**Policy Name: Complaints Policy**

**[Author]:**

**Approved by:**

**[Date]:**

 **[insert name Local Optical Committee]:**

### Complaints Policy

1. **Introduction and Scope**The LOC will endeavour to carry out its duties with fairness and diligence. We do not therefore envisage receiving many complaints but nevertheless it is important to plan for such an eventuality. This Policy demonstrates the steps that we will take in the event of complaints against the LOC and/or its members and officers.
2. **Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of all LOC members to understand and implement this policy. Officers are primarily responsible for ensuring that this Complaints Policy is implemented by the LOC.

1. **Form of Complaints**

Complaints against LOCs may come in a variety of ways:

* + Verbally
	+ In writing or by email
	+ By social media or online
	+ Third party.

We will only consider complaints that are made formally to the Committee in which the complaint is clearly outlined. We will consider anonymous complaints although this will restrict investigation and potentially investigation outcomes.

1. **Type of Complaints**Complaints against LOCs are rare. Complaints that do occur may include those:

	* against the LOC itself concerning perceived failures of the LOC to carry out its duties
	* alleging that the LOC has shown bias for or against an optical contractor or performer
	* alleging conflicts of interest
	* against a particular LOC member.
2. **Complaints Procedure**

The complaint should be directed in the first instance to the Chairman or Secretary or another officer of the Committee, as appropriate. The officer should consider whether the local NHS team should be informed of the complaint. As below, LOCSU can arbitrate and/or advise as requested. Nothing in this Policy should affect the legal rights of the Committee or a person making a complaint.

All complaints are acknowledged by the LOC within 3 working days. When acknowledging receipt of a complaint, the LOC offers to discuss with the complainant how and when the LOC intends to investigate and resolve the complaint. If the complainant refuses this offer, the LOC will advise the complainant in writing how long it is likely to take them to respond concerning the substance of the complaint (the ‘response period’).

The LOC endeavours to keep the complainant informed of the progress of the investigation. As soon as possible after completing the investigation, the LOC considers the complaint and what it proposes to do to resolve the complaint and any consequent action. This will be done within 10 working days where possible. The LOC endeavours to resolve the complaint within 6 months after receiving the complaint or, if it cannot be resolved, the LOC informs the complainant why they have not managed to do so.

The Company keeps a record of each complaint received, the subject matter and outcome of each complaint, each response period where applicable, and, in the cases of a response period being applicable, whether the complainant was informed of the outcome of the investigation.

1. **External mediation**

If the officer of the Committee, to whom the complaint has been directed, believes that it is not appropriate to deal with the complaint, the complaint should be directed to LOCSU or, if that is inappropriate, to the national representative bodies. They will then will investigate the complaint and make recommendations on the resolution of the complaint. LOCSU or the national representative bodies should notify the LOC and the complainant of the outcome of the investigation and the recommendations. The LOC must either follow the recommendations or refer to an Extraordinary General Meeting.

1. **Mediation**

LOCSU can be requested to act as a mediator if required.