General Optical Council

2016 to 2017

General Optical Council: Equality and Diversity Monitoring Report

General Optical Council

Contents

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 against discrimination for people 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]. This year we have developed our EDI strategy 2017-20[2] which feeds into the GOC strategic objectives 2017-20[3].

1.2. Data

The information in this report is based on our in-house datasets on 31 March 2017. Where possible we have provided data over the last five years to help us identify any trends.

In order to abide with the Data Protection Act and Our Approach to EDI monitoring policy statement[4] we may round up or group figures to ensure that individuals cannot be identified within the report.

Due to rounding, percentages may not always to add up to one hundred per cent. The totals will vary between 99 and 101 percentage range.

1.3. Data limitations

It is important that no sweeping conclusions or assumptions are made on the information presented due to the complexity of factors and variables.

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

[2] https://www.optical.org/filemanager/root/site_assets/edi/edi_strategy_2017-2020.pdf

[3] https://www.optical.org/download.cfm?docid=B12D04CA-724C-4E17-ABFA884B57268986

[4] https://www.optical.org/download.cfm?docid=38B7754E-0F89-49B4-BF8DBB95C09275B4

1.4. Progress in 2016/17

We have continued to make good progress against our seven equality objectives (from our EDI Scheme 2014-2017) and have used our analysis to inform our EDI strategy 2017-2020[5]. Key achievements this year include:

Strategy and Policy

- Development of EDI strategic plan 2017-2020 which is linked to our organisational strategic objectives, through consultation with a variety of internal and external stakeholders.
- Revision and launch of Raising Concerns (for FTP complaints from optical workers), Speaking Up in the GOC (internal concerns), Invesitgation and Corporate Complaints policies (for complaints about our service, policies, processes or our employees and members).

Research and engagement

- Planned our research around public protection matters, most of which overlap with EDI themes, such as domicilary care.
- Consultation on our EDI strategy and EDI impacts on policy proposals.
- Continued our internal engagement group and activities to foster winder understanding of EDI topics in an informal manner within the workforce.

Monitoring data and analysis

- Expanding the collection of EDI data, in line with our Monitoring and Impact objective by using a secure third party to collect and store data.
- Impact assessments have been completed for our projects and new policies and will be revisited next year to consider improvements made and make available to the public to be transparent.

Training and awareness

- Launch of an internal training and engagement programme for employees and members, including unconscious bias in decision-making, assessing impact and EDI awareness.
- Joined the Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'Working Forward' campaign to improve awareness and management of pregnancy and maternity rights.
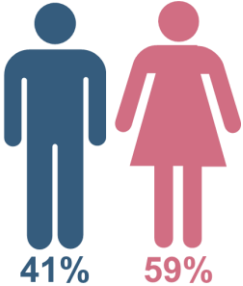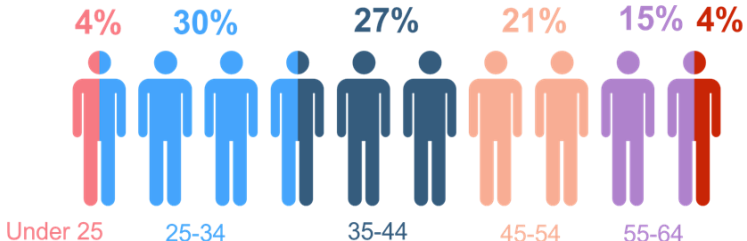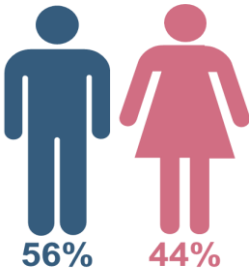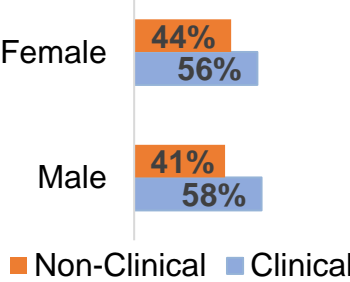
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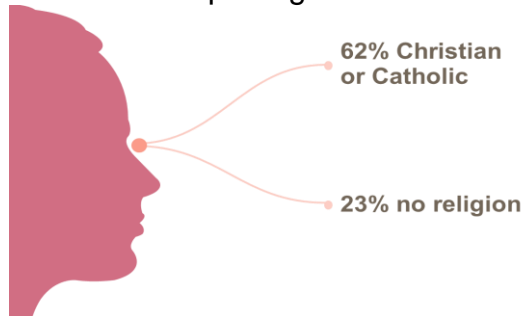
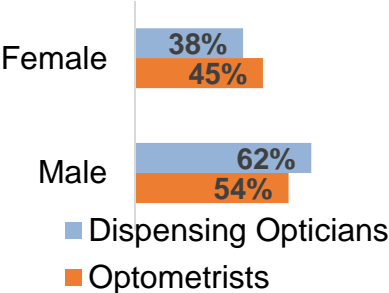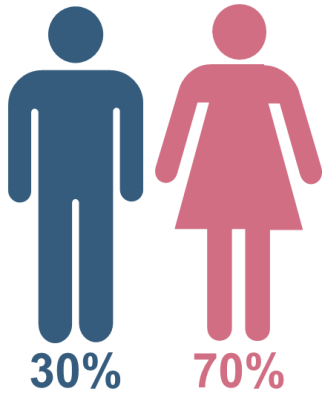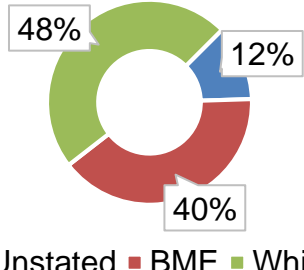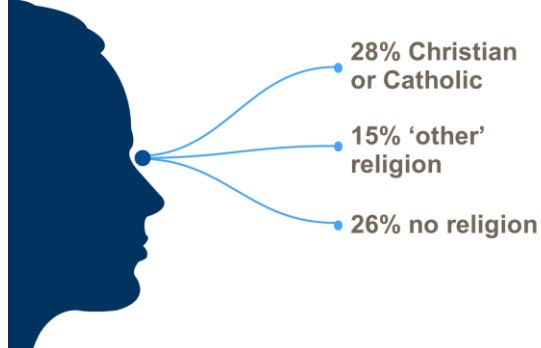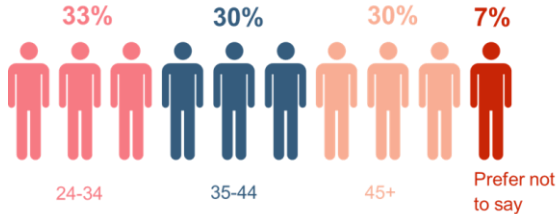- We work in an accessible office environment, in which our public hearings and meetings take place.
- Continuing use of our external interpretation and transcription service.

