

Invitation to tender: Analysis and reporting on the GOC's 'Call for evidence on the Opticians Act and consultation on associated GOC policies'

Summary

1. We are looking to commission a research agency to analyse, report and present the findings of the GOC's Call for evidence on the Opticians Act and consultation on associated GOC policies ('call for evidence').
2. We would like the appointed agency to bring out key themes, highlight key differences in stakeholder views and present the findings in a detailed but engaging and digestible way. We would also like the appointed agency to design a recorded PowerPoint presentation for the GOC's public Council meeting on 21 September 2022.
3. The GOC's call for evidence is a public consultation (Annex 1) hosted on the GOC's Citizen Space consultation platform. It was launched on 28 March 2022 and closes on 18 July 2022.
4. We are tendering at a total cost of **£20,000 including VAT**.
5. **The deadline for tenders is 14 April 2022.**

About the GOC

6. We are the regulator for the optical professions in the UK and our mission is to protect and promote the health and safety of the public. We currently register around 32,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student optometrists, student dispensing opticians and optical businesses. For more information, please visit our website: <https://www.optical.org/>
7. Optometrists examine eyes, test sight, and prescribe spectacles or contact lenses for those who need them. They are also qualified to fit spectacles and contact lenses, give advice on visual problems and detect any ocular disease or abnormality, referring the patient to a medical practitioner if necessary. A fully qualified optometrist can also gain specialty qualifications in independent prescribing.
8. A dispensing optician advises on, fits and supplies spectacles after taking account of each patient's visual, vocational and lifestyle needs. A fully qualified dispensing optician can undertake additional specialist training to fit and supply contact lenses.

9. We launched our [Strategic Plan 'Fit for the Future 2020-2025'](#) on 1 April 2020. This outlines what we plan to do over the next five years. The three main strategic objectives for the next five years are:
- delivering world-class regulatory practice;
 - transforming customer service; and
 - building a culture of continuous improvement.

Background and aim of the call for evidence

10. The call for evidence seeks views, information and factual evidence from external stakeholders on the need for change to the Opticians Act 1989 (the legislation that underpins the regulatory work of the GOC, as well as defining some aspects of optometry and dispensing optics practice). The original Opticians Act was published in 1958. This was replaced by the Opticians Act 1989, but still retained large sections of the 1958 Act. Since 1989, there have also been other amendments such as introducing Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
11. During this period, the roles of optometrists and dispensing opticians have also evolved significantly, with many gaining additional qualifications and skills and working at the top of their competency level. One purpose of the call for evidence is to understand if there are areas of our legislation that are overly restrictive or prescriptive, by asking for stakeholder views and supporting evidence. The findings from the consultation report will help us understand if there are any areas we want to take forward for further policy development.
12. For more information on the aims of the call for evidence please refer to the consultation document (Annex 1).
13. The consultation is hosted on the GOC's consultation platform (Citizen Space). As this is a lengthy and complex consultation, we would like the appointed agency to start the analysis during the consultation period. We would like the agency to suggest how we can share the consultation responses with them, for example, at the end of each week.

Response rates

14. As this is a unique opportunity to review the Opticians Act, we expect our organisational stakeholder bodies to respond given this is an area that they have been wanting to give feedback on for a number of years. We expect around 30-40 responses from organisations.
15. We are less certain how many individual GOC registrants and members of the public will respond. Some may respond to particular questions rather than answer all the questions. To give some indication, for major consultation such as this we may average around 300-500 responses overall (including organisational responses). The largest response we have received for any recent public consultation is just below 1,000.

Analysis and report writing

16. The call for evidence is divided into eight main chapters, with a total of 55 questions. Some of these questions are also requests for information from stakeholders, which may include factual evidence, insight or evidence of impact (positive or negative) and/or evidence of experience. We also have additional questions asking about the profile of the respondent and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), that we would also like to include as part of the analysis.
17. We are expecting a rigorous analysis of the findings drawing out, for example:
 - key themes in each chapter;
 - where there is consensus between organisational stakeholders and where there is not;
 - evidence to support any case; and
 - evidence of impacts (both positive and negative).
18. We would like the findings presented in a detailed but also engaging and digestible way. We would also like any references to evidence (e.g. from studies, scientific journals etc) to be collated and presented alongside the main report. We expect the report to be of publishable standards.
19. We would also like the appointed agency to present a recorded PowerPoint presentation at the GOC's public Council meeting capturing the main findings on 21 September 2022.

Outputs

20. The appointed agency will be expected to deliver the following:
 - rigorous analysis of the consultation findings including, for example: highlighting key themes and where there is consensus between stakeholders (or not); evidence to support arguments for and against change; and evidence of impacts;
 - production of a detailed written report (template to be agreed in advance with the GOC) to publishable standards, including annexes as necessary; and
 - preparation and delivery of a recorded presentation of the findings and conclusions for Council.

Budget

21. The budget is £20,000 including VAT.

Timetable

22. The timetable for this project is outlined below.

| Task | Date |
|---|-------------------|
| GOC launches call for evidence | 28 March 2022 |
| Bid submitted by agency | 14 April 2022 |
| Selection process by GOC | w/c 18 April 2022 |
| GOC call for evidence ends | 18 July 2022 |
| Final report submitted by agency | 2 September 2022 |
| Presentation of findings to our Council by agency | 21 September 2022 |

Proposals

23. Proposals should clearly state how you would meet the requirements set out in this invitation to tender. They should include:

- evidence of an understanding of our requirements;
- details of the project team, relevant skills and experience (including examples of relevant projects previously conducted) and specific project roles;
- details of any information or assistance that will be required from the GOC;
- details of how this project will be delivered, including the project management procedures and a timetable for the different stages; and
- a comprehensive itemised cost for all aspects of the work and total cost.

Selection process

24. Tenders will be assessed with reference to the following criteria:

- extent to which proposals demonstrate understanding of the brief, and meet its stated objectives;
- the tenderer having appropriate skills, qualifications and a track record in delivering similar projects; and
- the ability of the tenderer to deliver this project within the specified timescale and at reasonable costs.

25. All work should comply with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society.

26. The Council reserves the right to pay only for work it deems to be satisfactorily completed.

27. The Council is not bound to accept the lowest offer or any tender.

GOC contacts

28. Please send tenders and direct any questions to Angharad Jones (Policy Manager) by email to ajones@optical.org