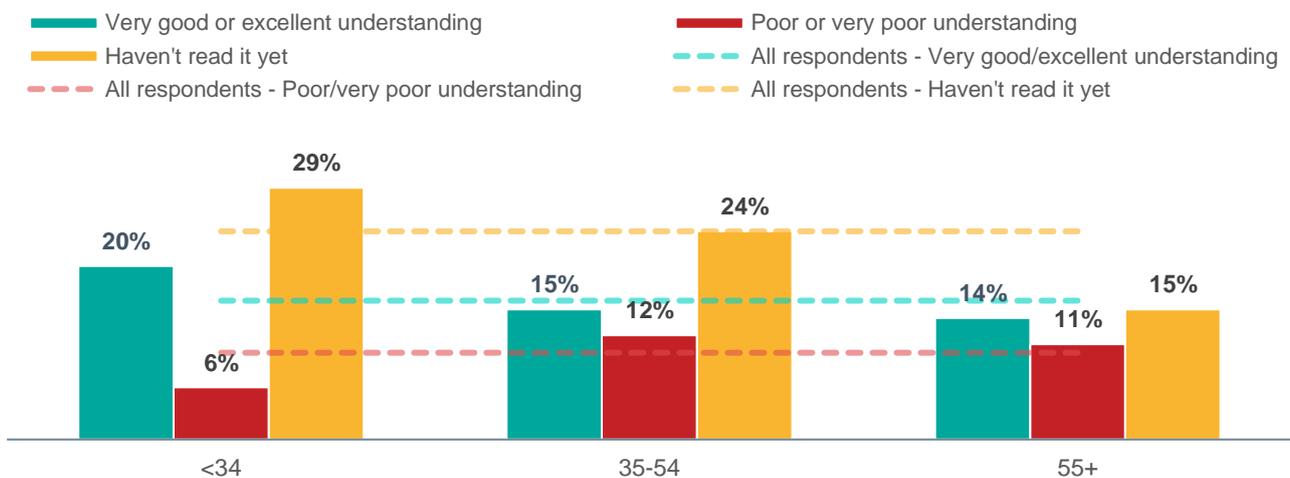


**Analysis by workplace setting** highlights that those who worked in a hospital were more likely to indicate that they *hadn’t read the guidance yet* (31%) when compared with other settings.

**Analysis by age group** shows that those aged <34 were more likely to describe their understanding of the guidance as *very good or excellent* (20%) when compared with older respondents. However, the youngest age group were also more likely to indicate that they *hadn’t read the guidance yet* (29%) when compared with older respondents.

**Figure 76 – Understanding of the ‘Speaking up’ guidance by age group**

Base: Aged <34 (1,351); 35-54 (1,676); 55+ (888)



**Analysis by ethnicity** highlights that those from minority ethnic groups were more likely to indicate that they were *not aware* of the guidance (17%) when compared with those of White ethnicity (13%).



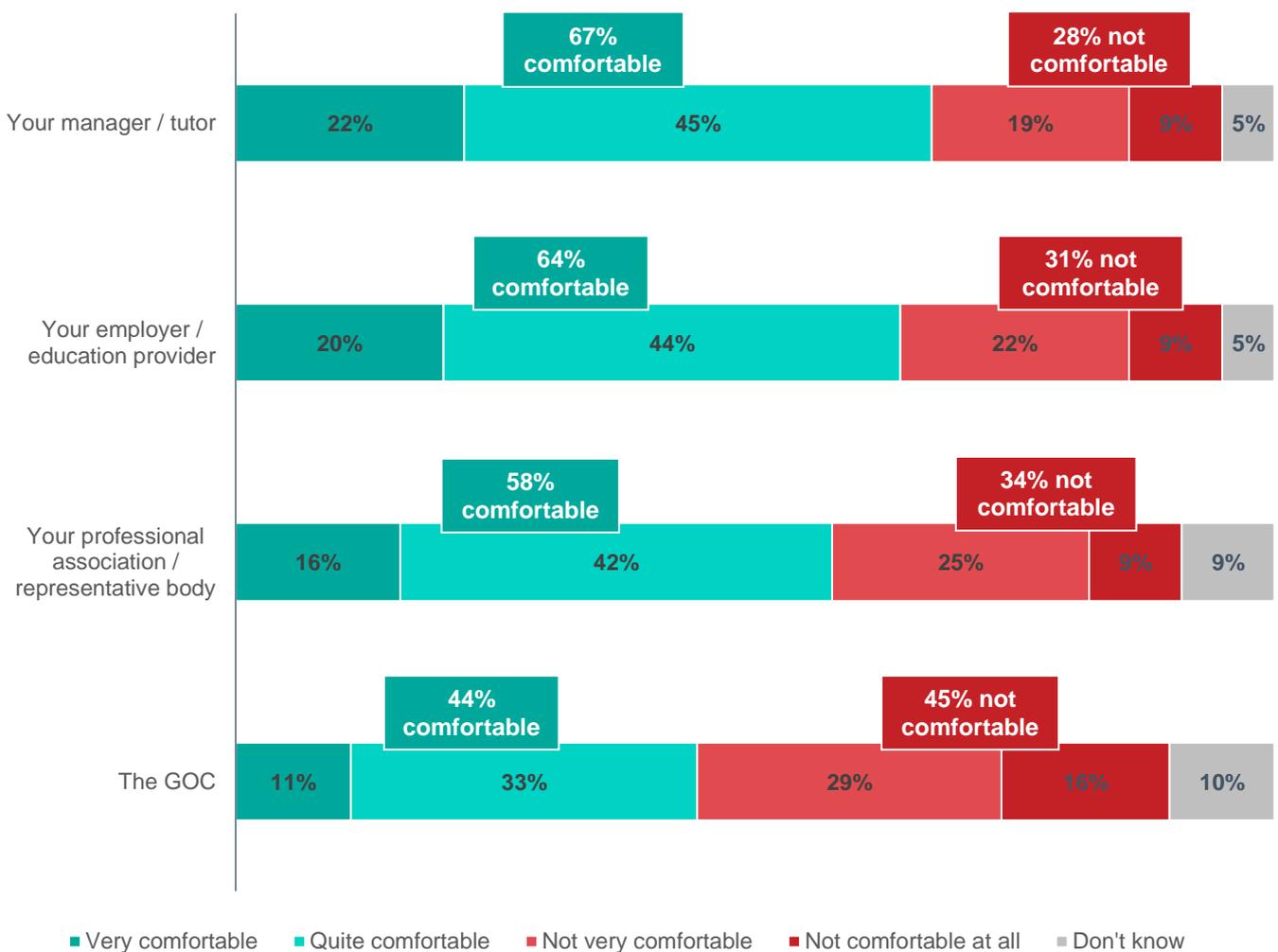
### Patient safety concerning an individual GOC registrant

Respondents were asked how comfortable they would feel speaking up about patient safety **concerning an individual GOC registrant** with different authorities. Respondents would feel most comfortable speaking up to their manager or tutor if they were a student (67%), closely followed by their employer or education provider (64%) and their professional association or representative body (58%).

