

DRAFT GOC BUSINESS REGISTRANT SURVEY

INTRODUCTORY TEXT

The General Optical Council has commissioned XX to conduct a survey of optical businesses registered with it. The purpose of this survey is to help the GOC understand more about the businesses it regulates and current issues facing optical businesses. The survey findings will also help the GOC to prepare proposals for legislative reform linked to regulation of optical businesses.

The survey should take approximately XX-XX minutes to complete depending on your answers.

Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence, and you won't be identified in any information we pass on to the GOC. XX abides by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct. The aggregated results from this study will be included in a report that will be published by the GOC.

SCREENING SECTION

[Note to agency: we will need to make sure that the individual completing the survey is appropriate, e.g. their seniority and access to information about the business].

XX Is your business registered with the General Optical Council?

01 Yes

02 No [Note to agency: screen out]

XX What is your position in the business?

01 Owner

02 Practice Manager or other senior manager

03 Other [Note to agency: ask follow up question below if this option is selected]

XX Please confirm that you are authorised by the business owners or managers to complete the survey and have access to information about your business's structure and operations.

01 Yes

02 No [Note to agency: prompt them to exit and send the survey to the appropriate person in the business]

SECTION A – ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS

The first section of the survey is designed to discover background information about your business. Please answer the following questions based on the business that you own or manage (for example, if you own a franchise, answer in relation to your franchise rather than the parent company).

XX How long ago was your business established?

01 Within the last 12 months

- 02 Over 1, up to 2 years ago
- 03 Over 2, up to 5 years ago
- 04 Over 5, up to 10 years ago
- 05 Over 10 years ago
- 06 Don't know

XX How many people in total are currently employed in your business?

Category	Number
Optometrists	
Dispensing Optician	
Contact Lens Optician	
Optical assistants	
Other	
Total [automated calculation]	

XX Which of the following best describes your business structure?

- 01 Independent practice
- 02 Joint Venture
- 03 Franchise
- 04 Regional provider
- 05 National provider

XX Which of the following best describes your ownership and management structure?

- 01 Owned and managed by registered practitioner(s)
- 02 Owned by registered practitioner(s) but managed by "lay" employee(s)
- 03 Owned by lay individual(s) but managed by registered practitioner(s)
- 04 Owned and managed by "lay" individual(s)

XX Where does your business operate? (please tick all that apply)

- 01 England
- 02 Scotland
- 03 Wales
- 04 Northern Ireland
- 05 Outside of the UK

XX In which type of locations does your business serve patients (please tick all that apply)?

- 01 City
- 02 Town

03 Rural

04 Other (e.g. mobile)

XX How many practices/sites does your business currently operate?

[write in]

XX What was the turnover of your business in the most recent completed financial year? Please round to the nearest thousand. (Turnover refers to the market sales of goods and services, including all taxes except VAT).

[write in]

SECTION B - SERVICES

XX Which of the following best describes your business?

01 Provides optical services only

02 Provides a combination of optical and non-optical services

XX Which of the following services does your business provide? (please tick all that apply)

Service	Offer currently	Plan to offer in next two years
Sight testing/eye examinations		
Sale of prescription spectacles		
Fitting and sale of contact lenses		
Sale of zero powered contact lenses		
Domiciliary		
Paediatric excluding myopia control		
Paediatric myopia control		
Orthoptics		
Dry eye		
Low vision		
Visual stress/colorimetry		
Independent prescribing		
Treatment of minor eye conditions		
Acute/emergency eye care		
Diabetic screening		
Myopia management		
Glaucoma monitoring		
Pre- and post-operative cataract		
Laser eye surgery		

XX Does your business hold a contract with the NHS England and/or is it on the Health Boards Ophthalmic lists (in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland)?

01 Yes

02 No

XX Thinking about the last 12 months, approximately what percentage of sight tests/eye examinations carried out by your business were NHS funded?

01 None – fully private

02 1-10%

03 11-20%

04 21-30%

05 31-40%

06 41-50%

07 51-60%

08 61-70%

09 71-80%

09 81-90%

10 91-100%

11 Don't know

SECTION C – INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Innovation

XX Over the last three years/since you were established, have you introduced any new or significantly improved clinical services to patients?

01 Yes

02 No

XX Thinking again about the new service development activity that you've undertaken, were any of these services... (please tick all that apply)

(Routing: ask only if answer to question above is Yes)

01 New to the market (i.e. you introduced them before other businesses)

02 Only new to your business (i.e. new services that were essentially the same as a service already available from other businesses)

XX What have been the benefits of this new service development activity (please tick as many that apply)?

