



# Guide for Practitioners



**Support in Managing Customer Complaints for Optical Professionals**

[www.opticalcomplaints.co.uk](http://www.opticalcomplaints.co.uk)

# Advice for Practitioners

---



**At the Optical Consumer Complaints Service (OCCS) we appreciate that as professionals you are committed to providing excellent care to your consumers and delivering a good service.**

Despite best efforts, complaints can and do arise, and we are here to support the optical professions to achieve a solution which will satisfy the consumer and minimise damage to your reputation.

Our approachable team has considerable complaints handling experience and can offer guidance or just the chance to talk through a situation. We have practical experience of operating within a regulated sector. We understand the requirements of a code of conduct and a regulator whilst providing a professional service and running a profitable business.

## **What We Can Do to Help**

We are here to offer help and guidance to professionals who would like to talk through a particular concern and help them manage the situation and wherever possible, avoid a complaint.

## **We Promise**

- To listen to both sides of the complaint
- To investigate quickly
- To share feedback and guidance to help avoid future complaints

## **We are Here to Facilitate and Mediate**

- A satisfactory and fair resolution to individual complaints
- Sharing of best practice particularly in terms of complaint avoidance and handling
- Profile raising of the regulated professions to make the public aware of the benefits of using regulated optical professionals and practices

## **What Happens When We Receive a Complaint Referral?**

- We will ask the consumer to tell us what has happened and to complete a form to allow you and your practice to release the optical records and to provide all the relevant information
- We will contact you and the practice and request all the information we need to investigate the complaint. This will include speaking to you to understand the complaint from your point of view
- If necessary, we will obtain a review from an independent optical expert
- We will then contact you both 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, it can be referred to a senior

adjudicator

## What We Will Not Do

- Force either party to accept a solution
- Investigate any fitness to practise issues, although we will assist and mediate consumer complaints which may arise within a fitness to practise investigation
- Deal with allegations of negligence

**For further details about the Optical Consumer Complaints Service and useful guidance and tools for you and your practice, please visit:**

**[www.opticalcomplaints.co.uk](http://www.opticalcomplaints.co.uk)**

## **An Aide Memoire on Section 18 of the New GOC Standards of Practice**

**From 1 April 2016, the GOC Practice Standards place an obligation on registrants to respond to complaints effectively, honestly, openly, politely and constructively (PS 18).**

This includes a duty to operate and follow a complaints policy. The OCCS can provide guidance to registrants on how to approach complaint handling as well as provide assistance in resolving individual complaints and mediate complaints that cannot be resolved within the practice. Practice Standard also requires registrants to inform the patient (at the appropriate time) of their rights to complain to the General Optical Council or to seek mediation through the Optical Consumer Complaints Service.

**If you would like any further information or advice on complaints handling and the Practice Standards, please contact us.**

## GOC Practice Standards

- 18.1** Operate a complaints system or follow the system that your employer has in place, making patients aware of their opportunities to complain to yourself or your employer. At the appropriate stage in the process, the patient should also be informed of their rights to complain to the General Optical Council or to seek mediation through the Optical Consumer Complaints Service.
- 18.2** Respect a patient's right to complain and ensure that the making of a complaint does not prejudice patient care.
- 18.3** Respond honestly, openly, politely and constructively to anyone who complains and apologise where appropriate.
- 18.4** Provide any information that a complainant might need to progress a complaint including your General Optical Council registration details and details of any registered specialty areas of practice.



## Contact Us

Telephone us on **0344 800 5071**  
Monday - Friday, 8am - 6pm

Email us:  
[enquiries@opticalcomplaints.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@opticalcomplaints.co.uk)

Complete the complaint form at:  
[www.opticalcomplaints.co.uk](http://www.opticalcomplaints.co.uk)



## OCCS Address

6 Market Square  
Bishop's Stortford  
Hertfordshire  
CM23 3UZ

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