In contrast, a smaller proportion of respondents said they would feel comfortable speaking up about this to the GOC (44%), with almost the same proportion indicating that they would not feel comfortable (45%).

**Figure 77 – How comfortable would you feel speaking up about patient safety concerning an individual GOC registrant with the following...?**

Base: All respondents excluding retired and all 'not applicable' responses – Your manager/tutor (3,531); Your employer/education provider (3,638); Your professional association/representative body (3,948); the GOC (3,977)



**2021/2022 comparison**

When compared with the 2021 survey results, generally similar levels of comfort and discomfort can be seen.

**Figure 78 – Speaking up about patient safety concerning an individual GOC registrant – 2021/2022 comparison**

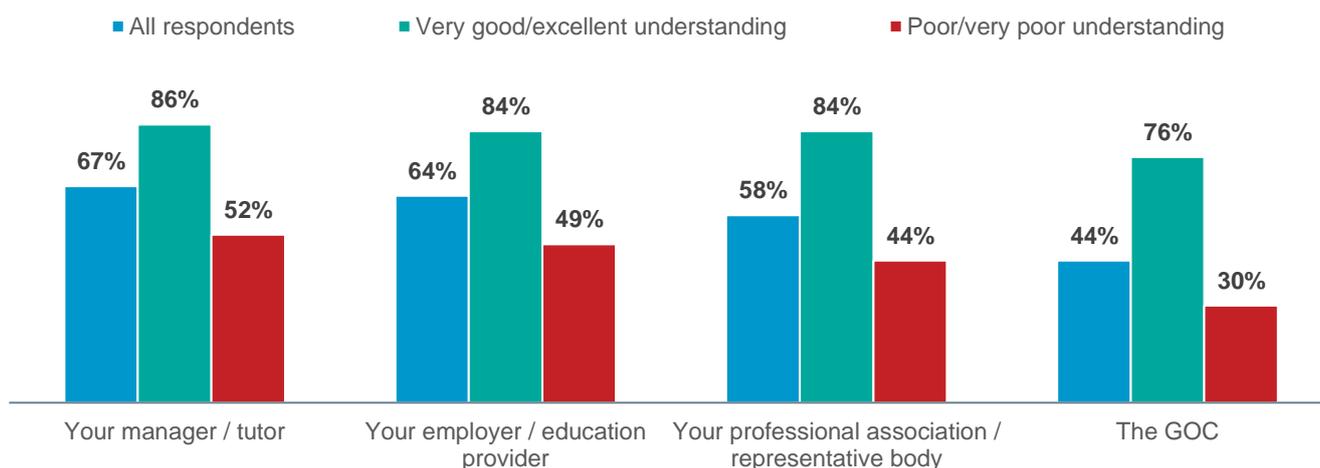
Base: All respondents excluding ‘not applicable’ responses (varies)

Authority	Response	2021	2022	Difference
Your manager/tutor	Comfortable	70%	67%	-3
	Not comfortable	27%	28%	+1
	Don't know	4%	5%	+1
Your employer/education provider	Comfortable	67%	64%	-3
	Not comfortable	30%	31%	+1
	Don't know	4%	5%	+1
Your professional association/representative body	Comfortable	61%	58%	-3
	Not comfortable	32%	34%	+2
	Don't know	7%	9%	+2
The GOC	Comfortable	47%	44%	-3
	Not comfortable	45%	45%	-
	Don't know	8%	10%	+2

**Analysis by level of understanding of the GOC’s ‘Speaking up’ guidance** highlights that respondents with a *very good* or *excellent* understanding were more likely to feel comfortable about speaking up about patient safety concerning an individual registrant to all authorities when compared with those who described their understanding as *poor* or *very poor*.

**Figure 79 – Feeling comfortable if speaking up about patient safety concerning an individual GOC registrant by level of understanding of the GOC’s ‘Speaking up’ guidance (% comfortable)**

Base: All respondents excluding ‘not applicable’ responses (various)



**Analysis by age group** shows that younger respondents aged <34 were more likely to feel comfortable speaking up about patient safety concerning an individual registrant to all authorities when compared with older respondents aged 35+.

**Analysis by ethnicity** shows that those of White ethnicity were more likely to not feel comfortable when speaking up about patient safety concerning an individual registrant to all authorities when compared with those from minority ethnic groups.

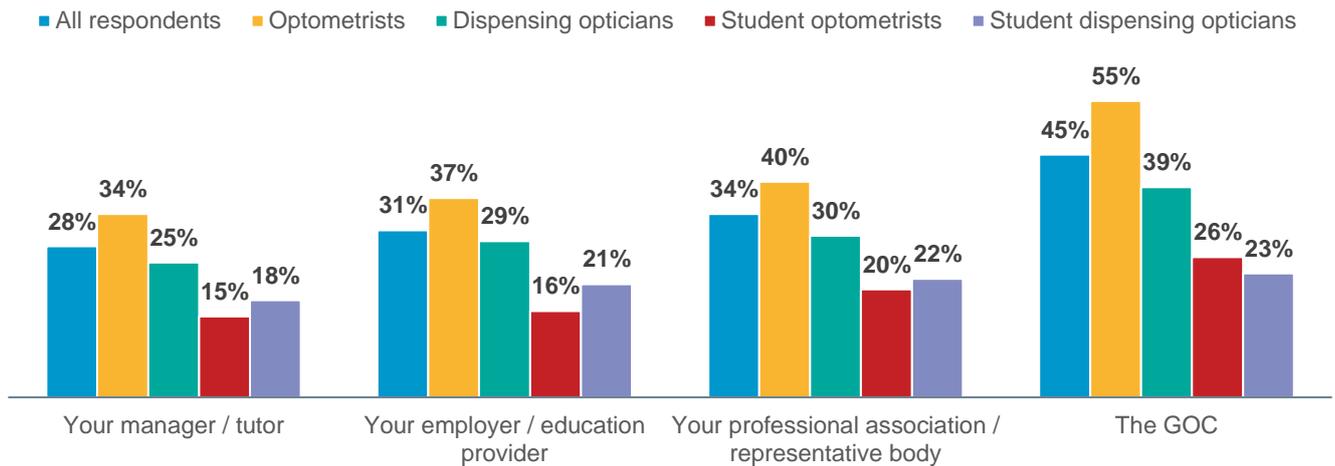


**Analysis by registration type** shows that optometrists were more likely to feel uncomfortable about speaking up about patient safety concerning individual GOC registrants to all authorities when compared with dispensing opticians. For example, 55% of optometrists said they would not feel comfortable speaking up to the GOC, compared with 39% of dispensing opticians.

In comparison to both optometrists and dispensing opticians, student optometrists and student dispensing opticians were less likely to feel uncomfortable about speaking up about patient safety concerning individual GOC registrants.

