



BIOS is pleased to announce the opportunity for a motivated, clinical, academic or research orthoptist to undertake an important piece of work related to orthoptists refracting and issuing HES prescriptions.

### **Context:**

The General Optical Council (GOC) recently issued a Call for Evidence on the Opticians Act and associated GOC policies ([Call for evidence on the Opticians Act and consultation on associated GOC policies - General Optical Council - Citizen Space](#)) following the DHSC programme of legislative reform for healthcare regulators. This review provides a unique opportunity to update legislation in light of the changing technological and clinical landscape of eyecare. The consultation explored evidence and views around the altering of the Opticians Act which would potentially enable professions in addition to optometrists to issue spectacle prescriptions.

Orthoptists qualify with the necessary knowledge and skills to safely undertake refraction of patients and BIOS is aware of a number of orthoptists in practice who regularly refract patients safely as a routine part of their clinical assessment. BIOS is aware that orthoptists utilise a variety of local arrangements in practice to navigate the barrier of current legislation to issue HES prescriptions, one example of which is having the prescription counter-signed by an ophthalmologist. In collaboration with RCOphth, EPDC undertook a mapping exercise which demonstrated that the knowledge and skills delivered around refraction to student orthoptists was commensurate with what trainee ophthalmologists undertake. BIOS's position, therefore, is to seek the ability for orthoptists to be able to independently issue HES prescriptions to patients who are already under their care within the confines of the hospital eye service.

### **Project Outline:**

The review of the legislation provides a unique opportunity to comprehensively state our case and in order to do that we need to present our supporting evidence. We are therefore funding an individual to undertake a project with the aim of gathering this evidence and producing a report which will serve as a crucial element of what BIOS presents to the GOC. The project design will be a collaborative process between the successful individual and representatives of BIOS, however the general focus will centre on:

- What is taking place in current practice
- What the current impact of orthoptists not having this function is to patient care
- What the potential impact would be to patient care if orthoptists had this function
- What the potential cost savings would be to Trusts as a result of streamlining patient care by orthoptists having the ability to issue HES prescriptions



The role will be funded on the basis of 2 days per week (0.4 FTE) for a six-month period at the rate of £45,996 pro-rata (mid-band 7 AfC). The role can be taken on through a secondment agreement or on a self-employed basis. The exact start date is negotiable; however, due to external time frames, BIOS would like the successful individual to begin in early 2024.

**Desirable Knowledge and Skills:**

- Experience of undertaking and leading a research project
- Ability to liaise and coordinate with multiple participant sites
- Experience of writing research papers in peer reviewed journals or complex managerial reports which present and evaluate data
- Ability to manage a project
- Ability to work to a set timescale

The successful applicant will report progress to the BIOS Chair and Vice Chair.

**Application Process**

Application by CV and supporting statement to Chair [chair@orthoptics.org.uk](mailto:chair@orthoptics.org.uk) and Vice Chair [vicechair@orthoptics.org.uk](mailto:vicechair@orthoptics.org.uk).

The supporting statement may include an outline of how the applicant plans to undertake the work to meet the overall aim of the project as outlined above.

If there is more than one suitable applicant, interviews will be held to select a successful candidate.

For informal enquiries, please contact Craig Murray ([chair@orthoptics.org.uk](mailto:chair@orthoptics.org.uk))

**Application Deadline:** Monday 8th January 2024 12 noon