

General Optical Council: Equality and Diversity Monitoring Report

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. Introduction

The General Optical Council (GOC) is the statutory regulator for the optical professions in the UK. We are committed to ensuring that in exercising all of our functions we operate in a fair and transparent manner and in a way that is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act), we have a number of duties that we must carry out and exercise within our public functions. The Act provides protection for people against discrimination (both direct and indirect) on the basis of nine protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; race/ethnicity; religion or belief; gender; sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnership; and pregnancy and maternity. It also provides for positive action to advantage some disadvantaged groups.

We embed and promote equality, diversity and inclusion within our practice and sector. Our approach is set out in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme (2014-17)¹, which is closely linked to our Strategic Plan.²

This report covers the second year of our EDI Scheme 2014-17, therefore focuses on the progress made across all of the seven objectives, those left to address and also considerations for our next scheme.

1.2. Data

The information in this report is based on our in-house datasets on 31 March 2016. Where possible we have provided data over the last five years to help us identify any trends.

Statistics followed by an asterisk (*) indicate that this figure has been rounded up, as there were less than ten individual responses. This is to abide with the Data Protection Act and Our Approach to EDI monitoring policy statement³ to ensure that individuals cannot be identified within the report.

Due to rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100 percent. The totals will vary between 99 and 101 percentage range.

1.3. Data Limitations

Due to the complexity of reasons behind the data, it is important that no assumptions are made about the information presented.

¹ <https://www.optical.org/download.cfm?docid=9598935D-29E2-4C65-8CB442A29F650D68>

² https://www.optical.org/en/about_us/strategic_plan/index.cfm

³ <https://www.optical.org/download.cfm?docid=38B7754E-0F89-49B4-BF8DBB95C09275B4>

1.4. Progress in 2015/16

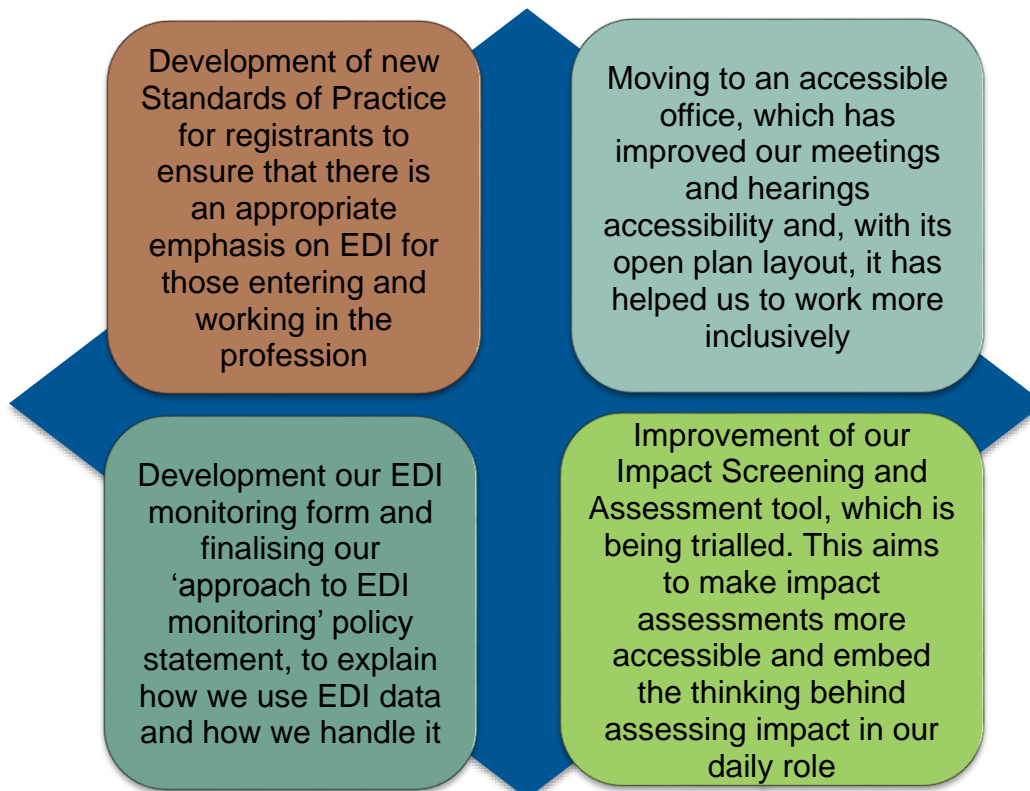
Since our last report, we have continued to make good progress against our seven equality objectives and are committed to identifying areas that we can further develop.

We will use this analysis to inform our next EDI scheme 2017-2020, which will be developed this year.

Our seven EDI objectives are:



Key achievements include:



1.5. Our progress against objectives 2015/16

Objective 1 - To ensure that our policies and procedures are fair, transparent and applied consistently

- We amended our Equality Impact Screening and Assessment (IA) template to improve our Impact Assessment process. This has enabled more employees to be able to complete a basic assessment of key equality considerations which is helping to embed impact assessment within our daily work.
- We assessed the implications of a number of external reports when considering our action plan, which included the EHRC's inquiry into disability related harassment. From this work, we have incorporated a number of points including accessibility, job advertising and our process for considering reasonable adjustments. We conducted an impact assessment on this covering our process of advertising, selection criteria and application forms for member recruitment to ensure consideration of how to improve the diversity of applicants.

Objective 2 - To provide relevant and practical guidance and training on equality, diversity and inclusion

- We sourced online EDI training and selected a provider which runs a number of different short courses to provide an introduction to EDI as well as refresher training and more specific topic-focussed training. We launched the awareness course with our members in March 2016 and our employees in July 2016. We also ran EDI classroom-based training for our members to build on their existing knowledge and continue to raise awareness and understanding around the purpose and need of Equality and Diversity within our daily practice. In addition, we provide refresher training on our responsibilities as a public body and our EDI scheme.
- We ran a number of training sessions about Unconscious Bias for members and employees involved in making decisions, and will continue to facilitate these as required.

Objective 3 - To monitor diversity and assess the impact of our activities

Compliance

- We use the monitoring report for three key purposes:
 - use the analysis to inform and prioritise key actions to active our EDI objectives;
 - use the data and analysis to inform impact assessments; and
 - raise awareness about our commitment towards our responsibilities and valuing of EDI as an employer, public body and charity.

Data Collection

- We will develop our IT system to enable us to add EDI information to MyGOC, whilst considering the changing Information Governance legislation and ensuring the data is kept securely. Until our internal system is developed, we are using a secure third party to collect and store the EDI information.
- We continue to collect monitoring information in relation to employees, members, respondents to our consultations and those applying to become members, have launched a new monitoring form and finalised 'our approach to EDI monitoring'⁴ policy statement which sets out how we use the information and how we use it.

⁴ https://www.optical.org/en/news_publications/Publications/equality-and-diversity-reports.cfm

Objective 4 - To provide services and deliver our statutory functions in a way that is accessible and appropriate

Accessibility

- Our new office is accessible and the interior was designed specifically for individuals with sight impairments: considering colour, space and design. Over 90 per cent of employees reported that they were satisfied with the new environment and visitors have given positive feedback regarding its improved suitability for our purposes. We now hold Hearings and meetings on site and we have installed Hearing Loops to improve accessibility.
- In order to be more accessible to the public, we formalised our process to make publications available in large text and languages other than English on request. For people who wish to speak with us in a language other than English, we sourced and set up an interpretation and translation service available for over 50 different languages.

Welsh Language Scheme

- We continue to operate in accordance with the commitments set out in our Welsh Language Scheme.

Reasonable adjustments

- When operating our policies and processes we offer reasonable adjustments and are ensuring that this is noted in our published documents. Our Compliance team oversee requests for reasonable adjustments and can be contacted by phone or email edi@optical.org.

