



## COUNCIL

### COVID-19

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**Meeting:** 13 May 2020

**Status:** For decision

**Lead responsibility:** Lesley Longstone

**Paper Author:** Marcus Dye (Director of Strategy – Interim)

**Council Lead(s):** There is no Council lead for this work.

### Purpose

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1. To update Council on the impact of the COVID-19 emergency on the optical sector and seek endorsement of the actions taken by the Executive team.

### Recommendations

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2. Council is asked to:
  - **note** the background and actions taken as outlined in report at annex one;
  - **discuss** implications for the future; and
  - **endorse** the GOC statements on the emergency that GOC has so far developed.

### Strategic objective

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3. This work does not flow from any particular strategic objective but affects them all, it also fulfils a new value, proposed by the sector as part of our consultation, that we should be agile and responsive to change.

### Background

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4. We discussed at the emergency meeting of Council on 18 March 2020, our initial plans to deal with the COVID-19 emergency.

### Analysis

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5. The paper at annex one outlines the background to the COVID-19 emergency, gives an outline of how this has affected the optical sector and provides information on how the GOC has responded in support of the sector and registrants.
6. The paper also raises several strategic issues for the sector and for the GOC. A separate strategy session is to be arranged to work through the implications longer term, but questions we will need to address include:
  - the longer-term impact on the sector at large
  - The implications for individual practice going forward

- the impact on optical education and the ESR
- the implications for our recently agreed strategic and operational business plans

7. Any thoughts about these broad themes to inform our planning would be helpful.

### Statements

8. At its emergency meeting of Council on 18 March, decisions in relation to regulatory statements were delegated to the Chair, CEO and Registrar and to David Parkins. This was and continues to be necessary because of the fast-moving situation, but this is an opportunity for Council to endorse those statements and raise any issues that will be considered as part of the next scheduled review.

### Finance

9. Council are considering a separate paper on the financial risks associated with Covid in their strictly confidential meeting. .

### Risks

10. There are three COVID-19 related risks on our corporate risk register. The most relevant for this paper is as follows:

- Regulatory requirements fail to ensure registrants deliver safe and effective services in the specific context of COVID-19 – mitigated by our work to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers, stakeholder engagement and signposting.

### Equality Impacts

11. There is the potential that Government guidance and therefore our responses may be different for different groups in society and we will need to closely monitor this impact as we proceed with our response to COVID-19.

### Devolved nations

12. The impact of the COVID-19 emergency has been different in different parts of the UK and this has meant that different approaches have sometimes been taken by Government and NHS bodies. We have remained apprised of this and adapted our work accordingly, ensuring that we remain in contact with devolved bodies and adapting our communications, such as the website, to reflect differences in approach.

### Other Impacts

13. The following other impacts have been identified:

- delay in legislative reform agenda; and
- potential delay in Strategic and Business Plan objectives.

**Communications**

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**External communications**

14. None planned in relation to this paper, but specific details of communications activities are within the paper.

**Internal communications**

15. None planned in relation to this paper.

**Next steps**

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16. To arrange a Council discussion on strategy post-COVID-19 to inform future review of business plan and five-year strategic plan.
17. To keep Council apprised of any significant developments or increased risks, through normal communications channels.

**Attachment**

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Annex One: Report on the Regulatory Impact of COVID-19