

## Invitation to tender

The General Optical Council (GOC) would like to commission a literature review to identify current and emerging risks to public health posed by illegal optical practice and explore opportunities for preventative action.

### Overview

The GOC is the statutory regulator for UK optical professions. We register around 30,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student opticians and optical businesses.

The GOC wishes to understand the harm that may be caused by illegal optical services – and to also understand how illegal practice can be better regulated and what practicable preventative measures can be taken.

A health risk assessment of illegal optical practice was conducted by Europe Economics in August 2013<sup>1</sup>, which informed the current Protocol, updated in 2015, for tackling illegal practice<sup>2</sup>. The current Protocol provides for the GOC to take a reactive approach to concerns about illegal optical practice and does not address the opportunity for preventative action. There has been no significant review of the Protocol since 2015.

The GOC seeks to review the current protocol which may include taking a more preventative approach.

### Purpose of the literature review

The purpose of the literature review is to:

- complete a broad review of the risk factors involved in illegal optical practice;
- assess the quantifiable evidence to help inform the scale of illegal practice; and
- identify the practicable measures that can be taken, including preventative action.

The review will help us understand what we can do, as a regulator, to prevent illegal optical practice and ensure that our strategy reflects current and emerging risks.

Currently, areas of particular concern are online sales of contact lenses and spectacles.

### Scope

The review should include literature published between August 2013 and April 2021 and focus on current and emerging risks of illegal optical practice and the quantifiable data, and method of data collection, to identify the scale of illegal optical practice. The review should also include analysis of the GOC's illegal practice complaints data and identify any trends.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.optical.org/en/news\\_publications/Publications/policy-and-research-papers.cfm](https://www.optical.org/en/news_publications/Publications/policy-and-research-papers.cfm)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.optical.org/en/Investigating\\_complaints/index.cfm](https://www.optical.org/en/Investigating_complaints/index.cfm)

## **Output**

A fully referenced report describing the outcome of the literature review (introduction, summary, literature synthesis and conclusions) for discussion by the Illegal Practice Strategy Review Team.

## **Timeline**

Four weeks from date of commission.

## **Applicant information**

Applicants are invited to submit a short proposal to [IllegalPracticeStrategy@optical.org](mailto:IllegalPracticeStrategy@optical.org) by **10am on Tuesday 1 June 2021**.

The proposal should include:

- Name(s), profile(s) and expertise of researcher(s), including any publication list.
- Timetable for completion and breakdown of costs.
- Experience of writing and delivering for diverse (non-academic) audiences.
- Outline of intended methodology and focus.
- Any other information demonstrating suitability for this work.

The GOC leads for this work will be Kiran Gill, Head of Legal and Dionne Spence, Director of Casework and Resolution. Questions in advance of bid submission are welcomed and should be directed to Claire Bond, Lawyer / Project Manager via email [cbond@optical.org](mailto:cbond@optical.org).

Applicants may be contacted by email or telephone to discuss their proposal.

The successful applicant will be invited to a briefing meeting in early June 2021.