

Joint sector statement

Organisations from across the optical sector, including employers and professional and membership bodies, attended a meeting on 3 October to discuss the GOC's survey findings on bullying, harassment, abuse, and discrimination at work.

Findings from the GOC's registrant survey show a worrying level of GOC registrants reporting negative and damaging behaviours in the workplace, from patients, colleagues and managers, with many feeling unable to report their experiences. The survey data shows that registrants with one or more protected characteristics were more likely to report experiencing bullying, harassment, abuse, and discrimination at work.

In response to these findings, we will all work together to promote a safe and positive working environment for all members of the optical team. Discriminatory and unacceptable behaviours can have damaging effects on the mental health and wellbeing of individuals and teams, which in turn can impact on patient care.

As a sector we are committed to a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment, abuse, and discrimination across all working environments. We all commit to promoting and embedding a positive working environment that is based on respect, civility, compassion, and inclusion. We will be working together to support all team members with the support and tools they need to help achieve this.

This statement is supported by:

Association of Optometrists

Association of British Dispensing Opticians

Association for Independent Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians

FODO: The Association for Eye Care Providers

General Optical Council

Local Optical Committee Support Unit

Optical Consumer Complaints Service

Optometry Wales

Optometry Northern Ireland

Optometry Scotland

Optometry Schools Council

The College of Optometrists