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[5] https://www.optical.org/filemanager/root/site_assets/edi/edi_strategy_2017-2020.pdf

1.5.   2016/17 statistics summary

The complexity of contributing factors and variables 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.

Registrants

Our registrant demographic has remained relatively stable over the last five years.

There are still more female than male optometrists and dispensing opticians.

41%   **59%**

Nearly 60% of qualified registrants continue to be aged between 25 and 44.

4%   **30%**   **27%**   **21%**   **15%**   **4%**

Under 25   25-34   35-44   45-54   55-64

Dispensing Opticians have an older age profile than Optometrists.

FTP Complainants

Similar to last year, data relating to members of the public who raise their concerns to us, show that:
- referrals were made slightly more often by women; and
- around a third of complanants who submitted EDI data reported to have a disability.

We will continue to take into account this complaint profile and ensure that we respond to individual needs and seek to proactively ensure complainants are able to access our services.

Registrants subject to Fitness to Practise

The demographic of registrants receiving FTP allegations has remained relatively stable.

Professional group
For both fully qualified optometrists and dispensing opticians a higher proportion of males were subject to an FTP investigation than females.

Female   **38%**   **45%**

Male   **62%**   **54%**

■ Dispensing Opticians
■ Optometrists

Allegations:
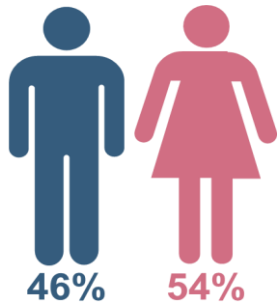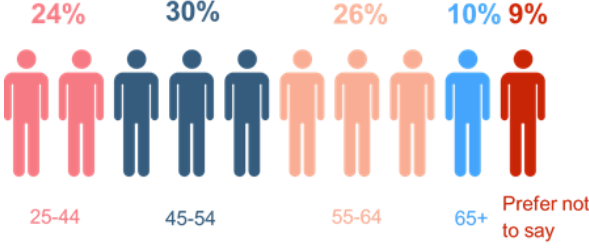Similar to last year, a higher proportion of male registrants received an FTP allegation against them than female registrants, which is disproportionate to the profile of our Register.

56%   **44%**

Allegation type
There is very little difference between the type of allegation (clinical and non-clinical) and gender.

Female   **44%**   **56%**

Male   **41%**   **58%**

■ Non-Clinical   ■ Clinical

Age:
The age profile of registrants subject to FTP allegations is in line with our Register.

Outcomes:
The same percentage of male and female registrants case received an outcome of no further action at the case examiner stage (66%). However a smaller percentage of female registrants were referred to FTPC.

Employees

Our employee demographic has remained relatively stable over the last two years.

Our employees are predominately female.

The gender split across all roles remains representative of the overall workforce, although there has been an overall increase in female employees since last year.

30% **70%**

We have a reasonably diverse workforce in terms of ethnicity and religion

48% 12% 40%

■ Unstated ■ BME ■ White

28% Christian or Catholic

15% 'other' religion

26% no religion

63 per cent of employees were aged between 24 and 44. As expected the majority of SMT and heads of department are over 35 years old and case examiners tend to be older than 45.

33% 30% 30% 7%

24-34 35-44 45+ Prefer not to say

As part of our employee engagement work, we have a staff engagement group who are responsible for supporting engagement activities.

Members

Our member demographic has remained relatively stable over the last two years.

Gender profile of members

65% of lay members are female and 53% of registrant members are female.

46% **54%**

When considering the different roles:

Council & Committee — 42%

Hearing Panel — 69%

Education Visitor Panel — 41%

As expected, our members tend to be older than our employees, with the largest age groups between 45-54 and 55-64.

24% 30% 26% 10% 9%

25-44 45-54 55-64 65+ Prefer not to say

Our members are less diverse than employees in terms of ethnicity and religion. 85% reporting as white.

62% Christian or Catholic

23% no religion

Member appointment:

Our analysis does not suggest any demographic disproportionality from application to shortlisting stages. We will take a number of actions to encourage monitoring returns and seek feedback about the process to continue to encourage applications from more diverse groups.

1.6.   2017/18 activities

We have a number of activities that we plan to complete, including:

Learning and development of optical professionals:

- Hold targeted discussions about EDI at our committee meetings to identify actions
- Consider EDI within the development of our business standards and Education Strategic Review

Targeted approach to regulation:

- Consider areas for further research and prioritise according to need
- Further develop our monitoring capabilites to be able to report and analyse our impact
- Engage with external stakeholders, such as other regulators, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and appropriate charities
- Consider our approach to consultation
- Consider our approach to supporting vulnerable witnesses

Organisational transformation:

- Raise awareness of EDI as an important component of business planning
- Continue the roll-out of unconscious bias in decision making training for employees and members
- Deliver a second EDI e-learning module for employees and members and increase awareness around mental health, disability and accessibility
- Continue our staff engagement activities, which are linked to issues arising from the staff survey
- Deliver Impact Assessment training for all employees who are involved in project and policy work
- Consider how we support visually-impaired members of the public in our activities
- Ensure our expectations of EDI awareness and behaviour are promoted in the review of our Code of Conduct
- Respond to changes in requirements resulting from the Welsh Language Scheme

1.7.   Feedback, comments and suggestions

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).

