



Challenges and Priorities for the Next Five Years **A Consultation issued by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)**

Joint response from the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO), the Association of Optometrists (AOP) the College of Optometrists and the Federation of Ophthalmic & Dispensing Opticians (FODO)

Together we represent the 10,000 optometrists, over 5,000 dispensing opticians and the thousands of optical businesses who provide high quality and accessible eye care services to the whole population across the UK.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the MHRA's consultation on the challenges and priorities for the next five years. The key focus for the agency will be to safeguard public health, involve the public, and to cooperate with European regulatory counterparts. We support these aims and we will seek to work with the agency to achieve them in a proportionate way in our low risk sector.

Optometrists have been able to become supplementary prescribers since July 2005 and in August 2007 the government gave approval for optometrists to have full independent prescribing rights for ocular conditions. As healthcare professionals we are committed to ensuring patients get high quality care at a time and place that is convenient to them. As training and guidance is developed for optometrists to prescribe drugs for ocular conditions we will seek to work closely with the MHRA to ensure a robust regulatory system that is proportionate and transparent both here in the UK and across Europe. The move to independent prescribing demonstrates the high public confidence and low level of risk within the eye care sector and its regulatory system.

As part of this process we would also welcome the opportunity to work more closely with the MHRA to support the strategic priority of increasing meaningful incoming traffic through the Yellow Card system and adverse incidents reports, which optometrists are already involved in.

2 November 2007