Objective 5 - To undertake communication and engagement with stakeholders in our approach to EDI and promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion

- We proactively consulted on a number of key policy decisions and asked stakeholders to identify any potential EDI implications of our decisions. We have expanded our stakeholder group and will continue to do so next year in order to ensure we speak to the right people who represent different perspectives and needs.
- We used informal feedback to understand perceptions and experiences and have attended a number of registrant events, to discuss matters arising within the optical sector and seek feedback about our policies and recruitment campaigns.
- We have started to publish our Equality Impact Assessments – and hope to do more of this in future to be transparent about our EDI progress.⁵
- We continually seek opportunities to foster a positive and productive culture, to share and understand EDI best practice, to foster good relations between people from different groups and to promote positive attitudes towards all people irrespective of any disabilities or other protected characteristics. As a regulator, we participate in numerous cross-regulatory forums to share best practice and shape our Equality and Diversity activity which we embed in our business plans. We are members of the healthcare regulators' Equality and Diversity group, UKIED and the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Regulators, Inspectorates and Ombudsman forum. We use this engagement, as well as the information in our monitoring reports, to consider our next areas of focus, such as aligned equality framework measurements and improved monitoring systems.

⁵ https://www.optical.org/en/news_publications/Publications/equality-and-diversity-reports.cfm

Objective 6 – To ensure our approach to regulation improves the effectiveness of EDI policies on service delivery

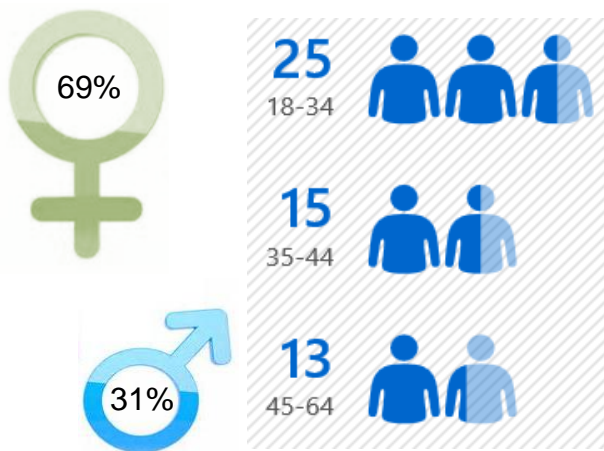


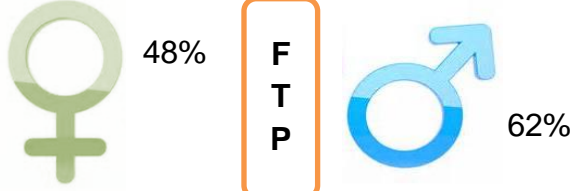

- We developed new Standards of Practice, ensuring that there is an appropriate emphasis on EDI for those entering and working in the profession.
- In January 2016, we conducted an equality impact assessment on our Hearings and Indicative Sanctions guidance which identified 19 final actions. These have been completed. So far, we have received no feedback regarding any areas of concern linked to this guidance but we will review any feedback submitted in future.

Objective 7 - To develop action plans to support the implementation and monitoring of our Scheme

- We have an EDI action plan which is aligned to our strategic objectives. It is regularly reviewed and updated as new activities are identified. We prioritised actions following consideration of our legal duties and risk assessment, and focussed on those which were considered more urgent. We encouraged teams to use our EDI report to identify other actions to be completed within their areas or projects.
- We have successfully identified areas of improvement within these areas over the past year (such as corporate complaints, FTP complaints, customer service) and action has been taken to mitigate any adverse impacts. We report our activity within our normal performance reporting as well as to the Audit and Risk Committee, Council and other committees throughout the year.

1.6. Findings

The expected complexity of reasoning behind the data means that it is important that no assumptions are made, especially regarding FTP allegations, based on one-strand data in this report.

<p>Employees: Our employees are predominately female, mostly aged under 44 and we have a reasonably ethnically diverse workforce.</p> 	<p>Complainants: There are indications that a high proportion of members of the public who raise their concerns to us report to have a disability and, although we have not yet specified type of disability, this needs to be considered on a daily basis, ensuring that we respond to an individual's needs and proactively ensure that are able to access our services.</p> 
<p>Registrants: Our registrant demographic in both age and gender continues to remain relatively stable over the last five years and there is a continual small increase in registrants year on year.</p>	<p>steady registrant numbers</p> 
	<p>Fitness to Practise allegations: A higher propotrion of complaints received are about male registrants than female registrants.</p>
	<p>Member recruitment: Our member recruitment analysis does not raise concerns regarding demographic disproportionality across long-listing and shortlisting stages, however we need to continue on concentrating our efforts on attracting a diverse group of applicants.</p>

1.7. 2016/17 activities

In 2016/17 we will prepare our next EDI scheme (2017-2020) and complete the following actions in line with our current objectives:

Processes, Engagement and Planning

- Raise awareness of EDI as a vital stage within business and strategic planning.
- Align Impact Assessments (IAs) with our policy review process to ensure our internal evaluation activity is effective and considers key risks.
- Consider the areas for further research and prioritise these according to need.
- Respond to the anticipated consultation regarding the Welsh Language Scheme.
- Develop our staff engagement group and collaborate with other regulators' networking/support groups.

Monitoring and Service Delivery

- Review our IAs and evaluate their application and effectiveness.
- Expand and strengthen our stakeholder groups to allow for effective comparison analysis and therefore an improved understanding of impact of our policies, practices and decisions on types of people.
- Consider joining the Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'Working Forward' campaign, which endeavours to improve the awareness and management of pregnancy and maternity rights within businesses.
- Further develop our Raising Concerns policy (for FTP complaints from optical workers) as well as our Corporate Complaints policy (for complaints about our service, policies, processes or our employees and members), in order to clarify how and why to contact us about these matters. Impact Assessments will be completed for both policies.

Training and Guidance

- Provide support to employees completing IAs.
- Develop and facilitate relevant EDI training to enable our employees and members to identify and act on EDI areas of focus.
- Ensure new starter and refresher EDI training is completed by all employees and members.
- Deliver unconscious bias in decision-making training.

We welcome feedback, comments and suggestions from all readers of this report and thank you for taking an interest in the General Optical Council.

Please kindly send any feedback to Compliance Team via edi@optical.org or call 020 7307 8851.

2. Who are the GOC?

We are one of 12 organisations in the UK known as health and social care regulators, who oversee the health and social care professions by regulating individual professionals. We are the statutory regulator for the optical professions in the UK and we are constituted as a body corporate under the Opticians Act 1989 (as amended). We are registered as a charity by the Charity Commission in England and Wales (charity number 1150137).

Our four regulatory functions:

- setting standards for optical education and training, performance and conduct;
- approving qualifications leading to registration;
- maintaining a register of individuals who are qualified and fit to practise, train or carry on business as optometrists and dispensing opticians; and
- investigating and acting where registrants' fitness to practise, train or carry on business is impaired.

Our Mission: To protect and promote the health and safety of the public.

Our Values: We are responsible, forward thinking and principled.

We are responsible because:

- we make clear, well-reasoned, evidence based decisions;
- we account for our actions and are open to scrutiny; and
- we apply our resources in a targeted and proportionate manner.

We are forward thinking because:

- we pursue defined goals and measure our results;
- we are progressive, innovative and agile in our ways of working;
- we achieve and deliver more by working collaboratively; and
- we are a learning organisation committed to continuous improvement.

We are principled because:

- we gain respect through our credibility, integrity and high standards;
- we listen openly, act responsively and communicate honestly;
- we behave consistently and fairly to everyone; and
- we foster a positive and productive culture.

3. Our Equality Scheme

Our Scheme was developed with the desire to embed and promote equality, diversity and inclusion within our organisation in line with our EDI commitments. Our EDI Scheme 2014-2017 demonstrates our commitment to developing our capabilities in this area so that we are able to meet our legal responsibilities as a public body under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups;
- foster good relations between people from different groups;
- promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities;
- encourage the participation of people with disabilities in public life; and
- take account of a person's disabilities even if this means treating the person with disabilities more favourably.

We consulted on a draft Scheme between February and May 2014 and invited our stakeholders to provide views on whether there were better ways of achieving our aims and priorities. Our Scheme was approved by our Council in July 2014 and published.⁶

We will shortly be commencing our work to review the scheme and design our next scheme for 2017-2020.

