

**BEFORE THE FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE
OF THE GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL**

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

F(24)38

AND

JOHN SINGH (D-15254)

**DETERMINATION OF A SUBSTANTIVE REVIEW
24 FEBRUARY 2026**

Committee Members: Mr Gerry Wareham (Chair/Lay)
Ms Asmita Naik (Lay)
Ms Audrey McFarlane (Lay)
Mr Simon Pinnington (Dispensing Optician)
Mr Ian Taylor (Dispensing Optician)

Legal adviser: Mr Timothy Akers

GOC Presenting Officer: Mr Hugo Lodge

Registrant: Present and represented

Registrant representative: Mr John Graham

Hearings Officer: Ms Natasha Bance

Outcome: No impairment – Order to expire 2 April 2026

DETERMINATION

Background – Findings of the Previous Fitness to Practise Committee

1. The Committee noted the facts as admitted and proved from the substantive hearing that took place between 3-7 March 2025. At the end of the substantive hearing, the previous Committee found that the Registrant had deliberately made fraudulent transactions and overcharged 145 patients, to the value of £7051.61 over a substantial period of four years. As branch manager, the Committee found that the Registrant had abused the trust of other staff members as well as the patients involved in the fraud.
2. The previous Committee accepted that the Registrant had shown some level of remorse, given that he made early admissions, made a self-referral to the GOC and apologised to the GOC and the Committee, and has accepted dishonesty.
3. However, the previous Committee noted that the Registrant's witness statement asserted that he did not benefit from his actions. It was only during his oral evidence, under cross examination that the Registrant accepted that he did benefit from overcharging the patients, both by receiving bonuses linked to profitability and also being able to demonstrate good performance and willingness to adhere to policy which amounted to an indirect benefit. At the time, the Committee found this late admission to be a concern as the Registrant had only just started to appreciate his own motivations for his behaviour.
4. The previous Committee found that the Registrant had demonstrated only a limited understanding of his own culpability as to what he had done wrong and the impact this would have had on the 145 patients affected, as well as the wider public perception of the profession. At the time, the Committee was also concerned by the Registrant's comment in his evidence that this was an 'isolated incident.' There were 145 fraudulent transactions over a substantial period of four years. The overall value was high, at £7051.61.
5. The previous Committee was ultimately not satisfied that the Registrant fully accepted and understood the gravity of his dishonesty and the impact on patients, and it found the Registrant's fitness to practise to be impaired.
6. In terms of sanction, the previous Committee considered that a suspension for the maximum period of 12 months was required to mark the seriousness of the misconduct, to ensure public confidence in the profession and uphold proper professional standards. The Registrant's registration was therefore suspended for 12 months. The Order is due to expire on 2 April 2026.

Findings regarding impairment

7. The Committee heard submissions from Mr Lodge on behalf of the Council and from Mr Graham on behalf of the Registrant. The Committee also heard evidence from the Registrant. Whilst Mr Lodge did not positively assert that the

Registrant's fitness to practise was impaired, he emphasised that the burden was now on the Registrant to prove that his fitness to practise was no longer impaired. Mr Graham submitted that, as a result of remediation and insight developed by the Registrant over the course of the past year, that the Registrant's fitness to practise was no longer impaired.

8. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser, who referred to the law contained within the relevant sections of the GOC submissions dated 21 January 2026, paragraph 16 of the Council's Hearings and Indicative Sanctions Guidance, and the test for impairment enunciated by Dame Janet Smith in the fifth Shipman report, as applied in *Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence v Nursing and Midwifery Council and Grant* [2011] EWHC 927 (Admin).
9. In deliberating on the question of impairment, the Committee noted it had been provided with a comprehensive bundle on behalf of the Registrant which included a detailed 18-page witness statement, a 43-page bundle evidencing further relevant CPD undertaken and a monthly case preparation portfolio, together with a number of references from his current employer and a work colleague. The Committee also noted that it had heard oral evidence from the Registrant in which he accepted sole responsibility for his misconduct.
10. The Committee carefully considered all the material before it and reminded itself that the test for impairment is to determine whether the Registrant's fitness to practise is impaired at this point in time. Having considered the issue of impairment, the Committee determined that, whilst the original misconduct was undoubtedly serious, the Registrant's fitness to practise was no longer impaired.
11. In arriving at the above decision, the Committee determined that the Registrant would be unlikely to act in the future to put patients at unwarranted risk of harm, he would be unlikely in the future to bring the optical profession into disrepute, he would be unlikely in the future to breach one of the fundamental tenets of the optical profession, and that he would be unlikely to act dishonestly again. In drawing these conclusions, the Committee took the view that the Registrant had thoughtfully and consistently used the past year to proactively remedy his previous limited insight into his misconduct. The Committee found there to be significant evidence of remediation contained within a comprehensive reflective statement which recognised the impact of his misconduct on the public and the profession. Further, the Committee noted that the Registrant had undertaken a number of relevant CPD courses and provided testimonials which spoke highly of him and commended his honesty and work ethic. In terms of the Registrant's oral evidence before the Committee, the Committee found the Registrant to be a credible witness who demonstrated insight and accepted responsibility for his actions.
12. Thus, having considered all the available evidence, the Committee determined that the risk to the public posed by the Registrant was now low, such that it did not justify a finding of impairment. The Committee further determined that the need to uphold professional standards and public confidence in the profession no longer demanded a finding of current impairment.

13. Accordingly, the Committee found that the Registrant had successfully established on the balance of probabilities that his fitness to practise was no longer impaired. Given the imminent expiry of the Suspension Order in this case, the Committee makes no order for a further review.

Declaration

14. The Committee makes a formal declaration that the Registrant’s fitness to practise is no longer impaired for the reasons above.

Chair of the Committee: Gerry Wareham



Signature

Date: 24 February 2026

Registrant: John Singh

Signature *Present remotely and received via email* **Date:** 24 February 2026

FURTHER INFORMATION	
Transcript	
	A full transcript of the hearing will be made available for purchase in due course.
Appeal	
	Any appeal against an order of the Committee must be lodged with the relevant court within 28 days of the service of this notification. If no appeal is lodged, the order will take effect at the end of that period. The relevant court is shown at section 23G(4)(a)-(c) of the Opticians Act 1989 (as amended).

Professional Standards Authority

This decision will be reported to the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) under the provisions of section 29 of the NHS Reform and Healthcare Professions Act 2002. PSA may refer this case to the High Court of Justice in England and Wales, the Court of Session in Scotland or the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland as appropriate if they decide that a decision has been insufficient to protect the public and/or should not have been made, and if they consider that referral is desirable for the protection of the public.

Where a registrant can appeal against a decision, the Authority has 40 days beginning with the day which is the last day in which you can appeal. Where a registrant cannot appeal against the outcome of a hearing, the Authority's appeal period is 56 days beginning with the day in which notification of the decision was served on you. PSA will notify you promptly of a decision to refer. A letter will be sent by recorded delivery to your registered address (unless PSA has been notified by the GOC of a change of address).

Further information about the PSA can be obtained from its website at www.professionalstandards.org.uk or by telephone on 020 7389 8030.

Effect of orders for suspension or erasure

To practise or carry on business as an optometrist or dispensing optician, to take or use a description which implies registration or entitlement to undertake any activity which the law restricts to a registered person, may amount to a criminal offence once an entry in the register has been suspended or erased.

Contact

If you require any further information, please contact the Council's Hearings Manager at Level 29, One Canada Square, London, E14 5AA or by telephone, on 020 7580 3898.