**Figure 80 – Discomfort if speaking up about patient safety concerning an individual GOC registrant by registration type (% not comfortable)**

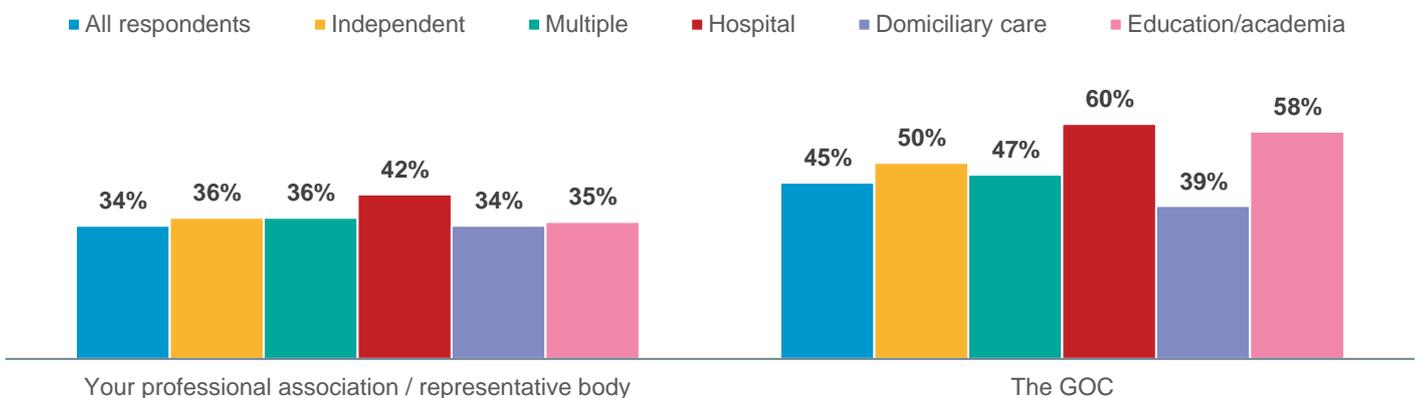
Base: All respondents excluding 'not applicable' responses (various)



**Analysis by workplace setting** shows that those who worked in a hospital setting were more likely to feel uncomfortable about speaking up about patient safety concerning an individual GOC registrant to their *professional association/representative body* and to *the GOC* when compared with other workplace settings. Those who worked in education/academia were also more likely to report that they would feel uncomfortable about speaking up to the GOC when compared with other workplace settings.

**Figure 81 – Discomfort if speaking up about patient safety concerning an individual GOC registrant by workplace setting (% not comfortable)**

Base: All respondents excluding 'not applicable' responses (various)



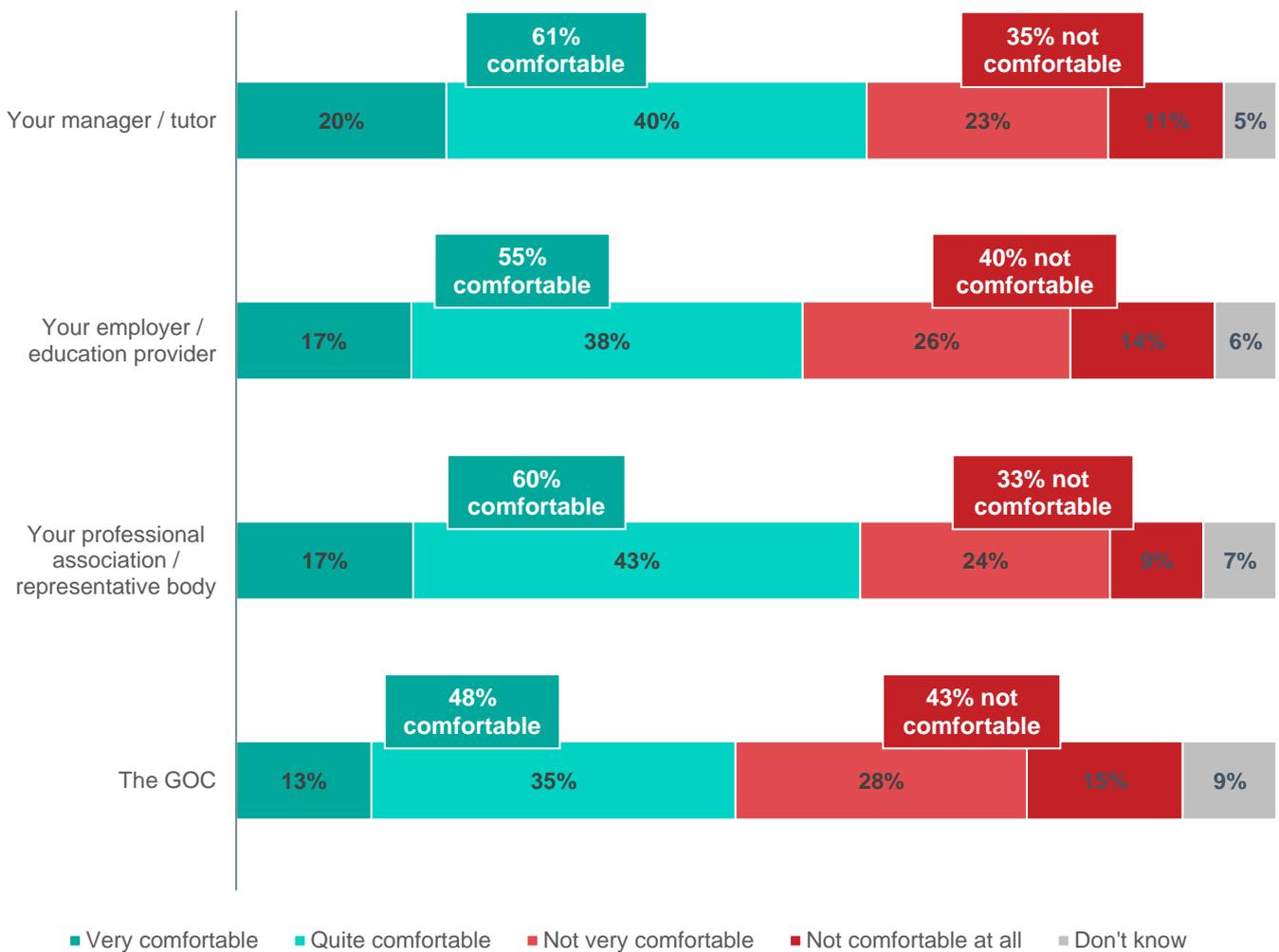
### Patient safety concerning an employer

Respondents were also asked how comfortable they would feel speaking up about patient safety **concerning their employer**. As with speaking up about an individual GOC registrant, respondents would feel most comfortable speaking up to their *manager or tutor* (61%) or their *professional association or representative body* (60%).

A smaller proportion said they would feel comfortable speaking up to *the GOC* about this (48%). In contrast to the previous question, respondents were less likely to feel comfortable speaking up about their employer to their *employer or education provider* (55%).

**Figure 82 – How comfortable would you feel speaking up about patient safety concerning your employer with the following...?**

Base: All respondents excluding retired and all 'not applicable' responses – Your manager/tutor (3,470); Your employer/education provider (3,580); Your professional association/representative body (3,738); the GOC (3,764)



### 2021/2022 comparison

As with speaking up about an individual GOC registrant, generally similar levels of comfort and discomfort can be seen when comparing the 2021 and 2022 results in relation to speaking up about patient safety concerning an employer.