3.1. Meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010 replacing previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. The Act includes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into force on 5 April 2011 replacing the separate duties towards race, disability and gender equality.

Under the Equality Act 2010, we have a legal duty as a public body to have due regard to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and foster good relations between key equality strands of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.

The Equality Duty outlines specific duties requiring public bodies such as ourselves to publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating our compliance with the Equality Duty, and for us to set equality objectives. Alongside our EDI Scheme and action plan,⁷ this report fulfils our duty under the Equality Act 2010.

⁶ <https://www.optical.org/download.cfm?docid=9598935D-29E2-4C65-8CB442A29F650D68>

⁷ https://www.optical.org/en/about_us/equality-and-diversity.cfm

3.2. Definitions

For the purpose of this report, a number of broad terms are used:

- **BME (of Black & Minority Ethnicity)** – refers to people of non-white descent⁸
- **EDI** – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- **IA** – impact assessment – our equality impact screening and assessment tool used when assessing the impact of a process or policy
- **Members** – refers to Council and Committee members.

3.3. Collated data

This section provides an overview of the data we hold as a result of our EDI monitoring of GOC registrants, employees and members. Where comparisons with the England and Wales population have been made, this information was taken from the 2011 ONS and the summaries are included in Annex 1.

<p style="text-align: center;">Employees:</p> <p>All employees are asked to complete an EDI monitoring form on appointment. The information requested covers gender, age, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation and disabilities and is managed by our Human Resources team, who also collate information on maternity and pregnancy and marriage and civil partnership.</p> <p>This information was extracted anonymously on 31 March 2016 for the purpose of this report.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Members:</p> <p>All applicants for Council and Committee member vacancies are asked to complete an EDI monitoring form.</p> <p>This information was extracted from our confidential database on 31 March 2016 for the purpose of this report.</p> <p>We do not yet report on the demographics of our other members, such as the Education Visitor Panel members and hope to do so in future.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Registrants:</p> <p>The data was extracted from our system at 31 March 2016 for age and gender of fully qualified optometrists, dispensing opticians and student registrants. This date is the start of the fully qualified professional's year (1 April – 31 March), and mid-student year (which runs from 1 September to 31 August).</p> <p>Information of all registrants who are subject or have been subject to an FTP complaint is manually compiled from the database on 31 March 2016 for the purpose of this report.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Additional comments regarding the data:</p> <p>In 2014, it was agreed that all statistics would be recorded from 31 March, rather than 31 December, to align with the financial year.</p> <p>We understand that some people may not wish to disclose their personal details for the purpose of diversity monitoring, and that data included in this report is the data that individuals have felt comfortable in disclosing.</p> <p>Due to rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100 percent. The totals will vary between 99 and 101 percentage range.</p>

⁸ As described by The Institute of Race Relations.

4. Our Registrants

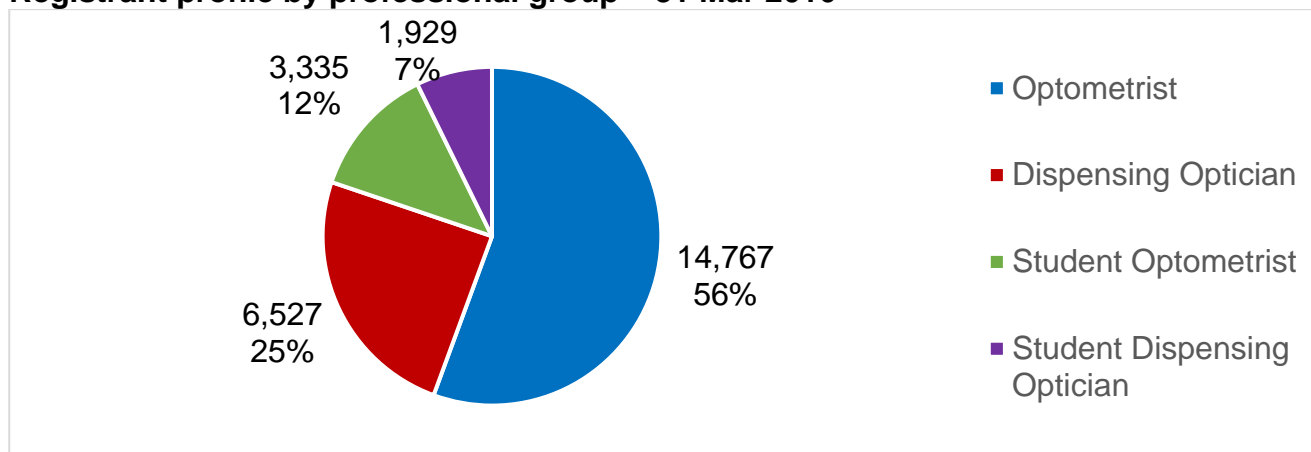
4.1. Registrant profile

As of 31 March 2016, we had 26,559 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student optometrists and student dispensing opticians on our registers (these figures include less than 100 people who appear on two registers). Of these, 56 per cent are optometrists, 25 per cent of dispensing opticians and 19 percent students. The structure of our register has remained fairly stable during the last five years.

Registration profile by professional group from 2011/12 to 2015/16

Registrant Type	Dec 2011	Dec 2012	Dec 2013	March 2015 ⁹	March 2016	1 year % change	5 year % change
Optometrists	12,770	13,209	13,646	14,354	14,767	+3%	+16%
Dispensing Opticians	5,655	5,887	6,129	6,430	6,527	+2%	+16%
Students	4,693	4,642	4,488	5,903	5,264	-11%	+12%
Total	23,118	23,738	24,263	26,687	26,558	-0%	+15%

Registrant profile by professional group – 31 Mar 2016



4.2. Gender

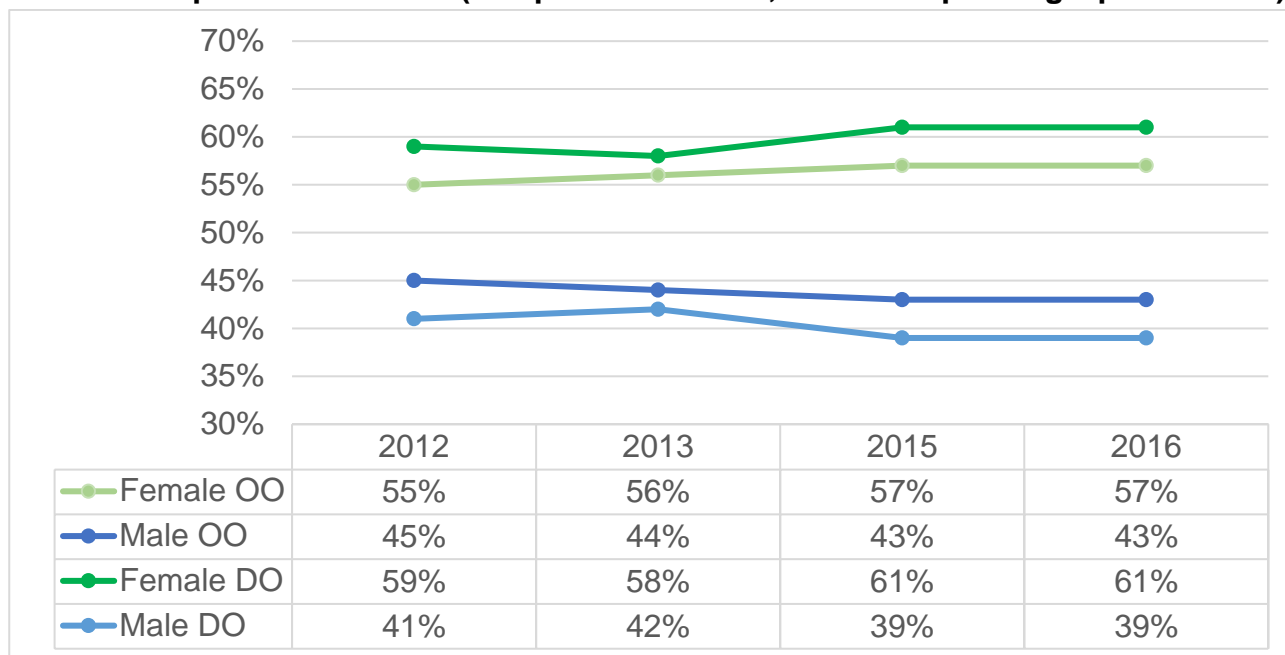
At 31 March 2016, 59 per cent of fully qualified registrants are female and 41 per cent are male. This compares with the UK population where 51 per cent is female and 49 per cent is male. Over the last four years the proportion of female and male registrants remained fairly stable across both fully qualified roles.