GOC Mission
To protect and promote the health and safety of the public

Setting standards for optical education and training, performance and conduct	Approving qualifications leading to registration

Our regulatory functions

Maintaining a register of those who are qualified and fit to practise, to train or carry on business as optometrists and dispensing opticians	Investigating and acting where registrants' fitness to practise, to train or carry on business is impaired

Our Values

Responsible

We inspire confidence because:

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

Forward thinking

We make a difference 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
- We are a learning organisation committed to continuous improvement.

Principled

We build trust 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
- We foster a positive and productive culture

3. Our equality strategy

This year we developed our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2017-20, with the desire to embed and promote EDI within our organisation in line with our organisational commitments and activities. We commit to continuously developing our capabilities in this area in order to meet our legal responsibilities as a public body under the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people, including providing reasonable adjustments as appropriate;
- tackle prejudice and promote understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and those that do not;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
- remove or minimise disadvantages and barriers experienced by people due to their protected characteristics; and
- encourage the participation of people with disabilities in public life or in other activities, particularly where their participation is disproportionately low.

3.1. Meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act')

The 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 Act, 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 strategy and action plan,[6] this report fulfils our duty under the Act.

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 descent[7]
- **Disability** – a limiting long term illness, impairment or disability
- **EDI** – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- **Members** – refers to Council and committee members, unless otherwise specified.

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[6] https://www.optical.org/en/about_us/equality-and-diversity.cfm

[7] As described by The Institute of Race Relations.

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[8].

Employees:	**Members:**
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. This year, this dataset includes our case examiners. This information was extracted on 31 March 2017 for the purpose of this report.	All applicants for Council and committee member vacancies are asked to complete an EDI monitoring form. This information was extracted from our confidential database on 31 March 2017 for the purpose of this report. This is the first EDI report in which we consider Education Visitor Panel demographics.
Registrants:	**Additional comments regarding the data:**
The data was extracted from our system at 31 March 2017 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). Information of all registrants who are subject or have been subject to an FTP complaint is manually compiled from the database on 31 March 2017 for the purpose of this report.	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. Due to rounding, percentages may not always to add up to one hundred per cent. The totals will vary between 99 and 101 percentage range. It is important that no sweeping conclusions or assumptions are made on the following data due to the complexity of factors and variables.

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[8] www.ons.gov.uk

4. Our registrants

4.1. Registrant profile

As of 31 March 2017, we had 27,206 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student optometrists and student dispensing opticians on our registers (these figures include less than 200 people who appear on two registers). Of these, 56 per cent are optometrists, 24 per cent dispensing opticians and 20 per cent students. The structure of our register has remained fairly stable during the last five years.

Registration profile by professional group from 2011/12 to 2016/17

Registrant Type	Dec 2012	Dec 2013	March 2015	March 2016	March 2017	1-yr % change	5 y-r % change
Optometrists	13,209	13,646	14,354	14,767	**15,141**	+3%	+15%
Dispensing Opticians	5,887	6,129	6,430	6,527	**6,600**	+1%	+12%
Students	4,642	4,488	5,903	5,264	**5,465**	+4%	+18%
Total	**23,738**	**24,263**	**26,687**	**26,558**	**27,206**	+2%	+15%

Registrant profile by professional group – 31 Mar 2017
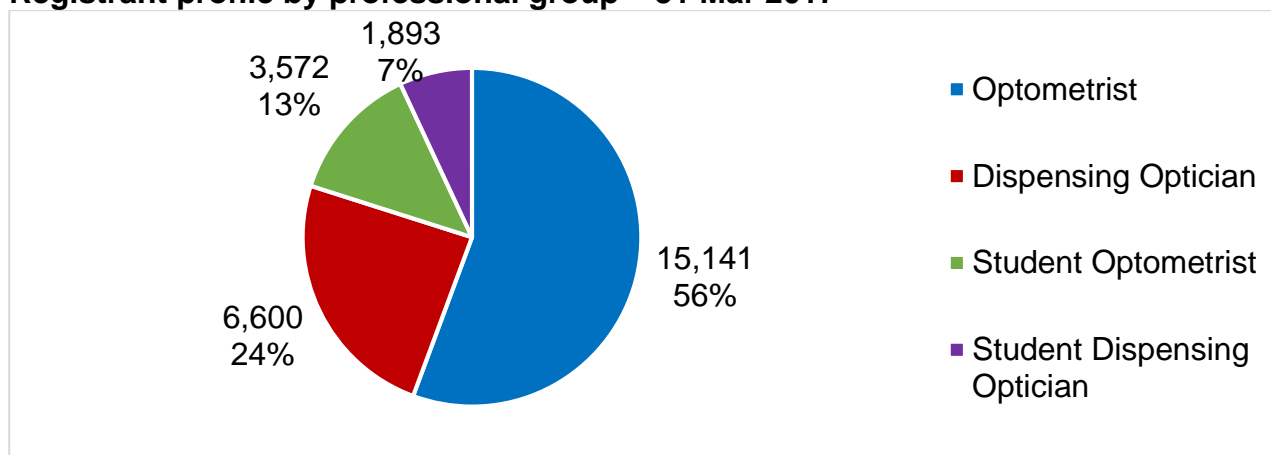
4.2. Gender

At 31 March 2017, 59 per cent of fully qualified registrants are female and 41 per cent male. This compares with the UK population where 51 per cent is female and 49 per cent male. Over the last four years the proportion of female and male registrants has remained fairly stable across both fully qualified roles.

