

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR INDIVIDUAL REGISTRANTS

INTRODUCTION

Patients (including customers) must be able to trust optometrists and dispensing opticians with their well being. To justify that trust, professionals have a duty to maintain a good standard of practice and care and to show respect for all aspects of human life.

In all matters, a practitioner must never discriminate unfairly against patients or colleagues and must always be prepared to justify his or her actions.

This document describes principles of good practice in professional conduct and standards and sets out the framework of conduct expected in all aspects of professional work. The principles are linked to the values which have been agreed by healthcare professionals to be common to each profession.

Failure to comply with the duties and responsibilities set out in the Code may put registration at risk.

The GOC recognises that other bodies have issued detailed guidance with regard to the matters covered in this Code. Practitioners are expected therefore to be familiar with the relevant guidance and advice issued by other organisations and, in particular, that of the professional and representative bodies. Reference may be made by the GOC to the guidance and advice of other bodies in the exercise of its functions. In addition, the GOC may from time to time supplement the Code with guidance on specific matters.

THE CODE

A registered optometrist or dispensing optician must:

1. make the care of the patient his or her first and continuing concern;
2. treat every patient politely and considerately;
3. respect patients' dignity and privacy;
4. listen to patients and respect their views;
5. give patients information in a way they can understand and make them aware of the options available;
6. maintain adequate patients' records;
7. respect the rights of patients to be fully involved in decisions about their care;
8. keep professional knowledge and skills up to date;
9. recognise the limits of his or her professional competence;
10. be honest and trustworthy;
11. ensure that financial and commercial dealings do not compromise the interests of the patient;
12. respect and protect confidential information;
13. make sure that personal beliefs do not prejudice patient care;
14. act quickly to protect patients from risk where there is good reason to believe that he or she, or a colleague, may not be fit to practise;
15. avoid abusing his or her position as an optometrist or a dispensing optician;
16. work with colleagues in the ways that best serve patients' interests;
17. register with and maintain registration with the GOC.

Dated the 30 day of June 2005