Gender of fully qualified registrants over the last four years

	Role	2012	2013	2015	2016
Male	Optometrists	6,085	6,114	6,175	6,276
	Dispensing Opticians	2,506	2,555	2,515	2,513
Female	Optometrists	7,531	7,652	8,179	8,491
	Dispensing Opticians	3,676	3,546	3,915	4,014
All	Total	19,798	19,867	20,784	21,294

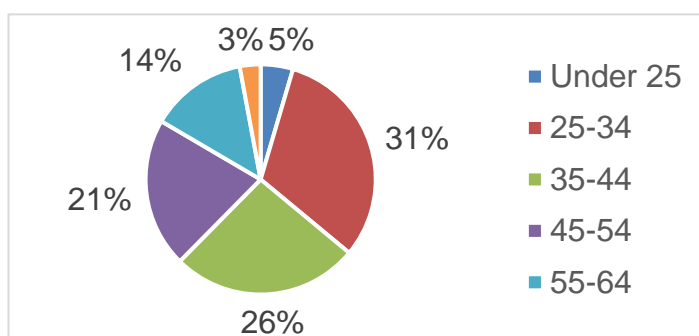
⁹ There was a change within the date of data extraction. It was decided that data would be extracted at the end of the financial year.

Gender profile between 2012 and 2016 of fully qualified registrants – gender split within each professional role (of Optometrists OO; and of Dispensing Opticians DO)



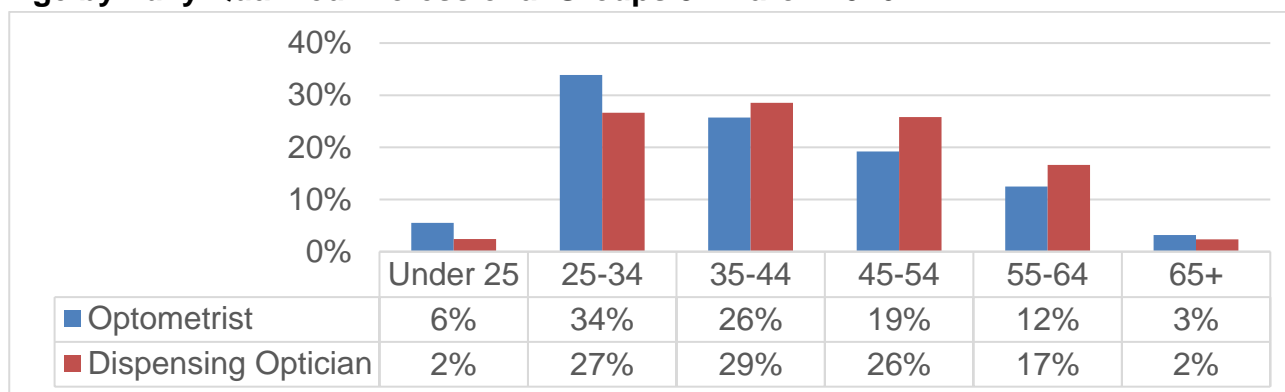
4.3. Age

In line with previous years, the largest age group amongst fully qualified registrants is for registrants between 25 and 34 years of age, followed by those aged 35 to 44.



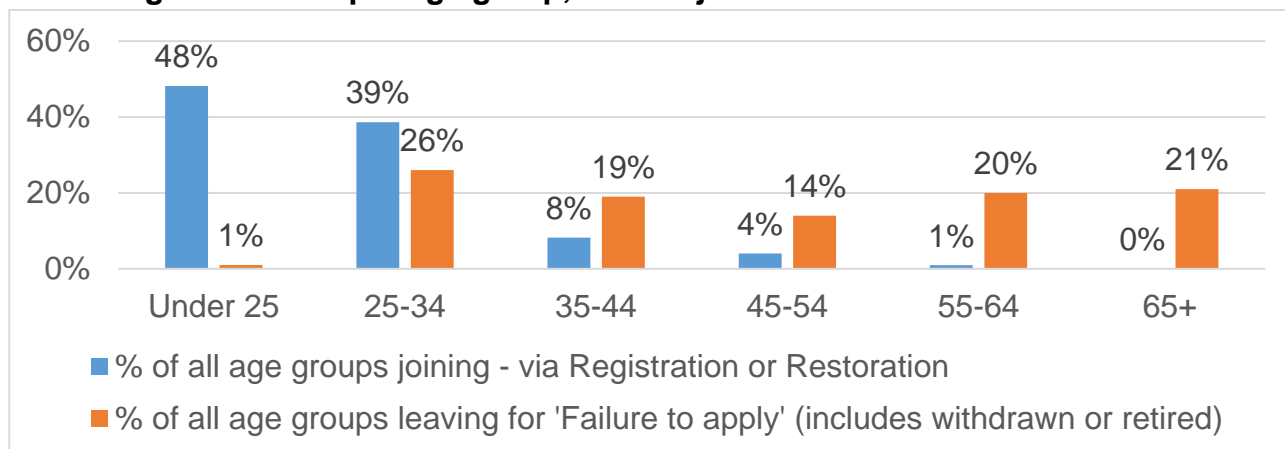
Amongst the fully qualified registrants, there is a slightly higher proportion of qualified optometrists than dispensing opticians aged between 25 and 34. Between 35 to 54 years old, there is a higher percentage of dispensing opticians than optometrists. This mirrors our findings in last year’s report, although it is not directly comparable due to the age categories previously used.

Age by Fully Qualified Professional Groups 31 March 2016



This year, we considered which is the most prominent age group of fully qualified registrants that leave the register for reasons of failure to apply (which includes withdrawal and retirement) against those that are joining the register.

Percentage of leavers per age group, of total joiners/leavers



This shows that there are more joiners than leavers to the fully qualified register – roughly 500 more people joining. There are more dispensing opticians leaving the register than optometrists, when compared to those joining the register.

We will consider conducting further research to explore reasons for leaving the register at different points in a person’s career and registrant retention more widely.

4.4. Other collated data

Monitoring data on ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and religion or belief is now being collected and we will be able to publish some analysis of this information once we have further developed our myGOC platform.

5. Fitness to Practise (FTP) complaints

One of our statutory functions is to investigate allegations that registrants may not be fit to practise as part of our role in protecting the public. Anyone can complain to us if they have a concern about one of our registrants. If the concern/complaint raises a question about a registrant’s FTP, we will investigate by gathering all the relevant information, for example, optical records, witness statements or information from the police or NHS organisations. Once the investigation is complete and both the registrant and complainant have had the opportunity to provide comments, all papers are passed to case examiners to decide whether the case should be either closed or referred to the FTP Committee for a hearing.

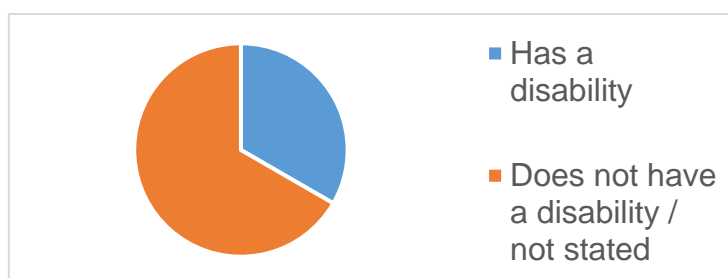
More detail about the complaints we received during 2015/16 in relation to the FTP of registrants and our work in investigating these allegations can be found in our Annual Report.¹⁰

5.1. Complainant/Referral Sources

When considering referrals, it was found that referrals were quite evenly split between men and women.