(Routing: as for previous question)

01 Extended the range of services you offer

02 Improved the speed of delivery of your services

03 Increased value added (This refers to increasing the difference between the price of a product or service and the cost of producing it)

04 Reduced costs

05 Improved the quality of the services you offer

06 Attracted new patients

07 Increased revenue from existing patients

08 Increased market share

09 Reduced environmental impacts

10 Replaced outdated services or processes

11 Improved health and safety

12 Met regulatory requirements

13 Faster referrals

14 Better communications IT links with ophthalmology and GPs

XX Again, thinking about the last three years, how important were each of the following factors in your decision to innovate?

(Routing: as for previous question)

Factor	High importance	Medium importance	Low importance	Not important
Patient demand for new services				
Improving customer experience				
Changes in NHS or Government commissioning of optical services				
Intensity of competition				
Availability of finance				
Cost of finance				
Recruitment of new staff or talent				
The availability of new technology				
Government regulations				
GOC regulations				
EU regulations				

Withdrawal of UK from the EU				
Issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic				

XX Below is a list of possible barriers that may have constrained your new service development over the last three years/since you were established. How important were following factors in constraining innovation activities?

(Routing: ask all respondents)

	High importance	Medium importance	Low importance	Not important
Conditions in the UK economy				
Direct innovation costs too high				
Cost of finance				
Availability of finance				
Lack of qualified personnel				
Lack of information on technology				
Lack of information on markets				
Perceived uncertain demand for innovative services				
Lack of NHS IT connectivity to ophthalmology				
GOC regulations				
Government regulations				
EU regulations				
Withdrawal of UK from the EU				
Issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic				

Technology

XX Does your business have a website?

01 Yes

02 No

XX Does your business use social media to engage with patients and the public?

01 Yes

02 No

XX If QXX = 01 Does your business publish the price of a sight test/eye examination on its website?

01 Yes

02 No

XX Does your business use, or plan to use in the next two years, the following types of technology?

Type of technology	Use now	Plan to use in next two years	No current plans to use
Autorefractor			
OCT			
OptoMap			
Artificial Intelligence			
A website with interactive features such as or online booking			
LiveChat or virtual assistants on your website			
Remote sight testing			
PMS/electronic patient records			

SECTION D – OPTICAL STUDENTS AND NEWLY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS

Optical students

XX Does your business currently have arrangements with universities or College of Optometrists to offer placements to optical students during their studies?

01 Yes

02 No

XX Are the placements for...?

(Routing: ask only if answer to first question in section was Yes)

01 Student optometrists

02 Student dispensing opticians

03 Both of the above

XX Do you plan to offer placements to optical students within the next two years?

(Routing: ask only if answer to first question in section was No)

01 Yes

02 No

XX What do you see as the main benefits of offering placements to optical students?

	Major benefit	Minor benefit	Not a benefit
Providing a pipeline of newly qualified			

optical professionals to employ in future			
Supporting the next generation of optical professionals			
Access to workforce at lower cost			
Benefits to fully qualified employees			

XX What do you see as the main barriers to offering placements to optical students?

	Major barrier	Minor barrier	Not a barrier
Financial factors			
Time constraints			
No education provider in my area			
No available consulting room			
Lack of supervisors			
Regulatory burden			
Lack of clarity about GOC requirements			
Bureaucracy by education providers			
Lack of knowledge of what is involved			

Newly qualified professionals

XX Does your business employ optical professionals who have joined the GOC register (not including pre-registration students) in the last two years? (please answer as many as apply)

01 Yes – optometrists

02 Yes – dispensing opticians

03 No

(If answer is 03, route to start of Section E – Operating Conditions)

XX The GOC's education requirements are designed to ensure that newly qualified professionals meet outcomes in the seven areas below at the point they qualify and enter the register.

Thinking about the newly qualified **optometrists** you have employed collectively, to what extent do you consider they met outcomes in each of these seven areas **at the point they started working for you**.

	Met	Not met	Unsure
Person centred care			
Communication			
Clinical practice			

Ethics and standards			
Risk			
Leadership and management			
Lifelong learning			

XX Again, thinking collectively about the newly qualified optometrists at the point they started with your business, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that...

They were equipped for safe clinical practice

There were gaps in their knowledge, skills and behaviours

They could perform most tasks within their scope of practice

They were confident within their scope of practice

01 Strongly agree

02 Agree

03 Disagree

04 Strongly disagree

05 Don't know

XX And how would you rate their performance now...