**Figure 83 – Speaking up about patient safety concerning an employer – 2021/2022 comparison**

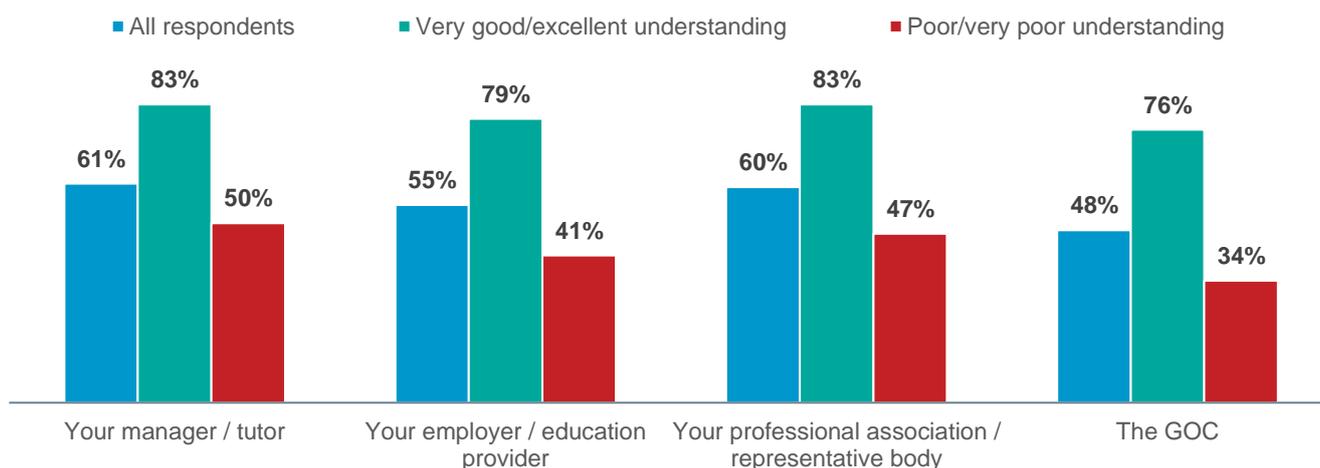
Base: All respondents excluding ‘not applicable’ responses (varies)

Authority	Response	2021	2022	Difference
Your manager/tutor	Comfortable	65%	61%	-4
	Not comfortable	32%	35%	+3
	Don't know	3%	5%	+2
Your employer/education provider	Comfortable	59%	55%	-4
	Not comfortable	38%	40%	+2
	Don't know	3%	6%	+3
Your professional association/representative body	Comfortable	62%	60%	-2
	Not comfortable	33%	33%	-
	Don't know	5%	7%	+2
The GOC	Comfortable	49%	48%	-1
	Not comfortable	45%	43%	-2
	Don't know	7%	9%	+2

**Analysis by level of understanding of the GOC’s ‘Speaking up’ guidance** highlights that respondents with a *very good* or *excellent* understanding were more likely to feel comfortable about speaking up about patient safety concerning an employer to all authorities when compared with those who described their understanding as *poor* or *very poor*.

**Figure 84 – Feeling comfortable if speaking up about patient safety concerning an employer by level of understanding of the GOC’s ‘Speaking up’ guidance**

Base: All respondents excluding ‘not applicable’ responses (various)



As seen with speaking up about an individual registrant, **analysis by age group** shows that younger respondents aged <34 were more likely to feel comfortable speaking up about patient safety concerning an employer to all authorities when compared with older respondents aged 35+.

Again, **analysis by ethnicity** shows that those of White ethnicity were more likely to not feel comfortable when speaking up about patient safety concerning an employer to all authorities when compared with those from minority ethnic groups.

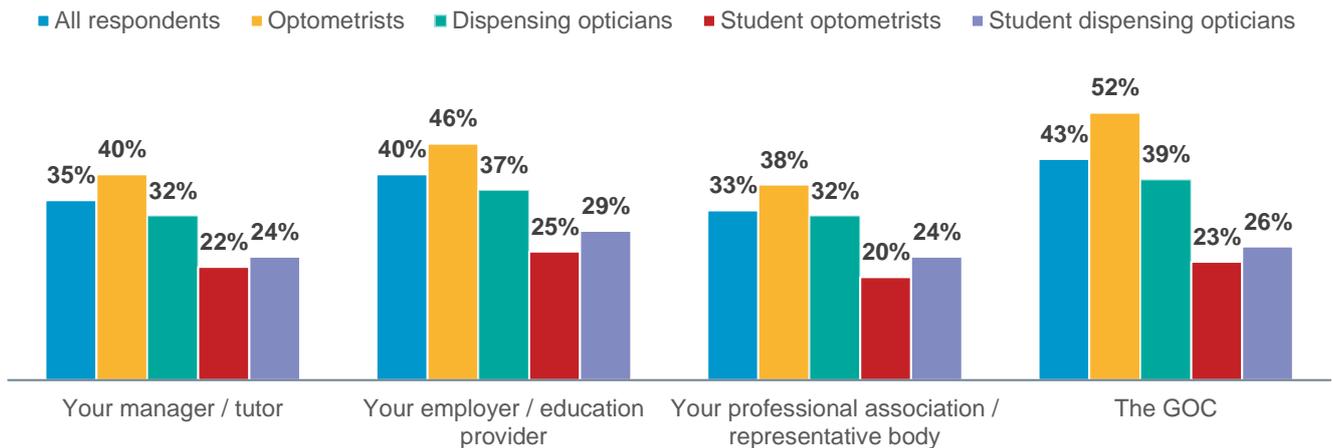


As seen in relation to speaking up about an individual GOC registrant, **analysis by registration type highlights** that optometrists are more likely to feel uncomfortable about speaking up about patient safety concerning their employer to all authorities when compared with dispensing opticians. For example, 52% of optometrists said they would feel uncomfortable speaking up to *the GOC*, compared with 39% of dispensing opticians.

This analysis also highlights that, again, student optometrists and student dispensing opticians were less likely to feel uncomfortable about speaking up about patient safety concerning their employer.