Source of Concern 2015/16	Number
Male referrer	80
Female referrer	100
Not known	6
Other (e.g. referred by company)	37
TOTAL	223

We also collect EDI data from complainants on a voluntary basis. For 2015/16 we collected 51 monitoring forms – which equates to approximately 25 per cent of all complainants. Whilst this is not enough data to rely upon, when combined with previous years’ returns, there was a similar percentage (about one third) of complainants who returned their forms to us reported to have a disability.



This initial information highlights that disability is one key area on which we need continued focus to ensure we provide the appropriate support and guidance for people who raise concerns and complaints to us.

¹⁰ https://www.optical.org/en/news_publications/Publications/annual_reports_archive.cfm

5.2. Registrants subject to a Fitness to Practise (FTP) complaint

Between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 we received 343 complaints about the FTP of GOC registrants. From these, we opened 223 investigations. This is 20 per cent fewer than the previous year.

Registrants subject to a FTP complaint profiled by professional group (including business registrants) from 2012/13 to 2015/16

Registrant Type	2012/13	%	2013/14	%	2014/15	%	2015/16	%
Optometrist	160	66.9	123	65.1	193	69.2	158	71
Dispensing optician	28	11.7	26	13.8	31	11.1	28	13
Student optometrist	12	5.0	10	5.3	10	3.6	12	5
Student dispensing optician	6	2.5	6	3.2	7	2.5	2	1
Subtotal	236		165		241		200	
Business registrant	33	13.8	24	12.7	38	13.6	23	10
Total FTP complaints	239		189		279		223	

5.3. Professional Group subject to a FTP Complaint

Fully qualified optometrists received higher levels of complaints (71 per cent) than dispensing opticians (13 per cent), compared to the proportion of optometrists (56 per cent) and dispensing opticians (25 per cent).

Students were subject to seven per cent of the total FTP complaints, and 0.5 per cent of the student registrants, in comparison to last year where six per cent of the total FTP complaints in 2014/15 (0.5 per cent of the student registrants).

Registrants subject to a FTP complaint profile by professional group 2015/16

Registrant Type	Total Registrants	% of total	2015/16	% of registrant	% of FTP investigations
Optometrist	14,767	56	158	1.1	71
Dispensing optician	6,527	25	28	0.4	13
Student optometrist	3,335	12	12	0.4	5
Student dispensing optician	1,929	7	2	0.1	1
Total	26,558	-	200	0.8	-

5.4. Gender

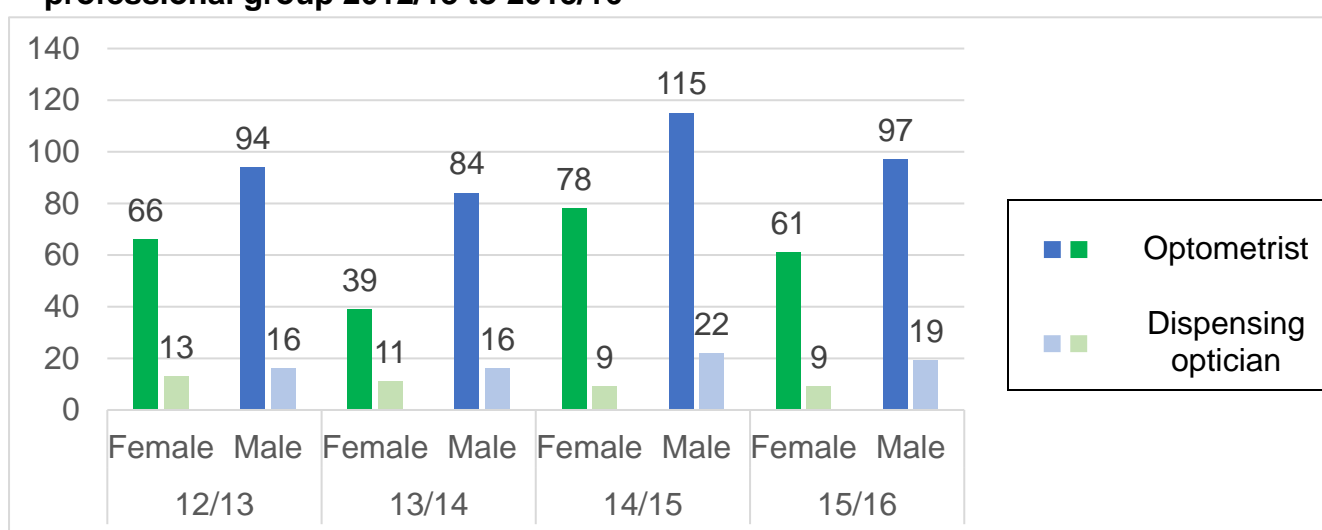
Excluding business registrants, 62 per cent of complaints were made against male registrants, considering that 41 per cent of our fully qualified registrants are male. Of which, 79 per cent were against fully qualified optometrists.

The gender distribution of those subject to an FTP investigation differs across fully-qualified registrants and student registrants. For both fully qualified Optometrists (61 per cent) and Dispensing Opticians (68 per cent) a higher proportion of males were subject to an FTP investigation than females. For students, the gender distribution of those subject to an FTP investigation was equal. **It is important that no assumptions are made based on the following one-strand data.**

Gender profile of fully qualified registrants subject to a FTP investigation by professional group – 2015/16

Registrant category	Male under investigation	Female under investigation	Total
Optometrists	97	61	158
Dispensing Opticians	19	9	28
Student Optometrists	6	6	12
Student Dispensing Opticians	1	1	2
Total	123	77	200
<i>Business Registrants</i>	-	-	23
Total FTP Complaints	-	-	223

Gender profile of fully qualified registrants subject to a FTP complaint by professional group 2012/13 to 2015/16



5.5. Case Examiner outcome against gender

Each case is considered by two case examiners (one registrant and one lay person) and they decide whether the case should be closed or should be referred to the FTP Committee for a full hearing. During 2015/16, we found that a smaller percentage of female registrants were referred to FTPC, although this does not consider the types of allegation received.

Percentage of total FTP outcomes split by gender

Case Examiner Decisions	M	F
No Further Action (including if advice/warning was issued)	69%	83%
Referral to Fitness to Practise Committee (FTPC)	31%	17%
Total	134	94

5.6. Age

During the last five years the majority of registrants subject to an FTP investigation were in the 25 – 34 age group, including this year where 39.5 per cent of the complaints were against registrants aged between 25 and 34 years of age. This is in line with the general registration data which shows that the largest age group across fully qualified registrants is 25 to 34. **However, it is important that no assumptions are made based on the following one-strand data.**

Comparison of percentage of investigations opened per age from 2011/12 to 2015/16

	2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
Under 25	7	4%	14	8%	3	1%	14	7%
25-34	76	40%	56	34%	76	34%	79	39.5%
35-44	33	17%	37	22%	55	25%	32	16%
45-54	42	22%	35	21%	56	25%	43	21.5%
55-64	22	12%	20	12%	28	12%	20	10%
65+	9	5%	3	2%	6	3%	12	6%
Total	189		165		224		200	

5.7. Other characteristics

Having developed our Approach to EDI Monitoring statement, which sets out how we will monitor and analyse all protected characteristics, we intend to start collecting this data as part of registration and retention in 2017/18.

5.8. FTP Complaints regarding discriminatory behaviour of registrants

From April 2015 to March 2016, two FTP investigations were opened into allegations of discriminatory behaviour by registrants: one regarding the ethnicity of a child and one regarding disability. Both cases are ongoing.