They are equipped for safe clinical practice

There are gaps in their knowledge, skills and behaviours

They can perform most tasks within their scope of practice

They are confident within their scope of practice

01 Strongly agree

02 Agree

03 Disagree

04 Strongly disagree

05 Don't know

XX The GOC's education requirements are designed to ensure that newly qualified professionals meet outcomes in the seven areas below at the point they qualify and enter the register.

Thinking about the newly qualified **dispensing opticians** you have employed as a whole, to what extent do you consider they met outcomes in each of these seven areas **at the point they started working for you....**

(Routing – ask only if respondents selected 02 – dispensing optician near start of section)

	Met	Not met	Unsure
Person centred care			
Communication			

Clinical practice			
Ethics and standards			
Risk			
Leadership and management			
Lifelong learning			

XX Again, thinking collectively about the newly qualified dispensing opticians at the point they started with your business, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that...

They were equipped for safe clinical practice

There were gaps in their knowledge, skills and behaviours

They could perform most tasks within their scope of practice

They were confident within their scope of practice

01 Strongly agree

02 Agree

03 Disagree

04 Strongly disagree

05 Don't know

XX And how would you rate their performance now...

They are equipped for safe clinical practice

There are gaps in their knowledge, skills and behaviours

They can perform most tasks within their scope of practice

They are confident within their scope of practice

01 Strongly agree

02 Agree

03 Disagree

04 Strongly disagree

05 Don't know

SECTION E – OPERATING CONDITIONS

XX Reflecting on the last 12 months, what best describes how your organisation has performed overall.

01 Growing

02 Stable

03 Declining

XX Thinking about the performance of your business compared to 3-4 years ago, would you say that the business is...

01 Growing

02 Stable

03 Declining

XX Thinking about the next 12 months, what is the outlook for your business?

01 Growing

02 Stable

03 Declining

04 Exit

XX Please rate the following challenges that might be facing your business.

	Very challenging	Somewhat challenging	Not challenging
Rising costs due to economic conditions			
Impacts of cost-of-living crisis on patients			
Welfare of employees			
Brexit and its implications			
Covid-19 and its impacts			
Difficulties recruiting staff			
Increasing wage pressures			
Government funding of sight tests			
Retaining patients			
Keeping up with changes in technology			
Meeting compliance requirements			
Competition from online businesses			
Demand outstripping capacity to deliver			

XX Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that...

I am optimistic about the future of primary eye care

I am optimistic about the future of my business

There are rough times ahead for optical businesses in general

I can easily recruit optometrists when I need to

I can easily recruit dispensing opticians when I need to

01 Strongly agree

02 Agree

03 Disagree

04 Strongly disagree

- 05 Don't know
- XX To what extent has your business used locums in the last 12 months?
- 01 All the time or nearly all the time
- 02 Most of the time
- 03 Sometimes
- 04 Occasionally
- 05 Never
- XX Which of the following best represents the reasons why you use locums?
- (Routing – ask only if respondents selected options 01-04 in question above)
- 01 We use locums as a positive choice that fits our business model
- 02 We are forced to use locums due to difficulties recruiting/retaining permanent staff

SECTION F – PERCEPTIONS OF REGULATION

- XX Do you consider the annual registration fee your business pays to the GOC is...
- 01 Low
- 02 Reasonable
- 03 High but not excessive
- 04 Poor value for money
- 05 Don't know
- XX Do you consider the annual compliance costs your business faces are...
- 01 Low
- 02 Reasonable
- 03 High but not excessive
- 04 Poor value for money
- 05 Don't know
- XX Please rate the following types of regulation in terms of cost of ongoing compliance.
- [note to agency: only some of the below relate to GOC and this will need to be differentiated in the analysis and report-writing]
- Information requests from the GOC
- Keeping up to date with changes in government legislation
- Keeping up to date with changes in GOC regulation

NHS commissioning requirements

Safeguarding requirements

Health and safety

Equalities legislation

Environmental or sustainability laws/regulations/standards

Information you are required to provide to patients

Maintaining patient records

Data protection requirements

Handling patient complaints

Professional indemnity insurance

CPD undertaken by employees

01 Very low

02 Low

03 High

04 Very high

05 Don't know

XX 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?

01 Very aware

02 Quite aware

03 Not very aware

04 Not at all aware

05 Don't know

XX In the last 12 months, has the OCCS considered a complaint about your business?

01 Yes

02 No

03 Don't know

XX Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that...

I find the GOC's standards for optical businesses easy to understand

I find the GOC's standards for optical businesses easy to comply with

The GOC's standards for optical businesses help to ensure the quality of patient care

01 Strongly agree

02 Agree

03 Disagree

04 Strongly disagree

05 Don't know