**Figure 85 – Discomfort if speaking up about patient safety concerning an individual GOC registrant by registration type (% not comfortable)**

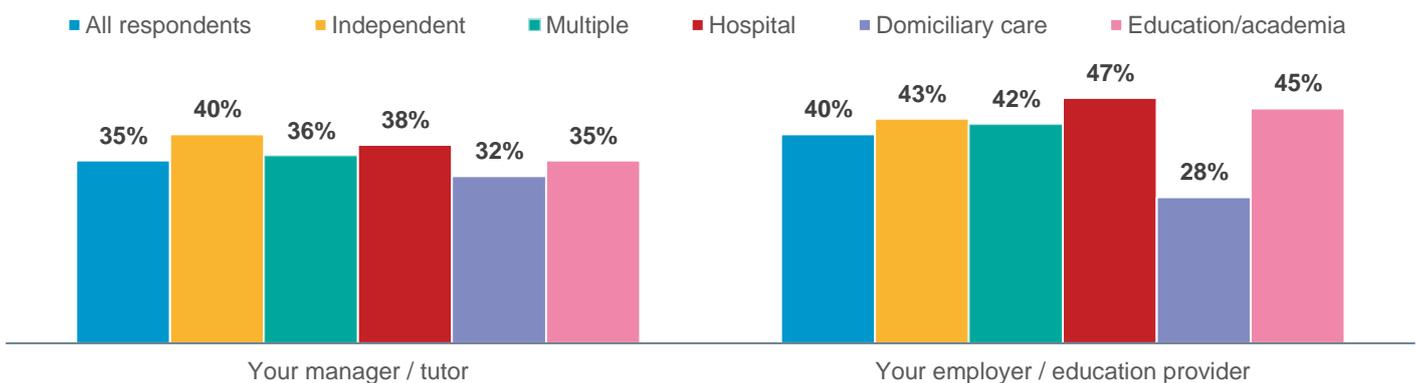
Base: All respondents excluding ‘not applicable’ responses (various)



**Analysis by workplace setting** highlights that respondents who worked for an independent optician were more likely to feel uncomfortable about speaking up about patient safety concerning their employer to *their manager* when compared with other workplace settings. In relation to speaking up about an employer to *their employer/education provider*, those who worked in domiciliary care were less likely to indicate that they would feel uncomfortable when compared with all other settings.

**Figure 86 – Discomfort if speaking up about patient safety concerning your employer by workplace setting (% not comfortable)**

Base: All respondents excluding ‘not applicable’ responses (various)

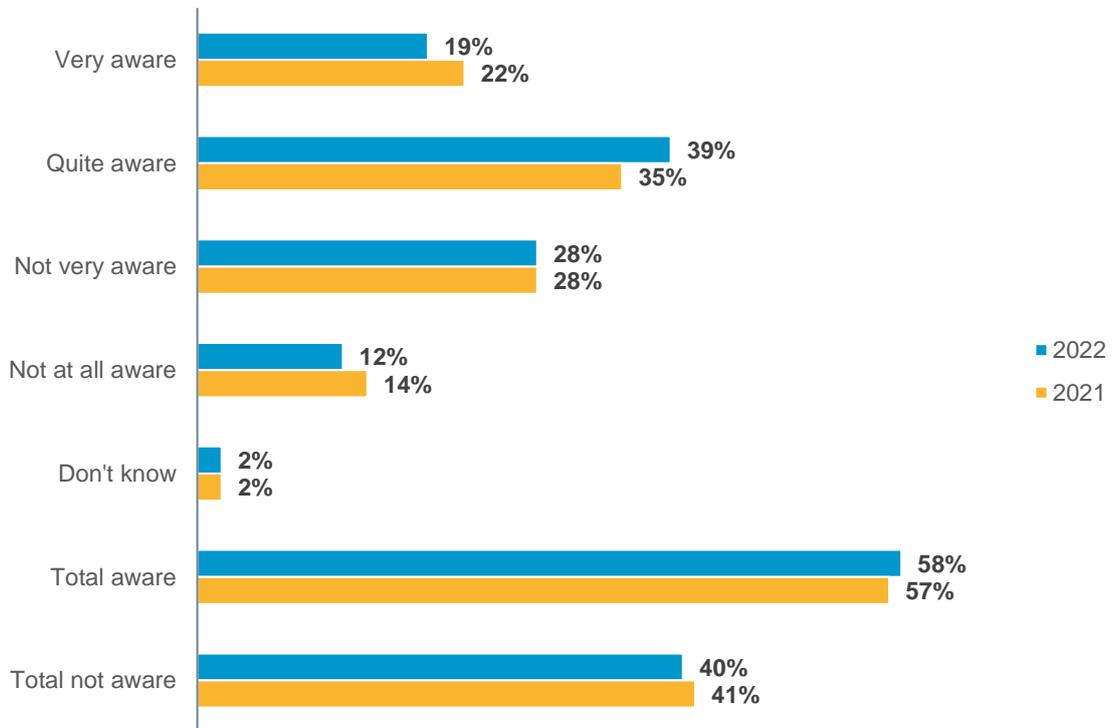


## The Optical Consumer Complaints Service (OCCS)

Whilst the majority of respondents were aware of the OCCS (58%), a large proportion were unaware (40%), in line with the results collected in 2021.

**Figure 87 – How aware are you of the role of the Optical Consumer Complaints Service (OCCS) in providing a free mediation service to help resolve consumer complaints?**

Base: All respondents 2022 (4,102); 2021 (4,880)

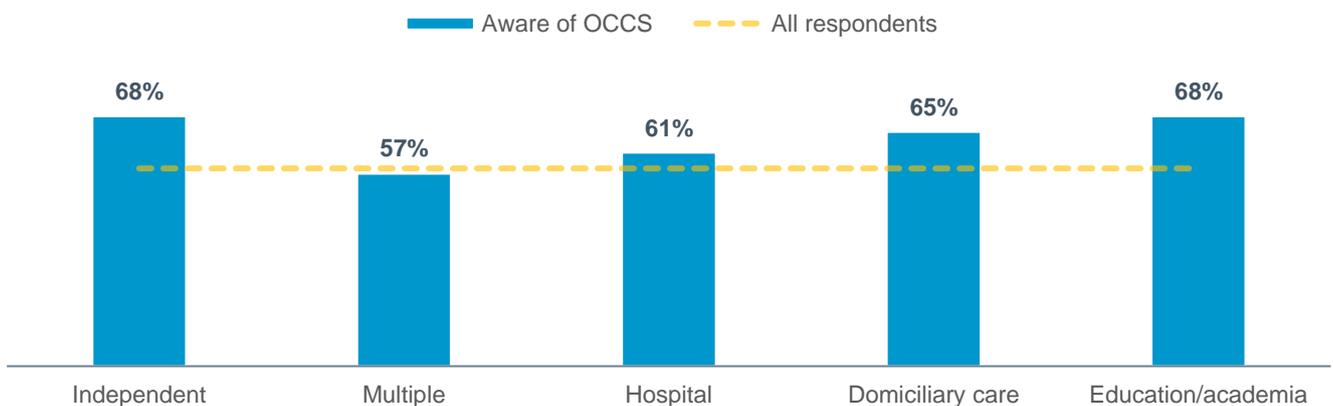


**Analysis by registration type** highlights that student optometrists were much more likely to answer that they were *not aware* of the OCCS (66%) when compared with optometrists (36%), dispensing opticians (33%), and student dispensing opticians (32%).

**Analysis by workplace setting** finds that those who worked for an independent optician or in education/academia were most likely to be aware of the OCCS (both at 68%), particularly when compared with those who worked for a multiple optician (57%).