Gender of fully qualified registrants over the last five years

	Role	2012	2013	2015	2016	2017
Male	**Optometrists**	6,085	6,114	6,175	6,276	**6,331**
	Dispensing Opticians	2,506	2,555	2,515	2,513	**2,494**
Female	**Optometrists**	7,531	7,652	8,179	8,491	**8,810**
	Dispensing Opticians	3,676	3,546	3,915	4,014	**4,106**
All	**Total**	**19,798**	**19,867**	**20,784**	**21,294**	**21,741**

Gender profile between 2012 and 2017 of fully qualified registrants – gender split within each professional role (of Optometrists OO; and of Dispensing Opticians DO)

	2012	2013	2015	2016	2017
Male OO	45%	44%	43%	43%	42%
Female OO	55%	56%	57%	57%	58%
Male DO	41%	42%	39%	39%	38%
Female DO	59%	58%	61%	61%	62%
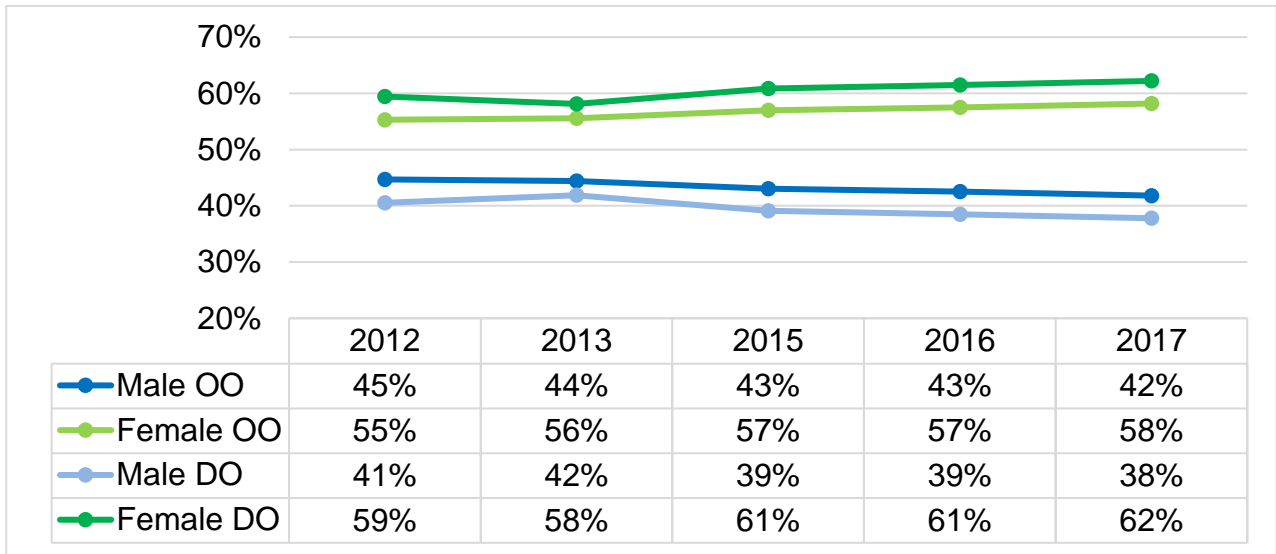
4.3.   Age

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.

4%   30%   27%   21%   15% 4%

Under 25   25-34   35-44   45-54   55-64
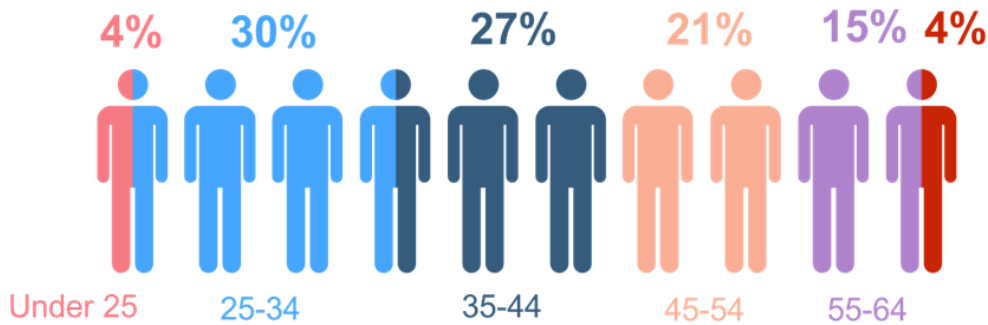
Amongst the fully qualified registrants, there is a slightly higher proportion of qualified optometrists than dispensing opticians aged between 25 and 34. Between 35 to 54 years old, there is a higher percentage of dispensing opticians than optometrists. This mirrors our findings in last year's report, although it is not directly comparable due to the age categories previously used.

Age by fully qualified professional groups (31 March 2017)

	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Over 65
Dispensing Op	2%	24%	28%	25%	17%	3%
Optometrist	4%	32%	27%	19%	13%	4%
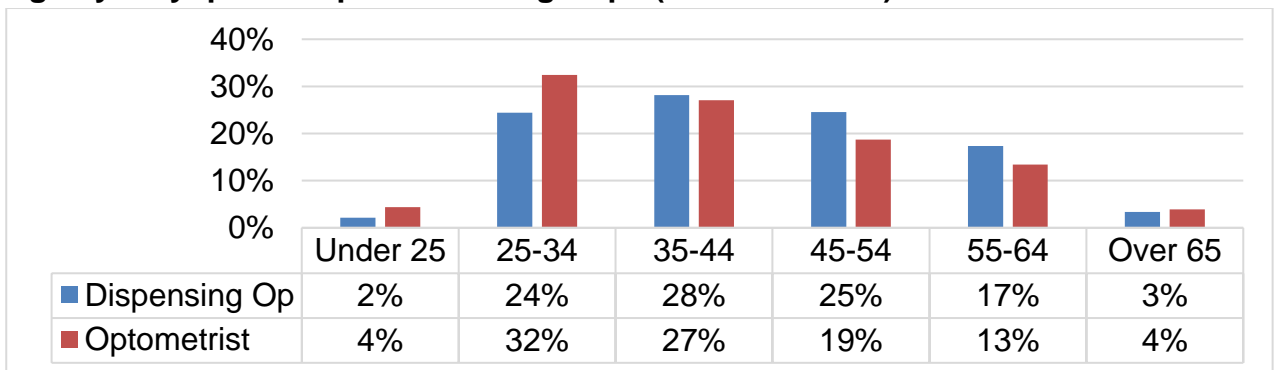
We considered which is the most prominent age group of fully qualified registrants leaving the register for reasons of failure to apply (which includes withdrawal and retirement) against those who are joining the register.

