



College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth) response to the General Optical Council's consultation on the draft Strategic Plan for 2017 to 2020

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. This includes non-medical eye care professionals and their representative bodies.
- 1.4 We have responded below to the questions in the consultation of greatest relevant to our role and members' interests.

2. Consultation questions

Are there any changes in the external environment that we have not identified, or to which we have given insufficient weight?

- 2.1 As the professional body representing ophthalmologists, we want to ensure that the increasing delegation of eye disease management to GOC registrants, is done safely and effectively.
- 2.2 Many eye departments already successfully make use of highly skilled optometrists and other non-medical staff to deliver quality eye care, but it is important to ensure that further uptake of this model is underpinned by appropriate safeguards.
- 2.3 We wish to emphasise the importance of appropriate training, successful upskilling, and developing effective ways of working with all colleagues, for ensuring patient safety. Sharing care across secondary, primary and community settings requires reliable and accurate information to be accessible to all staff involved in service delivery.

What are your views on our proposed strategic objectives?

- 2.4 We support the overall aim to equip opticians for the roles of the future and to develop into an organisation that stakeholders find accessible and easy to work with.
- 2.5 We strongly support the GOCs wish to collaborate in achieving shared objectives and hope that you will work with the RCOphth towards delivering a safe, high quality and sustainable system of eye care which makes effective use of all members of the eye care community.
- 2.6 We welcome Objective one and wish to be an active partner in reviewing and developing optical education and training. It is essential that registrants who undertake extended roles develop the necessary skills and knowledge that will allow them to do so safely and effectively.

What are your views on the priorities we have identified for the three year life of our strategic plan?

- 2.7 We consider the strategic review of education of optical professionals to be very timely given the increasing number who are carrying out extended roles. We strongly support this as a priority. We would also expect that requirements for ongoing professional development will reflect this change, and therefore support the review of CET to achieve this.