**Figure 88 – Awareness of the OCCS by workplace setting**

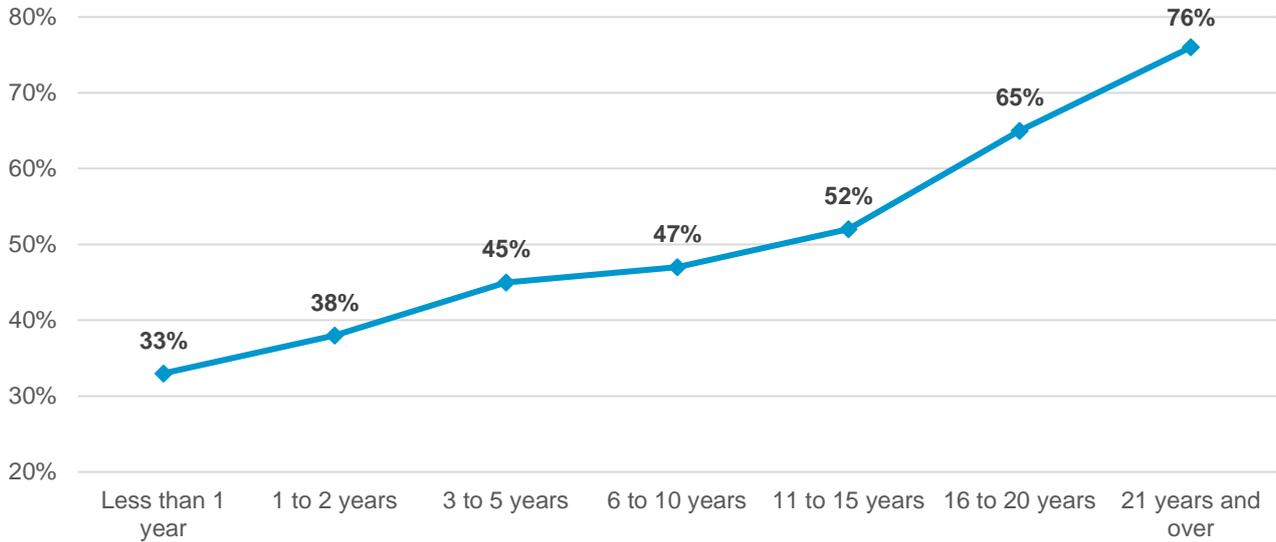
Base: Independent (1,467); multiple (2,037); hospital (328); domiciliary care (81); education/academia (204)



**Analysis by length of time on the register** clearly shows that awareness of the OCCS increases in line with length of time on the GOC register. Just a third of respondents with less than a year on the register were aware of the OCCS (33%), increasing to three quarters for those who have been on the register for 21 years and over (76%). **Analysis by age group** finds a very similar pattern, with awareness of the OCCS increasing with age.

**Figure 89 – Awareness of the OCCS by length of time on the register**

Base: <1 year (315); 1-2 years (307); 3-5 years (576); 6-10 years (419); 11-15 years (473); 16-20 years (443); 21+ years (1,554)



**Analysis by ethnicity** highlights that those from minority ethnic groups were more likely to answer that they were not aware of the OCCS (58%) when compared with those of White ethnicity (32%).

**Analysis by gender** finds that female respondents were more likely to be unaware of the OCCS (46%) when compared with male respondents (29%).



# Conclusions

## **The majority of registrants are satisfied in their role**

The majority of registrants reported that over the last 12 months they have been satisfied in their role or job, which represents a small increase in satisfaction when compared with last year's results.

Satisfaction is more commonplace amongst a number of groups, including student dispensing opticians, those working in a hospital, domiciliary care, or in education/academia, those who worked full-time, those involved in enhanced services, and those who lived in Wales. However, a significant minority reported that they were dissatisfied, including a larger proportion of optometrists, locums, those who worked part-time, those who worked for a multiple optician, and those who lived in London.

## **Insight into drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction**

Additional insight has been gained in this year's survey by asking respondents to explain why they were satisfied or dissatisfied with their role/job over the last 12 months. The key drivers of satisfaction focused on gaining enjoyment from their job and finding it rewarding, and being able to deliver varied and interesting work. Conversely, drivers of dissatisfaction focused on increasing workloads and time pressures, poor pay and lack of financial reward, feeling commercial pressure, and feeling underappreciated.

## **Increases in negative working conditions, especially working beyond hours**

When compared with last year's results, increases in negative working conditions have been recorded, with small increases in registrants feeling unable to cope with their workload, finding it difficult to provide patients with the sufficient level of care they need, and taking a leave of absence due to stress. However, there has been a more significant increase in the proportion of registrants who said they were working beyond their hours, with the majority of registrants falling into this category in this year's results.

## **Positive changes to future career plans**

Last year's survey results found that large proportions of registrants planned to reduce their hours or leave the profession over the next 12-24 months, highlighting potential future staffing problems for the profession. However, this year's results show that the proportion of registrants planning to reduce their hours or leave the profession has fallen, along with smaller proportions who plan to retire, switch to locum work, or take a career break, suggesting that opinions may have changed over the last 12 months. Although this appears to be a positive result, it is important to note that the combined total of those who plan to reduce their hours, leave the profession, and retire is still considerable.

## **Changing perceptions towards the GOC's performance in line with its strategic objectives**

This year's survey results show that slightly smaller proportions of registrants agree that the GOC is meeting the objectives set out in its Strategic Plan 2020-25, including delivering world-class regulatory practice, transforming customer service, and building a culture of continuous improvement.

However, rather than being more likely to disagree, larger proportions of registrants indicated that they did not know when asked to rate the GOC's performance in this way, suggesting that awareness of what the GOC's strategic objectives and what it is doing to meet may be low.

## **Continued mixed perspectives of the GOC's roles and responsibilities**

In relation to its roles and responsibilities, registrant perspectives of the GOC continue to be mixed. In terms of positive perspectives, the majority of registrants think that the GOC sets fair standards for the profession, ensures the quality of optical education, and promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion in its work. However, a large proportion of registrants are unaware of the GOC's role in being fair to registrants via the fitness to practise process, something which has increased since the 2021 survey.

As seen in last year's survey, the most critical perspective of the GOC was recorded for the charging of registration fees, where opinion was almost equally divided between those who agreed they were reasonable and those who disagreed, the latter including a larger proportion of dispensing opticians.



### **Room for improvement in understanding of the requirements of the new CPD scheme**

The largest proportion of registrants described their understanding of the requirements for the new CPD scheme introduced on 1 January 2022 as 'OK', but a larger proportion rated it as 'poor' or 'very poor' than those who rated it 'very good' or 'excellent'. Although this may be influenced by when the survey was delivered, this finding highlights that there may be room for improvement in the levels of understanding, particularly amongst established practising optometrists and dispensing opticians who have been registered with the GOC for a long time. This result also sets a useful baseline for measuring understanding of the new CPD scheme requirements in the future.

To help improve understanding of the new CPD scheme, the GOC could focus its attention on providing additional information on how to complete a personal development plan, how to complete a reflective activity, and how to gain points from self-directed CPD, which were the most popular suggestions from survey respondents.

### **Frequency of communication from the GOC continues to be about right**

As seen in 2021, the vast majority of registrants keep up to date with GOC news via email or the GOC website. When asked about the frequency of communication from the GOC, the majority felt it was *about right*, with only small proportions indicating it was too frequent or infrequent, mirroring results collected since 2016.