Percentage of leavers per age group, of total joiners/leavers
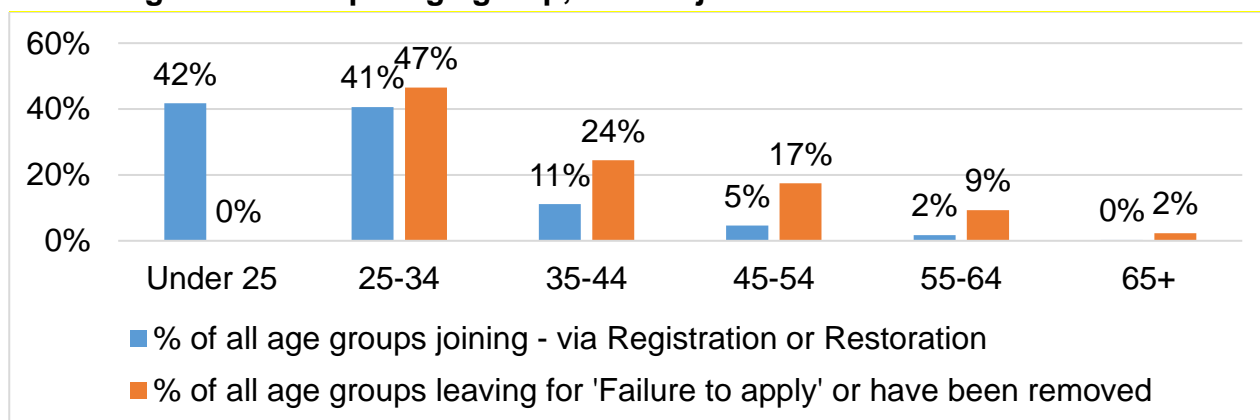
There are more dispensing opticians leaving the register than optometrists, when compared to those joining the register.

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.

This year we launched a new monitoring form and received data from 635 student optometrists and 357 student dispensing options. Whilst acknowledging that this is not our full register, the data suggests that the gender split follows the fully qualified trends and that student optometrists are generally starting their studies under 25 years old whilst student dispensing opticians were from more varied age groups.

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 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 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.

Further information regarding FTP outcomes can be found in our Annual Report.[9]

5.1. Complainant/Referral sources
When considering complainants, it was found that referrals were made slightly more often by women.

Source of Concern	2015/16	2015/16 % of total concerns	2016/17	2016/17 % of total concerns
Male referrer	80	36%	155	36%
Female referrer	100	45%	217	51%
Not known	6	3%	35	8%
Other (e.g. referred by company)	37	17%	18	4%
TOTAL	**223**		**425**	

We also collect EDI data from complainants on a voluntary basis. For 2016/17, we collected 33 monitoring forms – which equates to approximately eight per cent of all known complainants. Whilst this data alone is not enough to rely on, there remains about one third of complainants who returned their forms to us reporting to have a disability – a trend that has been the same for three years. This trend reconfirms 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 to us. We will ensure that disability is considered within all our processes, paying particular attention to public-facing processes, such as the FTP complaints process.

5.2. Registrants subject to a Fitness to Practise (FTP) complaint
Between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 we received 425 complaints about the FTP of GOC registrants. From these, we opened 293 investigations. This is 31 per cent more than the previous year.

Fully qualified optometrists received higher levels of complaints (75 per cent) than dispensing opticians (16 per cent), compared to the proportion of optometrists (56 per cent) and dispensing opticians (24 per cent) on our Register.

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[9] https://www.optical.org/en/news_publications/Publications/annual_reports_archive.cfm

Students were subject to 8.9 per cent of the total FTP complaints, and 0.7 per cent of the student registrants, in comparison to last year where seven per cent of the total FTP complaints in 2015/16 (0.5 per cent of the student registrants).

Registrants subject to a FTP complaint profile by professional group 2016/17

Registrant type	2016/17	% of total FTP complaints against role	% of complaint against total registrant role	Comparison: Total registrants	% of total registrants
Optometrist	170	75.22%	1.12%	15,151	56%
Dispensing optician	37	16.37%	0.55%	6,705	24%
Student optometrist	12	5.31%	0.34%	3,489	13%
Student dispensing optician	8	3.54%	0.42%	1,899	7%
Total	227		0.83%	27,244	

In comparison to previous years, the proportion is similar.

Registrants subject to a FTP complaint profiled by professional group (including business registrants) from 2013/14 to 2016/17

Registrant Type	2013/14	%	2014/15	%	2015/16	%	2016/17	%
Optometrist	123	65.1	193	69.2	158	71	170	58
Dispensing optician	26	13.8	31	11.1	28	13	37	13
Student optometrist	10	5.3	10	3.6	12	5	12	4
Student dispensing optician	6	3.2	7	2.5	2	1	8	2
Subtotal	165		241		200		227	77
Business registrant	24	12.7	38	13.6	23	10	67	23
Total FTP complaints	189		279		223		294	

5.3.   Gender

Excluding business registrants, 56 per cent of complaints were made against male registrants, considering that 41 per cent of our fully qualified registrants are male. Of which, 74 per cent were against fully qualified optometrists.

