

# Quality in Optometry toolkit grows for contract compliance

Trevor Warburton, Susan Blakeney, and Kevin Thompson

18  
04/12/09 RESOURCES

Preparing for a GOS Contract Compliance visit can be a real headache for contractors. The *Quality in Optometry* website has recently been updated to assist practitioners in this task by providing extensive help and advice as to what evidence the PCT may be looking for and how contractors can provide evidence that they comply with the GOS contract.

*Quality in Optometry* started life in February 2007 as a booklet distributed with an issue of *Optometry Today* and a matching interactive PDF document. Although based on the Healthcare Commission's document *Standards for Better Health* it was very specifically geared to the needs of optics. Developments continued and, 12 months later, *Quality in Optometry* was available as an interactive website allowing completion of the checklists online. In the period since the website was launched, close to 1,000 checklists have been completed.

Whilst Primary Care Trusts have welcomed *Quality in Optometry* as a model of clinical governance for optometry, the position has been less clear for contract compliance in England. Although compliance requirements changed very

little with the transfer from Terms of Service to a GOS Contract, it did serve to focus the minds of PCTs on their responsibilities for ensuring that practices were adhering to the terms of the new contract. Unfortunately, PCTs often had very different ideas as to what this meant – a reaction that mirrored the issues the profession encountered when Clinical Governance first reared its head. To try and bring about some standardisation, the NHS organisation known as Primary Care Commissioning produced a Framework for GOS Contract Compliance, with the main part being an inspection checklist for use by those inspecting on behalf of PCTs.

Since Level 1 of *Quality in Optometry* was already composed of basic legal and regulatory items, it seemed sensible to align this with the PCC Framework and, with the combined efforts and consensus of representatives from AOP/FODO/ABDO/ College of Optometrists and the Optometric Advisers Group, this is exactly what has been achieved. If you have previously completed a Level 1 checklist, you will find it has now vanished, to be replaced by a new list based precisely on the PCC Framework. The

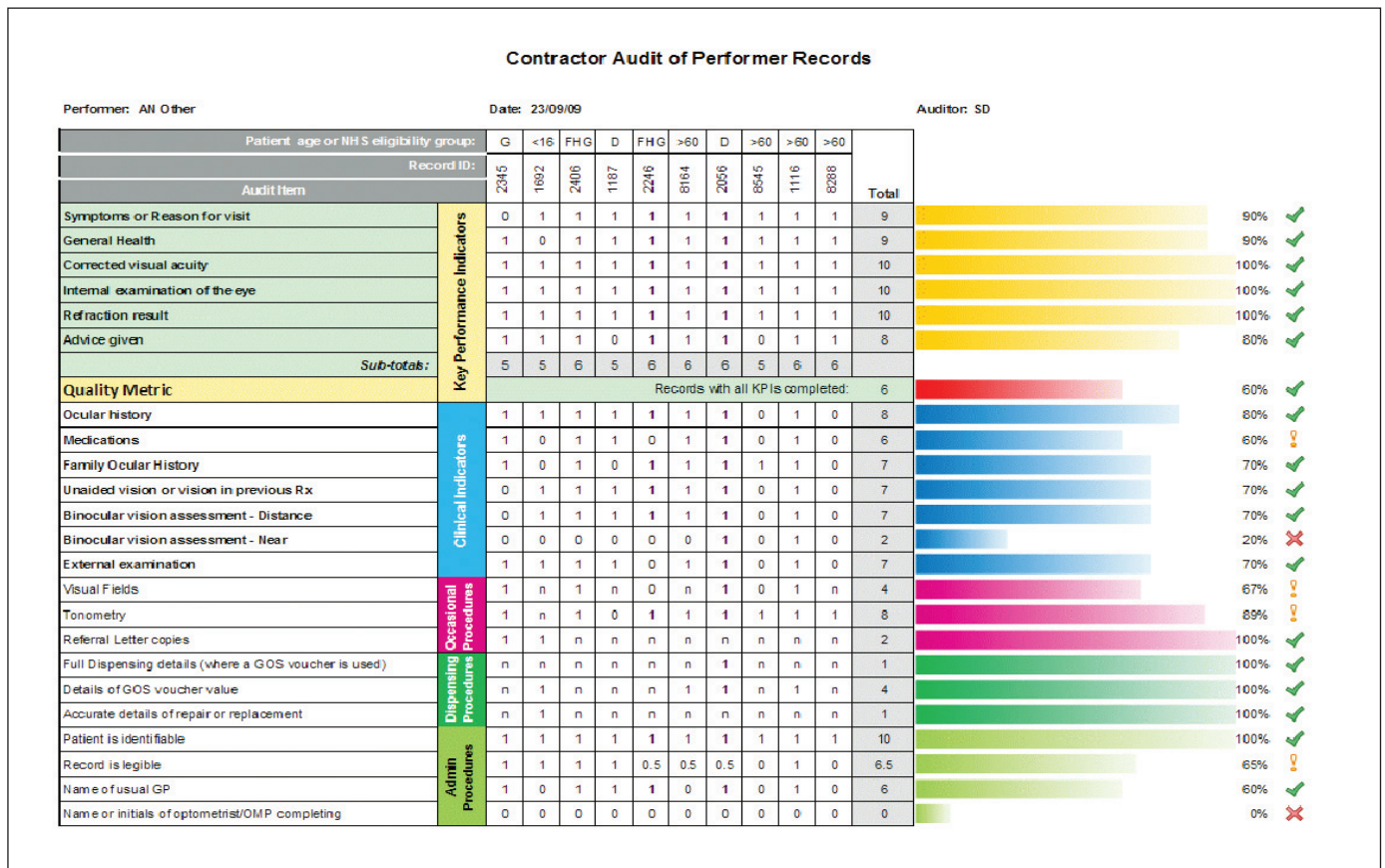
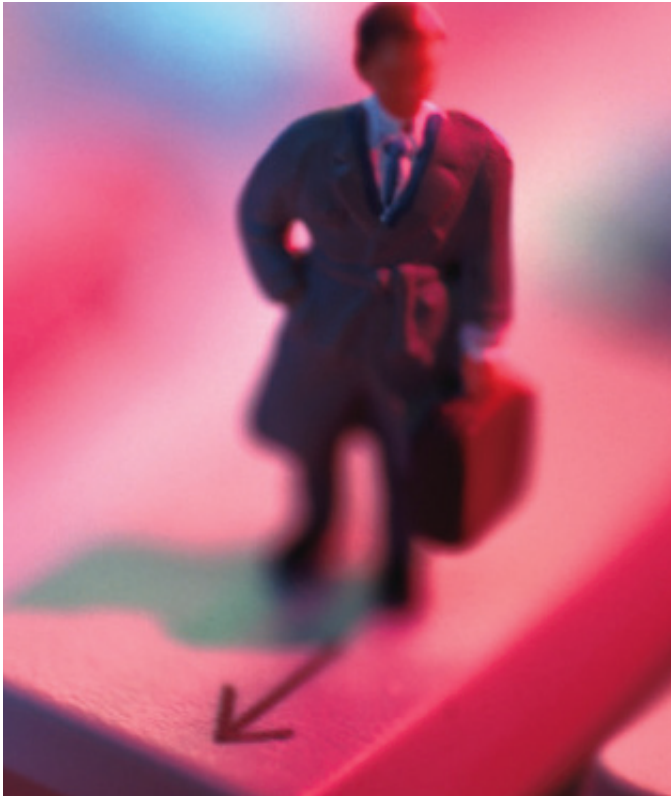


