



Summary of ABDO response to the GOC CPD consultation

The Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO) broadly supports modernisation of the GOC Continuing Professional Development (CPD) system but has significant concerns about the potential for the GOC's proposals to weaken public protection, reduce professional autonomy, rely unduly on employer oversight and encourage inappropriate commercial influence. There is also a need for a full impact assessment to be carried out before the GOC finalises the proposed changes.

ABDO agrees that moving away from a points-based system is appropriate and would strengthen meaningful, outcomes-driven learning. However, it believes that the GOC's proposals do not sufficiently prioritise patient safety, and that several objectives require clearer alignment with the responsibilities of registered healthcare professionals.

ABDO strongly advocates retaining minimum CPD requirements recommending mandated interactive learning, including continued compulsory participation in peer review. The Association views these elements as central to ensuring safe practice and aligning with wider UK healthcare regulatory expectations.

ABDO firmly opposes proposals to impose on optical businesses the costs of taking on specific responsibilities to oversee registrants' professional development plans. Many registrants lack access to formal appraisal systems and with 40% of businesses not registered with the GOC and no agreed timetable to address this, the proposals would not be enforceable. The proposed changes would also risk a reduced focus on clinical learning, potentially undermining the broad knowledge and independence required for safe patient care.

ABDO supports annual declarations of CPD completion and sampling of CPD records by the GOC, emphasising the importance of accountability and transparency. However, developing a fair and rigorous approach to auditing CPD records will require careful consideration and input from sector bodies.

ABDO also endorses the long-term transition toward self-directed learning and ending CPD provider approval, but only once clear, robust guidance is in place to safeguard educational quality. Given the GOC's own published concerns over the quality of some CPD provision, ABDO opposes early withdrawal of CPD provider standards or reduction of provider checks. Sufficient time will be required for evaluation and adjustment following any non-legislative changes to the scheme.



Overall, ABDO favours a CPD system that maintains professional standards, supports clinical autonomy, ensures high-quality learning, and is centered on patient safety – these foundational principles must not be compromised.