Gender profile of fully qualified registrants subject to a FTP investigation by professional group – 2016/17

Registrant category	Male under investigation	Female under investigation	Total
Optometrists	94	76	170
Dispensing Opticians	23	14	37
Student Optometrists	8	4	12
Student Dispensing Opticians	2	6	8
Total	127	100	227

The gender distribution of those subject to an FTP investigation differs across fully-qualified registrants and student registrants. For both fully qualified optometrists (54 per cent) and dispensing opticians (62 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 complaint by professional group 2012/13 to 2016/17

	12/13		13/14		14/15		15/16		16/17	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Optometrist	66	94	39	84	78	115	61	97	76	94
Dispensing optician	13	16	11	16	9	22	9	19	14	23
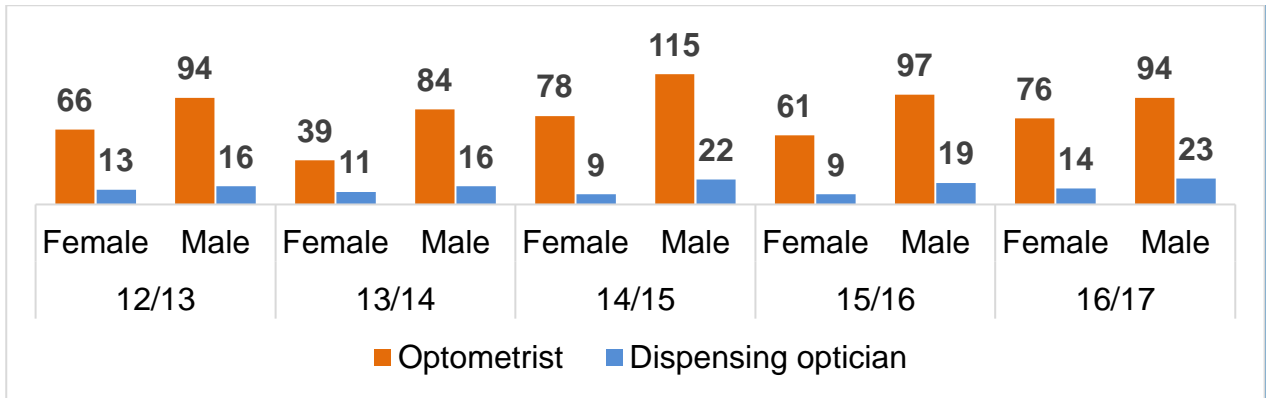
5.4. Allegation Type

This year, we considered the type of allegation – clinical or non-clinical – against the gender of the registrant subject to a FTP complaint. We found that there appears to be very little difference between allegation type and gender.

	Total	Male	Female	Companies
Non-Clinical	48%	41%	44%	63%
Clinical	52%	58%	56%	38%
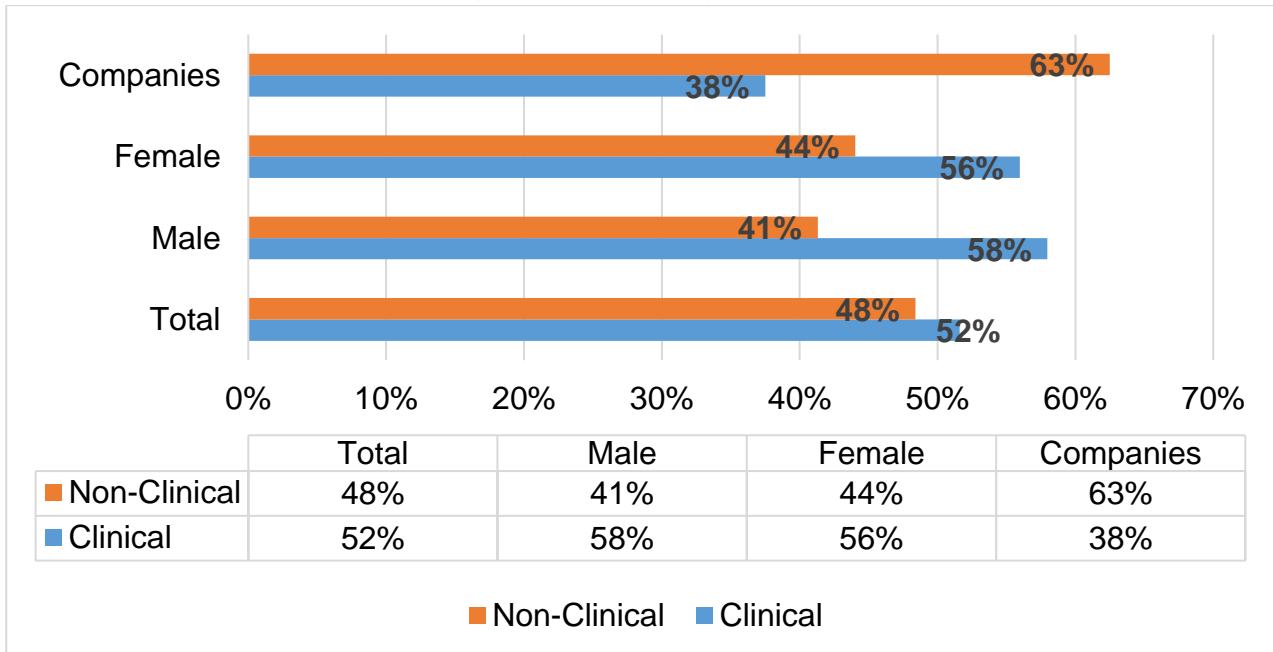
5.5. Location

During 2016/17, 88 per cent of FTP complaints have been made against registrants whom are in England which is a seven per cent increase against the previous year. On the other hand, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have dropped slightly.

Location profile of FTP complaints of 2015/16 to 2016/17

	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
■ 2015/16	81.7%	6.9%	10.6%	0.9%
■ 2016/17	88.4%	2.8%	8.4%	0.4%
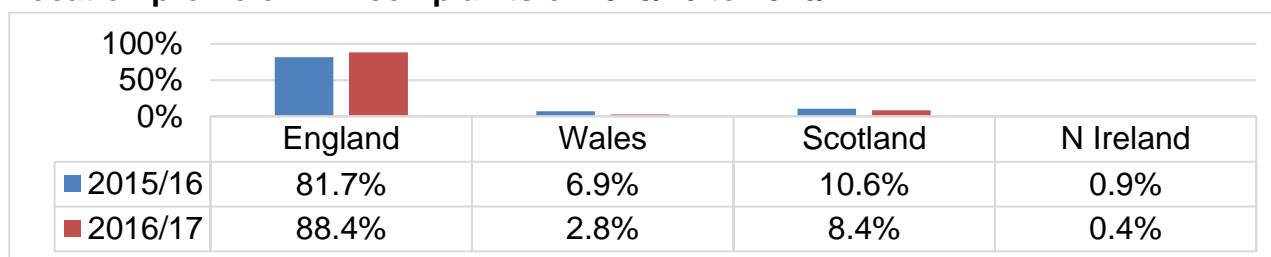
5.6. Age

During the previous five years the majority of registrants subject to an FTP investigation were in the 25 – 34 age group, however this year majority of registrants subject to an FTP investigation is shared between the 25-34 (27 per cent) age group and 35-44 (30 per cent). This in line with the general registration data which shows that the largest age group across fully qualified registrants is 25-34.

