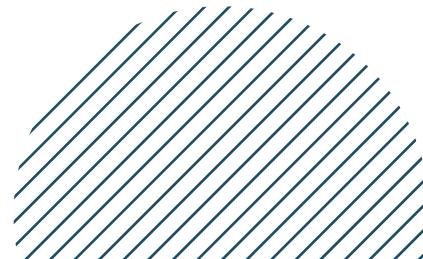
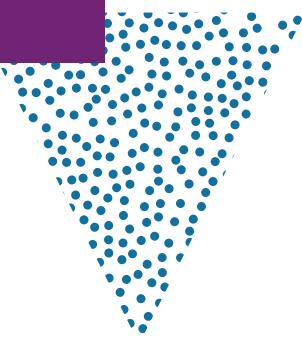


**Optical Consumer
Complaints Service**

**OCCS Winter Newsletter -
Including the Latest Trends in
Complaints**



Welcome to the winter newsletter for the Optical Consumer Complaints Service (OCCS). Here we share the highlights from the Q2/Q3 2025 reports, plus the details of a recent case we mediated in which a complaint arose due to a lack of understanding of lens and frame warranties.

Annual Report Findings - Q2/Q3 2025

During Q2 and Q3, we handled 1,057 cases – a 22% increase on the previous year's figure of 861 cases for the same period.

Of the cases received, 62% were managed by supporting local resolution, which means providing advice or reassurance to consumers, or with support for early resolution within the practice's own complaint process.

However, the OCCS has seen a significant increase in cases where the consumer is unwilling to accept the resolutions offered by their practice and want OCCS support to find an acceptable resolution. As a result, the number of cases progressing to full mediation has increased 45%. Many of these have been more challenging as the perception of an acceptable outcome between consumer and practice is markedly different. In many cases, the change sits with the consumer's expectation of how their complaint should be resolved, with a focus on financial resolutions. While there are complaints where the practice complaint process may not have been as efficient as they would hope, some consumers are seeking financial 'recompense' for low level service issues which would previously have been resolved with an apology. The OCCS continually analyses trends in terms of complaint numbers, the issues raised and resolutions, as well as the drivers of these changes and will look to share this analysis in the 2026 annual report and wider insight sharing.

Key facts and stats:

- 22% increase in enquiries, year-on-year
- 85% of OCCS-mediated cases were resolved
- 20% of cases where the consumer requested mediation were resolved in practice with the support of the OCCS
- The most common issues related to goods and services, and customer care
- Complaints around costs have edged up to 7%, having been consistently 5% for a number of years
- 25% of the complaints raised through the GOC were passed to OCCS for investigation.

Jennie Jones, head of the OCCS, said: "The substantial rise in complaints during Q2 and Q3 of 2025, has highlighted the growing importance of mediation and advice, as key resolution tools, for both practices and consumers. The data also underscores the need for ongoing education, especially through CPD initiatives, to continue to help improve standards of practice whilst also navigating changing consumer behaviours and expectations."



Case Study: Seeing Eye-to-Eye on Warranties

A customer purchased spectacles in August 2023. Over a year later (October 2024) the titanium frame broke so these were replaced by the opticians with a non-titanium frame in the same model. In January 2025, the customer noticed the lens were scratched so brought his glasses back in for replacement. Later, the customer realised that the lenses were not the same manufacturer and design that they had originally ordered and contacted the opticians to complain.

After rejecting the practice's offer to resolve the situation with replacement lenses, the customer contacted the OCCS in March 2025 to mediate the dispute.

The practice kept detailed records which showed that the customer's spectacles had been brought back several times, and on each occasion, they had tried to meet the customer's needs and ensure they were satisfied with their glasses.

Shortly after the customer collected the glasses in August 2023, they returned them saying they were struggling with near and intermediate vision. After a refraction check resulted in no change, the practice agreed with the customer to try a different lens design. The change in lens resolved the customer's vision issue.

When the customer returned with the broken glasses over a year later, the frame was no longer covered by the 12 month warranty. However, the practice replaced the frame free of charge as a gesture of good will. Unfortunately, the original titanium frame ordered had been discontinued and was no longer available, so a non-titanium frame in the same model was used, and the customer was happy with this resolution.

Earlier this year when the customer asked for the scratched lens to be replaced, this was done under the 24 month lens warranty, free of charge. The customer complained that these were not the lens chosen as part of his original order. They were a copy of the lenses provided when he had the initial issues in 2023.

The practice agreed to supply another set of new lenses by the original brand, as the customer requested. However, they declined to provide a new titanium frame as the model was no longer available, and they had replaced the frames previously outside of warranty.

Using the additional information from the practice records, the OCCS was able to go back to the customer to help them understand the frame and lens warranties, and to highlight that each solution provided by the practice had been explained to him at the time and was done with his agreement, and with no cost to him.

The practice maintained that replacements were provided either under warranty or as a goodwill gesture and that they were not required to provide anything further. However, they agreed to reiterate their offer to replace the lenses to the same manufacturer as originally purchased as a gesture of good will to resolve the complaint, and the customer accepted the offer.





Key Takeaway

Successful mediation requires both parties to see and understand the other side of the story. In this case, the OCCS mediation helped the customer to understand more about lens and frame warranties and highlighted that the practice had often gone above and beyond to ensure they successfully resolved his issues at no cost to the customer. This new level of understanding helped break down the barrier between the parties, and allowed a resolution to be accepted.

Contact Sue Clark sclark@nockolds.co.uk for more information or to book a CPD event for your LOC or employer.