### **Readership of the GOC eBulletin continues to increase, but readership of FTP Focus remains lower, despite being viewed as informative**

The GOC eBulletin is read by the majority of registrants, who typically scan-read it, and readership has slowly increased over time. However, less than half of registrants read the FTP Focus learning bulletin, and results show that readership fell slightly when compared with the 2021 survey. However, it is positive to note that the majority of registrants who read these email bulletins find them informative.

### **The updated GOC website is easy to access for most registrants**

After its update, most registrants find the GOC website easy to navigate. However, a large proportion were not sure how easy or difficult the website was to access, suggesting that not all registrants are aware of the redesign or may not have accessed the website recently.

### **Further promotion of the 'Speaking up' guidance is required**

As seen when rating their understanding of the new CPD scheme requirements, the largest proportion of registrants described their understanding of 'Speaking up: guidance for registrants' (introduced in October 2021) as 'OK'. However, significant numbers of registrants are either not aware of this new guidance, or are aware but have not yet read it, highlighting that further promotion is required.

### **Registrants continue to feel more comfortable speaking up about concerns to authorities other than the GOC**

As seen in 2021, when speaking up about patient safety concerning either an individual registrant or an employer, registrants are considerably more likely to feel comfortable doing so to their manager, their employer, or their professional association/representative body, rather than the GOC.

Registrants are more likely to feel comfortable speaking up to the GOC about patient safety if they rate their understanding of the 'Speaking up' guidance as *very good* or *excellent*, emphasising the requirement to increase promotion of this guidance to ensure all registrants have read and understand it, helping them to feel comfortable enough to take the correct action in these circumstances.

### **Awareness of the OCCS continues to be mixed**

Although the majority of registrants are aware of the OCCS, a large proportion indicated that they were unaware, as seen in 2021. Awareness varies across the subgroups, with student optometrists and those who worked for a multiple optician less likely to be aware. To see any change in this result, additional promotion of the OCCS and its role may be required.



## **Appendix A – Questionnaire**

## Registrant Workforce & Perceptions Survey 2022

Welcome to the General Optical Council (GOC)'s Registrant Workforce and Perceptions Survey 2022.

This survey will help the GOC understand how well its registrants think it is performing and where it can improve. In this year's survey, the GOC would particularly like to hear your views on challenges and opportunities in relation to your job and career path.

It should only take around **8-10 minutes** to complete. By taking part, you can be entered into a prize draw to win a **£100 online gift card**. The winner will be randomly selected once the survey is closed.

### Completing the survey

To navigate through this questionnaire, use the arrow buttons at the bottom of each page. **DO NOT** use the back/forward options in your browser. To remove your answers to a question, click the reset button.

You can save your answers at any point and return to them later by clicking the save button or the link found in your email invitation.

### How Enventure Research will use your information

The GOC has invited an independent organisation, Enventure Research, to conduct this survey so that your responses remain confidential. The GOC will receive a report on the findings and anonymised data from the survey.

If you received an email invitation, your name and email address were securely passed to Enventure Research by the GOC. They will only be used by Enventure Research for the purposes of carrying out this survey and will not be disclosed to any third parties.

For more information about your rights and who to contact please read our privacy policies:

Enventure Research's privacy policy can be found [here](#).  
The GOC's privacy policy can be found [here](#).

### Questions or help

If you have a questions about this survey, please call the Enventure Research survey helpline on 0800 0092 117 or email [helpline@enventure.co.uk](mailto:helpline@enventure.co.uk)

**Please click the arrow button below to begin.**

## How to take part

To take part in the survey, please read the statement below, tick to say you agree and click the arrow button.

QA Enventure Research will use the information you give in your survey response as described above. Your data will be processed in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

I agree to take part in the survey and share my information with Enventure Research

## Your role

The first set of questions are about your role and where you work.

Q1 **Please tell us which of the following roles apply to you (if you are retired, please select the most appropriate role before you retired) Please select as many as apply**

- Optometrist
- Optometrist with an additional supply speciality
- Optometrist with a supplementary prescribing speciality
- Optometrist with an independent prescribing speciality
- Dispensing optician
- Dispensing optician with a contact lens speciality
- Student optometrist
- Student optometrist undertaking the pre-registration scheme
- Student dispensing optician
- Other

**Other Please specify**

Q2 **Which of these best describes your current working status? Please select as many as apply**

- Working / employed (including full/part-time and locum work, and temporarily away from work e.g. parental leave/extended sick leave etc.)
- Not working / unemployed
- Fully retired
- Student / in education
- Other

**Other** *Please specify*

**Q3 Do you work as a locum?**

- Yes
- No

**Q4 Where do you currently work? Please select as many as apply**

- Independent practice/sole practitioner
- National chain of opticians (e.g. UK-wide chain of opticians)
- Regional chain of opticians (e.g. chain of opticians working within one region in the UK)
- Hospital
- Domiciliary care
- Education/academia
- Other

**Other** *Please specify*

**Q5 For each location selected, please state the approximate number of hours you work there in a typical week Please type in the boxes below - the total number of hours per week will be automatically calculated**

Independent opticians/sole practitioner	<input type="text"/>
National chain of opticians	<input type="text"/>
Regional chain of opticians	<input type="text"/>
Hospital	<input type="text"/>
Domiciliary care	<input type="text"/>
Education/academia	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>
<b>Total number of hours</b>	<input type="text"/>

**Q6 Are you currently involved in delivering enhanced eye care services (e.g. providing patients with care beyond the remit of a routine sight test, such as Minor Eye Conditions Service (MECS) or Low Vision Service Wales (LVSW))?**

- Yes
- No
- I am not aware of these services
- Don't know

Q7 **Approximately how long have you been on the GOC register?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 2 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- 16 to 20 years
- 21 years and over
- Don't know

## Your career

The GOC would like to find out a bit more about satisfaction levels and career prospects in the professions.

Q8 **Thinking about the last 12 months, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your role/job?**

- Very satisfied
- Quite satisfied
- Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- Quite dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Not applicable

Q9 **In a few words or short sentence, please explain your answer above**

Q10 **In the last 12 months, have you experienced any of the following? Please select as many as apply**

- Working beyond your hours
- Feeling unable to cope with workload
- Taking leave of absence due to stress
- Finding it difficult to provide patients with the sufficient level of care they need
- None of the above

Q11 **Are you considering making any of the following changes to your career over the next 12-24 months?** *Please select as many as apply*

- Gain additional qualifications/skills
- Switch to locum work
- Reduce your hours
- Leave the profession
- Take a career break
- Retire
- Other
- None of the above

**Other** *Please specify*

Q12 **In a few words or short sentence, please explain why you plan to gain additional qualifications/skills**

Q13 **In a few words or short sentence, please explain why you plan to switch to locum work**

Q14 **In a few words or short sentence, please explain why you plan to reduce your hours**

Q15 **In a few words or short sentence, please explain why you plan to leave the profession**

Q16 **In a few words or short sentence, please explain why you plan to take a career break**

## Your perspective of the GOC

The GOC would like to understand more about how its registrants view its role.