Comparison of percentage of investigations opened per age from 2011/12 to 2016/17

|	2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
Under 25	7	4%	14	8%	3	1%	14	7%	20	9%
25-34	76	40%	56	34%	76	34%	79	39.5%	62	27%
35-44	33	17%	37	22%	55	25%	32	16%	68	30%
45-54	42	22%	35	21%	56	25%	43	21.5%	43	19%
55-64	22	12%	20	12%	28	12%	20	10%	28	12%
65+	9	5%	3	2%	6	3%	12	6%	8	3%
Total	**189**		**165**		**224**		**200**		**229**	

5.7. 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 2016/17, we found that a smaller percentage of female registrants were referred to FTPC, although this does not consider the types of allegation received. There are a number of cases on-going, which have not been included in the data below.

Percentage of total FTP outcomes split by gender

Case Examiner Decisions	Male	Female
No Further Action (including if advice/warning was issued)	66%	66%
Referral to Fitness to Practise Committee (FTPC)	22%	11%
Total	**50**	**38**

5.8. 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.

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.

6.1. Summary of GOC employees (31 March 2017)

This year we have included our case examiner monitoring data. However, there has been no substantial change since last year for employees (excluding case examiners).

Gender:

The gender split across all roles remains quite representative of the overall workforce, although there has been an overall increase in female employees since last year.

Two of the four senior managers were female.

30%   70%

Chart: Female/Male split by role — SMT & Heads: 62% Female / 38% Male; Manager: 68% Female / 32% Male; Officer: 82% Female / 18% Male; Admin: 89% Female / 11% Male; Case Examiner: 50% Female / 50% Male.

Age

Pie chart: 24-34: 33%; 35-44: 30%; 45-54: 24%; 55+: 6%; Prefer not to say: 7%

The majority of employees were between 24 and 34 years of age. The second largest group was among those aged 35 to 44 (35 per cent).

Similar to last year, the majority of SMT and Heads of are over 35 years old. Managers are quite evenly split across all age categories, especially between 18-44 years old. Officers and Administrators are mainly between 24-34 years old. Case examiners tended to be older than 45.

Ethnicity:

48 per cent of our employees reported they are White British and 40 per cent are BME, with 12 per cent preferring not to say. When compared to national trends which show that 87 per cent of the England and Wales population are white which suggest a high ethnic diversity within our workforce.

Religion:

There is a wide diversity of religions and beliefs within the employee make-up, with 28 per cent of employees reporting as Christian/Catholic and 26 per cent no religion.

- Christian or Catholic
- Other
- None
- Prefer not to say

28%
15%
26%
31%

Pregnancy and Maternity:

Less than ten people took maternity and/or paternity leave within the year.

We signed up to the Equality and Human Right Commission's Working Forward pledge, which promotes 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.

We have so far focussed on ensuring we have excellent flexible working arrangements. We are considering how new technology could further enhance flexible working within our organisation.

Sexual Orientation:

The majority of employees reported their sexual orientation as heterosexual. Less than ten reported a different sexual orientation.

Gender Identity:

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.

Marital status:

38 per cent are married, in a civil partnership or with a partner.

41 per cent are single.

Disability:

The majority of employees did not report any disabilities and less than ten employees reported having a disability.

6.2. Employee Engagement

We have committed to running an employee engagement survey every year. 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 and include them in our organisational development action plan.

As part of our employee engagement work, we launched a staff engagement group in May 2016. This group is responsible for supporting our engagement activities, linked to our annual staff engagement survey. These events generally overlap with Equality and Diversity training and awareness raising, with the intention of upskilling and updating knowledge to improve our communication with those who contact us.

7. 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.

Number of members (31 March 2017):

	Total members	Of which there are the following type of members			
		Council	Lay	GOC Registrant	Other / independent
Council	**12**	12	6	6	0
Education committee	**16**	4	3	12	1
Registration committee	**13**	2	3	9	1
Standards committee	**13**	4	2	10	1
Companies committee	**13**	3	4	1	8
Investigation committee	**9**	0	3	6	0
Audit and Risk committee	**4**	3	2	2	1
Remuneration committee	**4**	2	2	1	1
Nominations committee	**4**	3	2	1	1
Hearing panel (FTP and Registration Appeal)	**39**	0	18	21	0
Education Visitor panel	**17**	0	6	9	2

Data Limitations

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

We have changed the age groupings since 2015 which means that we are considering approximate age groupings this year.

All of our Council and committee members have returned their Equality forms, which allows for a much more complete analysis. However, we have recently started to consider the Education visitor panel demographic statistics. Whilst we are in the process of collecting a full dataset, we will only report on gender below. We plan that next year we will have a more complete dataset for this group.

7.1.   Summary of members March 2017:

Council members

58%   42%

Hearing Panel

28%   69%

Lay members

35%   65%

Gender:

All members

46%   54%

This profile is similar to 2015.

The number of female members of our Hearing panel has increased from 60 percent in 2015

Committee members

51%   49%

Education visitors

59%   41%

Registrant members

52%   46%

Age:

The most prominent approximate age group is 45-54 and 55-64.

24%   30%   26%   10% 9%

25-44   45-54   55-64   65+   Prefer not to say

Religion:

62 per cent of members reported that they were Christian or Catholic (compared with 49 per cent in 2015), followed by 23 per cent reported no religious faith (similar to 2015). Five reported other religious belief and ten per cent preferred not to answer this question.