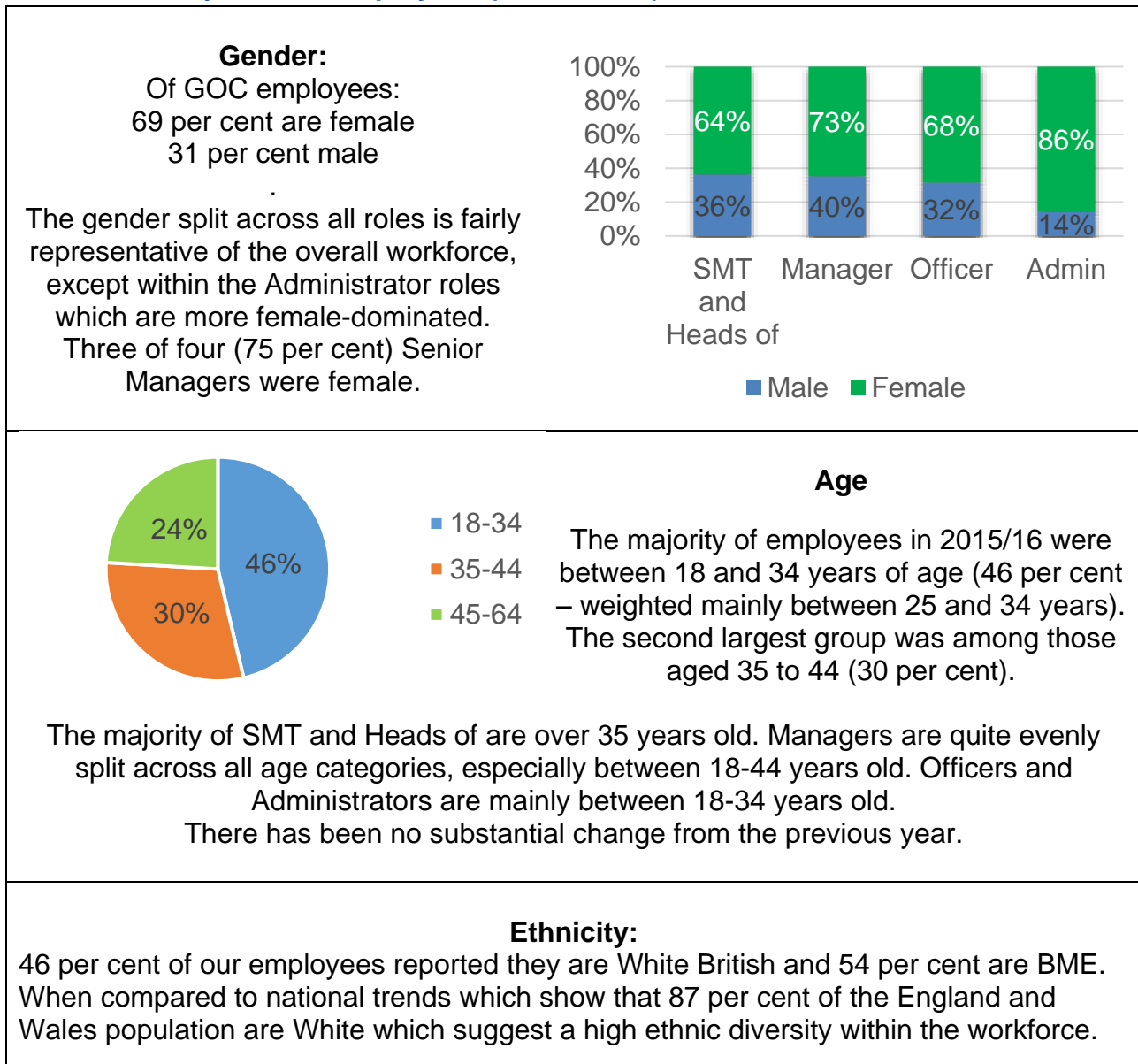
6. Employee profile

As an employer, we are committed to promoting and developing equality and diversity in all our work. In line with our commitment to being a principled regulator, our objective is to behave consistently and fairly to everyone and to ensure that we operate in a fair and transparent manner and in a way that is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

We have developed our EDI monitoring to include information on seniority levels with a detailed breakdown by each protected characteristic for our employees.

The information provided in this section is based on statistical data that the Human Resources team holds which records information on all current employees. It does not contain information about our Case Examiners.

6.1. Summary of GOC employees (March 2016)



<p style="text-align: center;">Religion:</p> <p>There is a wide diversity of religions and beliefs within the employee make-up, with 28 per cent of employees reporting as Christian and 30 per cent no religion.</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Religion Distribution</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Religion</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Christian</td> <td>28%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>None</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other religion</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prefer not say</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Religion	Percentage	Christian	28%	None	30%	Other religion	21%	Prefer not say	21%	<p style="text-align: center;">Disability:</p> <p>The majority of employees did not report any disabilities and less than ten employees reported having a disability.</p> <p>This year we considered implementing the 'Two Ticks' recruitment process which has now changed to Positive about Disability. We often review the scheme and will reconsider implementing it in future. We want to encourage individuals with disabilities to apply for our roles and assure them that we already consider and make reasonable adjustments when requested and we monitor the fairness of our processes.</p>
Religion	Percentage										
Christian	28%										
None	30%										
Other religion	21%										
Prefer not say	21%										
<p style="text-align: center;">Sexual Orientation:</p> <p>The majority of employees reported their sexual orientation as heterosexual. Less than ten reported a different sexual orientation.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Gender Identity:</p> <p>Less than ten employees disclosed that the gender they currently identify with is not the gender they were born with or that they were in the process of reassigning their gender.</p>										
<p style="text-align: center;">Marital status:</p> <p>48 per cent are married or in a civil partnership</p> <p>48 per cent are single</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pregnancy and Maternity:</p> <p>Less than ten people took maternity and/or paternity leave within the year.</p> <p>We intend to sign up to the EHRC's Working Forward pledge to promote key standards for inclusive policies and processes for pregnant women or those on maternity leave. We also consider the same standards will be applicable for paternity or shared parental leave.</p>										

6.2. Employee Engagement Survey

As part of our Organisational Transformation work, we have committed to running an Employee Engagement Survey every six months. This covers a range of topics from working environment, to raising concerns, to satisfaction and fair treatment/application of policies. We distribute the findings internally and then identify any recommendations that are required and include them in our organisational development action plan.

One of the recommendations was to launch a staff engagement group to support this activity with our organisation. This is currently being established.

7. Council and Committee member profile

We hold equality, diversity and inclusion information on all members in a confidential database. The information on the diversity profile of each member has been gathered as part of the appointment process and annual member declarations.

Due to the relatively small number of changes in appointments since last year, the breakdown of the 2016 EDI data has not been included in this report in order to respect data privacy of the individuals. We intend on publishing this information next year.

Summary of number of members March 2016:

	Number of members
Council	12
Education Committee	11
Registration Committee	9
Standards Committee	9
Companies Committee	12
Investigation Committee	9
Fitness to Practise Committees	40
Audit and Risk Committee	4
Remuneration Committee	4
Nominations Committee	4

March 2015 data summary

For comparison, we have included a summary of information held on members at 31 March 2015.

Data Limitations

In order to protect the identity of individuals, any figures under ten people have been rounded up to ten people. Due to rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100 per cent. The totals will vary between 99 and 101 percentage range.

This section contains only data about our Council, Committee and Hearing Panel members. It does not contain information about other types of members, such as the Education Visitor Panel. We hope to further expand our monitoring capabilities to capture this information within future reports.

An individual's response has been counted twice, for example, if they sit as a member of two committees. This is to provide a fuller picture about the overall make-up of the GOC Council and Committees.

