



Guide for Consumers



www.opticalcomplaints.co.uk

Advice for Consumers



The Optical Consumer Complaints Service (OCCS) is an independent and free service for consumers (patients) of optical care and the professionals providing that care. The service is funded by the General Optical Council who regulate optometrists, dispensing opticians (often known collectively as opticians) and registered optical businesses.

All opticians and optometry practices should have their own internal complaints procedure to deal with any complaints raised by consumers. Most concerns are normally resolved informally.

When a complaint cannot be resolved, then the OCCS offers an impartial facility to help obtain a satisfactory outcome. We understand that it is important that this is done fairly and quickly.

What We Can Do to Help

We can help resolve complaints about the goods you have received (glasses, contact lenses, etc.) and/or the service provided.

We will listen to your complaint and then investigate. We will then work with both you, and the optician involved to help reach a fair resolution.

By exploring why you are dissatisfied, and listening to both sides, we will support everyone involved to work towards a solution.

The Service Cannot Assist with the Following

- **Concerns that the practitioner is not fit to practice**

We may refer you and your complaint to the General Optical Council if there is any concern that the professionals involved are not fit to practice. The General Optical Council regulates all professionals in the UK and authorises them to practice. You can contact the General Optical Council on **020 7580 3898** or visit **www.optical.org**

- **Possible negligence**

If you feel the optical care your received was negligent, then you will need to speak to a solicitor specialising in clinical negligence

- **Practice or the professionals involved are not regulated by the General Optical Council**

We can only mediate complaints involving professionals and practices who are regulated by the General Optical Council. If your complaint relates to someone who is not registered with the General Optical Council, then we will refer you to Trading Standards or you would have to consider making a small claim in the county court.

- **Other regulators or complaints procedures**

For example, if your optical care was provided by the NHS, then you would need to use the relevant NHS complaints procedure (this includes hospitals).

We cannot mediate a complaint arising from laser eye surgery performed by an Ophthalmologist/ Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon as they are

regulated by the General Medical Council.

If you are unsure whether the service can accept and mediate your complaint, please call us for more information.

What Happens Next?

Once we have the details of your complaint:

- We will ask you to complete a form to allow the practice to release your optical records and to provide all the relevant information
- We will contact the practice and obtain all the information we need to investigate your complaint
- If necessary, we will obtain an independent review from an optical expert
- We will then contact you and the practice to discuss a solution
- When a solution is found, we will help to implement this
- If the solution proposed is not accepted by either party, your complaint can be referred to a senior adjudicator

Importantly, we will also ask you how we have done and listen to your feedback to continuously improve the mediation service.

Please visit www.opticalcomplaints.co.uk for more details.

As well as a complete complaints mediation service, we can also:

- Give guidance to optical professionals on how to resolve a complaint
- Provide initial assistance to consumers who may not be confident or able to raise a complaint alone

What do you have to do if you are unhappy?

The first step is to contact the practice and tell them you are unhappy as soon as possible. Every practice should have a complaints procedure and should respond to your complaint.

If your complaint cannot be resolved with the practice, then you can refer your complaint to the Optical Consumer Complaints Service. You can do this by:

- Telephoning us on **0344 800 5071**
Monday to Friday between 8am - 6pm
- Emailing us at:
enquiries@opticalcomplaints.co.uk
- Completing the complaint form at
www.opticalcomplaints.co.uk
- Writing to us at Optical Consumer Complaints Service, 6 Market Square, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 3UZ



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OCCS Address

6 Market Square
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The Optical Consumer Complaints
Service is operated by:
Nockolds Solicitors Limited