Gender Identity:

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.

Sexual Orientation:

Similarly to 2015, the majority of members reported being heterosexual (76 per cent) and 18 per cent preferred not to say.

Ethnicity:

The largest reported ethnicity across members is white (over 85 per cent). The remainder were either a different ethnicity or preferred not to say. This is similar to 2015.

Disability:

The majority of members did not report any disabilities, similarly to 2015.

8.   Member appointments

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

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 the appointment process. The data is collected and used solely for the purpose of this EDI monitoring report.

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.

APPLICATION CAMPAIGNS	STAGES OF THE RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN			PER CENT OF NON-RETURNS
	ALL APPS	LONG-LISTED	SHORT-LISTED	
Lay				
Council member (Northern Ireland)	130	49	11	27%
Education Visitor Panel Lay Chair				
Registrant				
Education Committee (OO + DO)	202	n/a	46	45%
Standards Committee (OO + DO)				
Companies Committee (DO)				
Registration Committee (OO + DO)				

The data has been drawn into two categories – Lay and Registrant member appointments – 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 strategy and our EDI action plan.

In 2015 we had an 87 per cent return of monitoring forms from lay applicants and 83 per cent from registrants. In 2016 this dipped to 69 per cent from lay and 77 per cent from registrants. This year as just over half of the applicants for Registrant roles returned their monitoring forms, it has meant that the data for this category is unreliable and therefore we have not reported it. We hope that the introduction of mandatory submission of EDI forms within the application process will improve returns. In the future we will publish monitoring data in this category where we have a return rate of 60 per cent or more.

8.2.   EDI information available

There was a large proportion of individuals who did not complete and return our EDI form, which means that the reality could be very different from the statistics presented here.

Next year we will be requiring completion of the EDI form with an application, allowing individuals to choose 'prefer not to say'.

In order to encourage better rates of completion, we will need to continue to emphasise the importance and reasoning for completing this form which includes being able to accurately assess the fairness of our process and detect any unconscious bias that may occur.

8.3. Feedback required

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 and take part in a number of external equality events to seek further ideas and suggestions which we can incorporate within our appointment process. 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 to edi@optical.org.

9. Lay member appointment

9.1. Summary of lay member appointment

There were 130 applications (App), 49 of these were longlisted (LL) and 11 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 appointment – from application to longlisting, gender was very evenly split amongst applicants, although 27 per cent were not stated.
This trend was also reflected last year.

	Female	Male	Unstated
1 - App	31%	41%	27%
2 - LL	31%	41%	29%
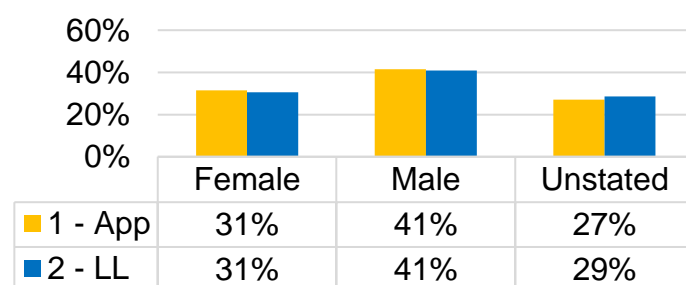
Shown as percentage of applicants in that gender group, per stage.

Disability:

Four per cent of applicants disclosed a disability, which is similar to last year.
We will continue our work to encourage applications from all individuals.

Age:

The majority of applicants were aged above 45 (57 per cent), with a large percentage (27 per cent) who did not disclose their age. There were a small number of applicants outside of this group who were long listed. This is similar to last year.
Shown as percentage of applicants in that age group, per stage:

	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Unstated
■ 1 - App	1%	1%	14%	19%	29%	9%	27%
■ 2 - LL	0%	2%	14%	20%	29%	6%	29%
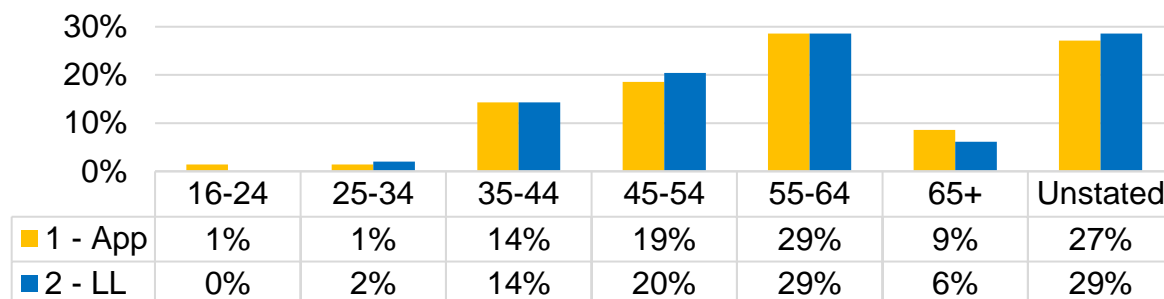
Religion:

The applicants' religions were mainly Christian / Catholic (74 per cent) with 3 per cent unstated. 13 per cent had no religion and ten per cent other religions, which was replicated in the longlisting stage. This differs significantly from last year, which is likely to be due to the campaign to appoint a Council member from Northern Ireland as required by our statue.

Ethnicity:

Ethnicity was quite evenly split amongst applicants (white 69 per cent, BME ten per cent, unstated 21 per cent) from application to long and shortlisting.

Marital status:

This information was not collected consistently this year.

Carer Responsibilities:

We have started to 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 the time commitment required for the different roles.

Sexual Orientation:

63 per cent of applicants stated they were heterosexual, with 30 per cent unstated. These weightings remained similar throughout the application stages and are similar to last year.

Geographical Location:

Due to recruiting a Northern Ireland Council member, the geographical location of applicants differs significantly from most years and is not representative of our typical campaigns.

Gender Identity:

Similar to last year, just under a third of applicants did not answer this question and less than ten were transgender applicants.

Pregnancy and Maternity:

Less than ten applicants stated they were pregnant or on maternity leave.

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