7.1. Summary of Council, Committee and Hearing Panel members March 2015 (reported in last year’s EDI monitoring report):

<p>Gender (2015):</p> <p>49.5 per cent of members are female, 47.5 per cent are male and three per cent are not disclosed.</p> <p>Breakdown: Council: 67 per cent male Committees: 55 per cent male Hearing Panel: 32 per cent male</p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Gender Distribution Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Group</th> <th>Male</th> <th>Female</th> <th>No answer</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Council</td> <td>8</td> <td>4</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Committees</td> <td>26</td> <td>21</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hearing Panel</td> <td>13</td> <td>24</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Group	Male	Female	No answer	Council	8	4	0	Committees	26	21	0	Hearing Panel	13	24	3
Group	Male	Female	No answer														
Council	8	4	0														
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<table border="1"> <caption>Age Distribution Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>22-40</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>41-50</td> <td>31%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>51-60</td> <td>23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>61-65+</td> <td>22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prefer not to say</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age Group	Percentage	22-40	14%	41-50	31%	51-60	23%	61-65+	22%	Prefer not to say	10%	<p>Age (2015):</p> <p>The largest age group across members was 41 to 50 years of age (31 per cent), followed by those aged 51 to 60 (23 per cent).</p>				
Age Group	Percentage																
22-40	14%																
41-50	31%																
51-60	23%																
61-65+	22%																
Prefer not to say	10%																
<p>Ethnicity (2015):</p> <p>The largest reported ethnicity across members is White (over 78 per cent) and less than ten per cent Asian. There were 12 per cent non-disclosed.</p> <p>Ethnicity, Gender and Age (2015):</p> <p>There is a higher proportion of White British men over 50 years of age in the Council and Committees. Less than ten per cent of Council and Committee members are under 41.</p>																	
<p>Religion (2015):</p> <p>49 per cent of members reported that they were Christian, followed by those with no religious faith or belief (25 per cent). 16 per cent preferred not to answer this question.</p>	<p>Disability (2015):</p> <p>The majority of Council and committee members did not report any disabilities. Less than ten people reported to have a disability.</p>																
<p>Sexual Orientation (2015):</p> <p>The majority of members reported being heterosexual. Less than ten people reported as homosexual/gay/lesbian or bi-sexual and 17 per cent preferred not to say.</p>	<p>Gender Identity (2015):</p> <p>Less than ten members have disclosed that the gender they currently identify with is not the gender they were born with, and less than ten members have any declared that they are in the process of reassigning their gender.</p>																

8. Member Recruitment

The aim of this section is to consider whether the member recruitment process attracts applications from a diverse range of people and identify any potential barriers for individuals within our member recruitment process.

Stages of recruitment

- 1 – App All applicants
- 2 – LL Longlisted applicants
- 3 – SL Applicants shortlisted for interview

8.1. Data

We encourage all applicants for member roles to complete an EDI monitoring form. This form is kept strictly private and confidential before, during and after recruitment process. It is collected and used solely for the purpose of EDI monitoring.

Within this report, we consider the diversity of our candidates for member roles at each stage of the process (from initial applications to final shortlisting). Where there is a small amount of data, which may lead to identification of the individual, this data has been aggregated or not published to ensure anonymity.

RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS	STAGES OF THE RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN		
	ALL APPS	LONG-LISTED	SHORT-LISTED
Lay			
Investigation Committee Chair 2015	YES	YES	YES
Registrant			
Registrant Council Member 2015	YES	YES	YES
Investigation Committee Registrant Optometrist 2015	YES	YES	YES
Investigation Committee Registrant Dispensing Optician 2015	YES	Not required	YES
Investigation Committee Registrant Dispensing Optician (2) 2015	YES	Not required	YES
Education Visitor Panel (DO) 2016	YES	Not required	YES
Education Visitor Panel (Ophthalmologist) 2016	YES	Not required	YES

The data has been drawn into two categories – Lay member recruitment and Registrant member recruitment – due to the different professional backgrounds that the roles attract. In future, we hope to further develop this section of the report, commence more in-depth trend analysis, and input any actions identified in our EDI scheme and our EDI Action Plan.

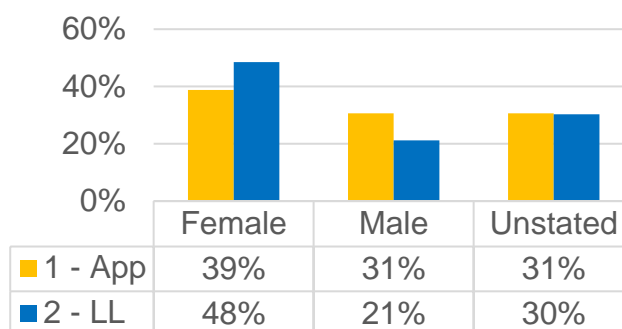
9. Lay Member Recruitment

11.1 Summary of lay member recruitment – Lay Investigation Committee Chair

There were 49 applications (App), 33 of these were longlisted (LL) and 6 shortlisted (SL). Due to the number of people shortlisted, we have analysed the information however we are unable to publish it for most characteristics in line with our Approach to EDI monitoring policy.

Gender:

Throughout the lay member recruitment – from application to longlisting, gender was quite evenly split amongst applicants.

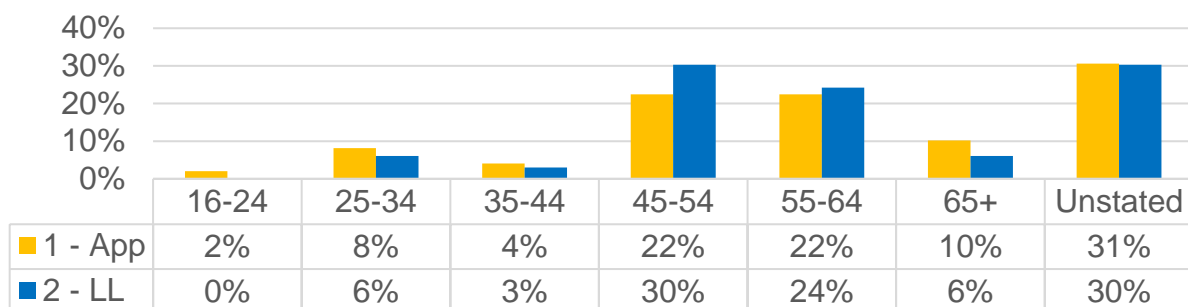


Shown as percentage of applicants in that gender group, per stage.

Age:

The majority of applicants were aged above 45 (54 per cent), with a large percentage (31 per cent) who did not disclose their age. There were a small number of applicants outside of this group who were long listed.

Shown as percentage of applicants in that age group, per stage:



Religion:

The applicants' religions were mainly unstated (39 per cent), with 29 per cent Christian, 22 per cent no religion and 10 per cent other religions. The successful longlisted candidates maintained a similar distribution.

Ethnicity:

Throughout the lay member recruitment – from application to longlisting, ethnicity was quite evenly split amongst applicants (White 53, BME 14 per cent, unstated 33 per cent).

<p>Disability:</p> <p>Within this report, disability is defined as a limiting long term illness, impairment or disability. Six per cent of applicants disclosed a disability.</p> <p>We will continue our work to encourage applicants from all individuals.</p> <p>Next year, we will also ask for information about an individual's carer responsibilities to understand other perceived or real barriers to applying for a member role. This may highlight a need to better communicate our flexible working policy and the time commitment required for the different roles.</p>	
<p>Sexual Orientation:</p> <p>63 per cent of applicants stated they were heterosexual. These weightings remained the same throughout the recruitment stages.</p>	<p>Gender Identity:</p> <p>Just under a third of applicants did not answer this question and there were less than ten transgender applicants.</p>
<p>Marital status:</p> <p>This information was not collected across all of the groups within this section of the report as we started to collect this information partway through the year.</p>	
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity:</p> <p>Less than ten applicants stated they were pregnant or on maternity leave.</p>	<p>Geographical Location:</p> <p>The majority of applicants were based in England (98 per cent).</p>

10. Registrant Member Recruitment

The equality monitoring data below was obtained during the recruitment for the following positions:

- Registrant Council Member 2015
- Investigation Committee Registrant Optometrist 2015
- Investigation Committee Registrant Dispensing Optician 2015
- Investigation Committee Registrant Dispensing Optician (2) 2015
- Education Visitor Panel (DO) 2016
- Education Visitor Panel (Ophthalmologist) 2016

10.1. Summary of registrant member recruitment

There were 140 applications (App). 79 were longlisted (LL) and 28 shortlisted (SL). Due to the number of applicants for the Investigation Committee Registrant Member Dispensing Optician and Education Visitor Panel members, applications progressed directly to shortlisting, as such this section will not contain the longlisted information because it would be unrepresentative.