Figure 1: Categorisation of irregular corneas

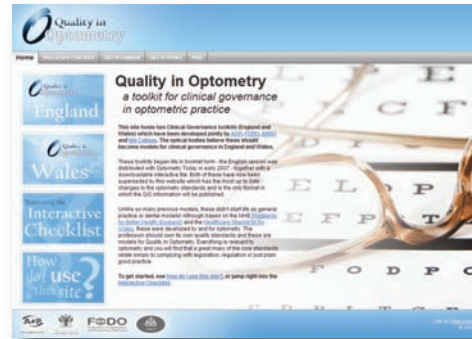


## ...web-based Quality in Optometry helps practitioners prepare for the visit of inspectors from PCTs...

questions are listed in exactly the same order as the PCC form, although they are still referenced to *Standards for Better Health*.

### Practice policy

So what's new? As well as the familiar help and advice, there are links to a number of sample policies. To demonstrate compliance with the contract a practice needs to be able to show, for instance, that data is handled correctly and that confidentiality is taken seriously. The



simplest way to do this is to have a written practice policy on such a subject. Many practices will already have this, but for those that don't, samples are available.

Perhaps the biggest change is the suggestion that contractors audit their performers' records, together with the advice and spreadsheets to help with this. Again, some practices will already be doing this, but many may not. GOS regulations have always required adequate records to be kept. In the contract it is quite explicit that the contractor is responsible for this. In the past, PCTs might have asked to see a sample of patient records. They may still do this, but being able to produce audits showing effective record keeping is a clear demonstration of compliance. You may choose to audit entirely random records, or those from particular patient groups, such as those at risk of glaucoma. The audit has been designed so that assistants can complete most of it. A completed audit is shown at Figure 1 (see page 18).

Further plans for *Quality in Optometry* include a review of Levels 2, 3 and 4 to ensure that they continue to be current and relevant, as well as a possible extension of audit into the voluntary clinical governance levels. In the meantime, many thanks are due to the rest of the *Quality in Optometry* review committee who have done sterling work over the summer in developing this new resource for practices.

### About the authors

Trevor Warburton chairs the *Quality in Optometry* review group and is clinical advisor to the Association of Optometrists' legal services department. Susan Blakeney is optometric advisor to the College of Optometrists and to PCTs in Kent. Kevin Thompson runs a group of practices in the north east and chairs the ABDO/AOP /FODO primary care committee.

## Connect with teens and grow your business

“Fitting teens with lenses is obviously good financially but you can also actually change a young person's life”

David Gould CLO, Director of David Gould Opticians Ltd.



Eye Care Professionals everywhere are seeing the benefits of fitting teens with contact lenses. To find out more about the teens opportunity and how CIBA VISION™ can help support your practice, call your Business Development Manager today.



CIBA VISION.

© CIBA VISION (UK) Ltd, a Novartis Company, 2009. The eyecon figures are registered design marks of Novartis AG