**Q17 For each of the aims below, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the GOC is meeting its three strategic objectives outlined in its Strategic Plan 2020-25?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Delivering world-class regulatory practice	<input type="radio"/>				
Transforming customer service	<input type="radio"/>				
Building a culture of continuous improvement	<input type="radio"/>				

**Q18 For each of the following statements please say to what extent you agree or disagree.**

**The General Optical Council...**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Ensures the quality of optical education	<input type="radio"/>				
Charges registration fees which are reasonable	<input type="radio"/>				
Is fair to registrants when taking action through the fitness to practise process	<input type="radio"/>				
Sets fair standards for the profession	<input type="radio"/>				
Promotes equality, diversity and inclusion in its work	<input type="radio"/>				

## How the GOC communicates with you

The GOC would like to know more about how it currently communicates with registrants to help improve the customer service it provides.

**Q19 How would you describe the frequency that the GOC communicates with you?**

- Too often
- About right
- Not often enough
- Don't know

**Q20 How do you keep up to date with GOC news? Please select as many as apply**

- Emails / eBulletin
- The GOC website
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Other
- I do not keep up to date with GOC news
- Don't know

Other Please specify

Q21 Do you read the following GOC bulletins sent by email?

	Yes, I read it in detail	Yes, I scan it	No	I do not receive this GOC bulletin	Don't know
The GOC eBulletin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The FTP Focus learning bulletin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q22 How informative do you find the following GOC bulletins?

	Very informative	Quite informative	Not very informative	Not at all informative	Don't know
The GOC eBulletin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The FTP Focus learning bulletin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q23 The GOC has recently updated its website.

How easy or difficult do you find the new GOC website to navigate?

- Very easy
- Quite easy
- Quite difficult
- Very difficult
- Don't know / not aware

## Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

On 1 January 2022, the GOC changed to a system of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), with new requirements for registrants. The GOC would like to hear your views on the new scheme.

Q24 How would you rate your understanding of the requirements of the new CPD scheme?

- Excellent
- Very good
- OK
- Poor
- Very poor
- Don't know



Q28 **How comfortable would you feel speaking up about patient safety concerning your employer with the following...**

	Very comfortable	Quite comfortable	Not very comfortable	Not comfortable at all	Don't know	Not applicable
Your manager / tutor?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your employer / education provider?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your professional association / representative body?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The GOC?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Consumer Complaints

Q29 **How aware are you of the role of the Optical Consumer Complaints Service (OCCS) in providing a free mediation service to help resolve consumer complaints?**

- Very aware
- Quite aware
- Not very aware
- Not at all aware
- Don't know

## About you

The GOC is committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and being inclusive in all its work as a health professions regulator, and to making sure we meet our equality duties. The following questions relate to our equality and diversity work and add to our understanding of the diversity of the optical profession, so that we can make sure our services and events reflect this diversity. They will also allow any differences in results between different groups to be highlighted.

Please remember you will not be individually identified in your survey response.

Q30 **Your age group:**

- Under 25
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 +
- Prefer not to say

**Q31 Your gender:**

- Male
- Female
- Intersex
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

**Q32 Is your gender identity different from the gender that you were assigned at birth?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**Q33 Your sexual orientation:**

- Heterosexual/Straight
- Gay/Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other
- Prefer not to say

**Q34 Your marital status:**

- Civil partnership
- Divorced or civil partnership dissolved
- Married
- Separated
- Single
- Widowed
- Prefer not to say

**Q35 Your ethnicity:**

- White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British
- White: Irish
- White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Other White background
- Black or Black British - Caribbean
- Black or Black British - African
- Other Black background
- Asian or Asian British - Indian
- Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British - Chinese
- Other Asian background
- Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed - White and Black African
- Mixed - White and Asian
- Other mixed background
- Other - Arab
- Other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say

**Other** *Please specify*

**Q36 Your religion or belief:**

- No religion or belief
- Buddhist
- Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Other
- Prefer not to say

**Other** *Please specify*

Q37 **Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q38 **Are you pregnant, on maternity leave, or returning from maternity leave?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q39 **Do you perform the role of a carer?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q40 **In which of the following regions do you live?**

- North East
- North West
- Yorkshire and Humber
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- East of England
- London
- South East
- South West
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- Outside the UK
- Prefer not to say

## Prize draw

As a thank you for your time today, we are offering you the opportunity to enter our prize draw to win a £100 gift card that can be used at a range of outlets. The winner will be randomly selected when the survey closes.

Q41 **Do you want to be entered into our prize draw?**

*By answering yes you are agreeing to be contacted by Enventure Research if you are selected as the winner.*

- Yes
- No

**So that we can contact you if you are selected as the winner, please provide your name, contact number, and email address in the boxes below.** *Any details you provide will only be used to contact you if you are selected as the winner of our prize draw. Your details will not be passed on to any third parties and will be kept separate from your survey answers, meaning that you will not be identified in any way. Your contact details will be kept securely for a maximum of three months, after which they will be confidentially deleted.*

Q42 **Name**

Q43 **Contact number**

Q44 **Email address**

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this survey. Your views are greatly appreciated.

**Please click the tick button below to send your response.**

## Appendix B – Demographic profile

The table below shows the demographic makeup of survey respondents, where the sample has been weighted by registration type to accurately reflect the overall GOC registrant population.

### **Demographic profile of survey respondents**

Base: All respondents (4,102)

Demographic	Number	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	1,325	32%
Female	2,537	62%
Intersex	5	0%
Non-Binary	7	0%
Prefer not to say	227	6%
<b>Is your gender identity different from the gender that you were assigned at birth?</b>		
Yes	548	13%
No	3,288	80%
Prefer not to say	266	6%
<b>Age group</b>		
Under 25	548	13%
25-34	803	20%
35-44	922	22%
45-54	757	18%
55-64	723	18%
65+	205	5%
Prefer not to say	144	4%
<b>Ethnic group</b>		
White British	2,311	56%
White other	233	6%
Black/Black British	100	2%
Mixed/Multiple	58	1%
Asian/Asian British	939	23%
Any other ethnic group	53	1%
Prefer not to say	410	10%
<b>Sexuality</b>		
Heterosexual/Straight	3,489	85%
Gay/Lesbian	90	2%
Bisexual	40	1%
Other	18	0%
Prefer not to say	466	11%
<b>Marital status</b>		
Civil partnership	124	3%
Divorced or civil partnership dissolved	161	4%
Married	2,108	51%
Separated	30	1%
Single	1,158	30%
Widowed	25	1%
Prefer not to say	495	10%
<b>Religion or belief</b>		
No religion or belief	1,256	31%
Buddhist	27	1%
Christian	1,362	33%
Hindu	229	6%

Demographic	Number	Percentage
Jewish	53	1%
Muslim	512	12%
Sikh	109	3%
Other	56	1%
Prefer not to say	499	12%
<b>Do you consider yourself to have a disability?</b>		
Yes	114	3%
No	3,693	90%
Prefer not to say	295	7%
<b>Are you pregnant, on maternity leave, or returning from maternity leave?</b>		
Yes	140	3%
No	3,695	90%
Prefer not to say	267	7%
<b>Do you perform the role of a carer?</b>		
Yes	449	11%
No	3,361	82%
Prefer not to say	292	7%