Gender:

In March 2016, 59 per cent of fully qualified registrants are female.

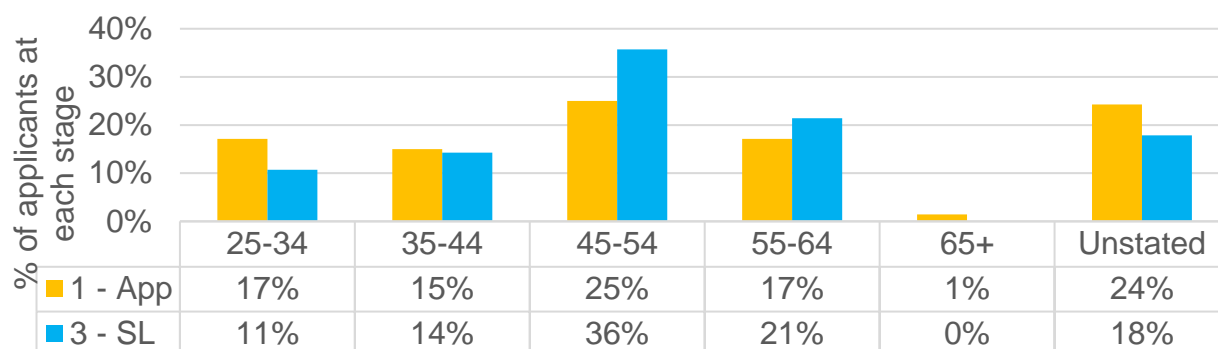
However more male registrants submitted applications for the roles advertised (42 per cent male applicants, 35 per cent female and 23 per cent unstated). By the shortlisting stage, female and male representation was consistent with initial applicants.

Geographical Location:

The majority of applicants were based in England (85 per cent) but shortlisted candidates based elsewhere in the UK and the Republic of Ireland were more highly represented in the shortlisting stage, as candidates in England decreased to 68 per cent.

Age:

There was minimal difference in age representation between applicants and those who were shortlisted, with the largest representation within the 45 to 54 age category which increased by 11 per cent between the two stages.



<p>Age and Gender:</p> <p>Applicants were generally evenly split between gender and ages, except within the 55-64 age bracket where we received 11 per cent more male applicants. The proportions remained similar at shortlisting, with a slight increase for female applicants between 45 and 54.</p>	
<p>Religion:</p> <p>The representation of applicants' religions were relatively even throughout the stages, with the majority being Christian or having no religion. This is similar to the population trend.</p>	<p>Ethnicity:</p> <p>61 per cent of applicants were White which increased to a 71 per cent representation at shortlisting. 22 per cent did not answer this question.</p>
<p>Disability:</p> <p>Within this report, disability is defined as a limiting long term illness, impairment or disability. Less than ten applicants disclosed a disability.</p>	<p>Gender Identity:</p> <p>There were less than ten transgender applicants although 27 per cent did not answer the question. There was little change in the proportions in the shortlisting stage.</p>
<p>Marital status:</p> <p>Most applicants stated that they were married (45 per cent) and 26 per cent were unstated. There was very little change in representation at short-listing stage.</p>	<p>Pregnancy and Maternity:</p> <p>Less than ten applicants reported that they were pregnant or on maternity leave.</p>
<p>Sexual Orientation:</p> <p>72 per cent of applicants reported that they were heterosexual, 25 per cent did not respond to the question and less than ten applicants stated that they were lesbian, gay, bisexual or other. These proportions remained the same for the shortlisting stage.</p>	

11. Recruitment Summary and Actions

11.1. Application stage:

The information suggests that our recruitment processes for registrant applicants attract a diverse group of applicants – across nearly all of the protected characteristics. There was no significant difference between the two stages, so it appears that our recruitment processes are well-compiled and allow candidates to be assessed on merit.

<p>EDI information available:</p> <p>There was still a large proportion of individuals who did not answer our EDI form, which means that some statistics could be very different from those represented here. We need to highlight the importance of completing this form for us to be able to accurately assess the fairness of our process and detect any unconscious bias that may occur. We continue to use this information to review our recruitment processes and to integrate this activity within our EDI scheme and action plan.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Gender:</p> <p>Lay roles attracted 40 per cent female applications, and registrant roles attracted 35 per cent female applications. There remains a question as to why there is such a low percentage of female registrants applying for the Registrant member roles, compared to the proportion of female registrants.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Age:</p> <p>Different to last year, lay roles attracted younger candidates than registrant roles: 19 per cent of applicants for registrant roles were under 45, compared to 32 per cent of lay applicants aged under 45. For registrants roles 43 per cent of applicants were over 45 years of age compared to 62 per cent for lay roles.</p>
<p>Identify barriers and engage with pre-applicants:</p> <p>We need to consider if there are any barriers in place preventing female registrants from applying to become members and look at barriers experienced by lay and registrant pre-applicants to encourage more applications from people with disabilities. It may be that time and availability play a factor and so we need to consider how we can communicate the time requirements more clearly in our adverts and our overall communication around working with us as a member.</p> <p>We need to improve how those aged under 45 are engaged in the recruitment processes and that our application allows for transferable experience to be considered, which should increase the number of short-listed candidates from this age group.</p>	
<p>Continue to seek feedback:</p> <p>Throughout the year we have collated feedback from potential and actual applicants who have suggested that our application form is too long and that, although it supports our objective to assess an individual's application on merit and help us to shortlist the best candidates, it could deter some people from applying. We will continue to explore how we can attract applicants from different backgrounds and with different talents.</p> <p>We welcome feedback regarding our process and suggestions on how to improve it whilst still ensuring that applications can be fairly selected for shortlisting. Please contact us with any feedback you may have – contact details are on page 8.</p>	

Annex 1: Diversity profile of England and Wales (E&W) population

In order for us to assess the impact of our work it is important that we understand the diversity profile of the E&W population and use this information to consider whether any of our policies or processes are adversely affecting different groups in society. The following information was sourced from the 2011 ONS report except where another source is specified.

Gender: The population consisted of 31,532,900 males (49.19 per cent) and 32,572,800 females (50.81 per cent).

Age: The population is aging. In 2011 the biggest age group was identified among those aged 15 to 39 (33.2 per cent) followed by people who were between 40 and 64 years of age. Since 2003 there has been significant increase (17.3 per cent) in the 65+ population as well as a notable increase in those aged 40 to 64 (over six per cent). In contrast a five per cent decrease has been recorded among younger age groups (up to 39 years of age).

Ethnicity: E&W have become more ethnically diverse with rising numbers of people identifying with minority ethnic groups. Despite the White ethnic group decreasing in size (by four per cent), it is still the majority ethnic group that people identify with. White was the majority ethnic group at 55 million in 2011 (87 per cent), a decrease from 91.3 per cent in 2001. Within this ethnic group, White British was the largest group at 45.1 million (80 per cent). The second largest ethnic group is Asian or Asian British (seven per cent).

Religion: Christianity remains the largest religion (59 per cent of the population). Islam is the next biggest religious group (4.8 per cent of the population). The proportion of the population who reported they have no religion has now reached 25 per cent.

Disability: There are over 11 million people reported with a limiting long term illness, impairment or disability. There are 16 per cent of working age adults with disabilities. In 2012, 46.3 per cent of working-age disabled people were in employment compared to 76.4 per cent of working-age non-disabled people.

Sexual orientation: In 2015, the Annual Population Survey¹¹, the majority of the population (93.5 per cent of people) report that they are heterosexual or 'straight'. 1.1 per cent reported to be 'gay' or 'lesbian' and 0.6 per cent are bisexual, 0.4 per cent identified as 'other' and 4.1 per cent refused or didn't know how to identify themselves.

Gender reassignment & Gender Identity: There is no census data about individuals who have undergone, are undergoing, or proposing to undergo, gender reassignment. More information regarding the ONS' approach regarding gender identity can be found here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/measuringequality/genderidentity>

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2015>



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