**Consultation document:**

**Updating Gender on the GOC Register Policy and Process**

1. **Overview**

We are committed to supporting registrants who wish to update their gender on our register and ensuring compliance with the [Gender Recognition Act 2004](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/7/introduction) (GRA) and the [Equality Act 2010.](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents) We have drafted a policy setting out the process for applying to the GOC to update the registered gender. We will agree such applications unless there is a public protection reason for not doing so.

As part of our statutory duty to maintain and publish a register of all those who are fit to practise, we publish certain information about our registrants, which currently includes their gender.

We recognise that this is a sensitive area for some registrants. This policy and process document seeks to make our process for updating gender clear and easy to apply. It also ensures confidentiality under section 22 of the GRA and complies with our information governance framework.

As a statutory regulator subject to the public sector equality duty, we are committed to upholding the Equality Act 2010 including the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment. This document aligns with our commitment to promoting equality, valuing diversity and being inclusive.

The relevant statutory provisions are section 11(2) of the Opticians Act 1989 and rule 21 of the [Registration Rules 2005](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1478/made). These do not include a specific requirement to publish a registrant's sex or gender.

The draft policy, together with a draft impact assessment, is available on our consultation hub in the ‘related’ section at the end of the page.

1. **Why we are consulting**

Our draft policy affects all of our registrants as we will be seeking to ensure fairness to our registrants and applicants who wish to update their gender on our register. We are interested in registrants’ and other stakeholders’ views on this policy and the safeguards that we will apply before we implement these.

This consultation will last for a period of 14 weeks from 12 December 2022 to 20 March 2023.

**Questions**

1. **To what extent do you agree with the content of the policy?**

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neither agree nor disagree d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

If you answered ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please explain your reasons.

1. **Is there anything unclear or missing in the policy?**

a) Yes b) No c) Not sure

If you answered ‘yes’, please give details.

1. **Are there any aspects of the policy that could discriminate against stakeholders with specific characteristics? (Please consider age, sex, race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy or maternity, caring responsibilities or any other characteristics.)**

a) Yes b) No c) Not sure

If you answered ‘yes’, please give details.

1. **Are there any aspects of the policy that could have a positive impact on stakeholders with specific characteristics? (Please consider age, sex, race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy or maternity, caring responsibilities or any other characteristics.)**

a) Yes b) No c) Not sure

If you answered ‘yes’, please give details.

1. **Are there any other impacts (including financial) of the policy that you would like to tell us about?**

a) Yes b) No c) Not sure

If you answered ‘yes’, please give details.

NB This document is an aide for you to see all the substantive consultation questions at once. We would be grateful if you could input your responses into our [consultation hub](https://consultation.optical.org/) so that we can collect information about you or your organisation and whether the response can be shared.