

# College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth) response to the General Optical Council's consultation on Supplementary Guidance on Consent

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Royal College of Ophthalmologists welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation.
- 1.2 The Royal College of Ophthalmologists is the professional body for ophthalmologists and we champion excellence in the practice of ophthalmology on behalf of our members to optimise care for patients. We set the curriculum and examinations for trainee ophthalmologists, provide training in eye surgery, maintain standards in the practice of ophthalmology, and promote research and advance science in the specialty.
- 1.3 We work with leaders across the eye health sector to help shape eye services for the benefit of patients.

## 2. Our response

- 2.1 Overall we consider the draft guidance to be clear, well laid out and includes useful examples to illustrate the meaning of explicit and implied consent.
- 2.2 The section in the draft guidance on **refusal or withdrawal of consent** is of particular relevance for patients who are considering refractive laser and intraocular eye surgery. It is especially important to consider the vulnerabilities and psychological needs of patients considering these procedures, and that they do so voluntarily. This includes ensuring that patients are informed about alternative interventions that could meet their needs with less risk.
- 2.3 Optometrists and other allied professionals play an important role in providing patients with the necessary information to be able to give, refuse or withdraw consent for refractive surgery. The General Medical Council's guidance for doctors who provide cosmetic interventions<sup>1</sup> applies to refractive surgery, and sets out the key considerations for obtaining consent from patients. We would welcome the addition of a reference to the GMC's guidance within the draft document, or more explicit guidance on the psychological considerations of refractive surgery.
- 2.4 We also consider that it is important that patients are able to understand the information that they are given, including in their first language. Therefore we would welcome specific reference to arranging translation services where appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.gmc-uk.org/Guidance\\_for\\_doctors\\_who\\_offer\\_cosmetic\\_interventions\\_210316.pdf\\_65254111.pdf](http://www.gmc-uk.org/Guidance_for_doctors_who_offer_cosmetic_interventions_210316.pdf_65254111.pdf)