

Standards

Attached are *Standards for Patient Information and Consent for Refractive Surgery* (Annex Ai), and *Advertising and Marketing Standards for Refractive Surgery* (Annex Aii). These have been edited in line with the comments in our main submission to make them consistent with GMC guidance and appropriate to the needs of patients.

Patient Information

With regard to the three sets of Patient Information, as we say in our full response we are happy with clinical contents of these documents. However, as drafted and as raised from the floor at the College's 'Industry Day' on 11 May, these documents are not as user friendly as they could be, either in terms of structure or language. Some sections are very clinical and read more as if intended for clinicians than patients. We fully support the statement in the *Standards for Patient Information and Consent* that providers should write patient information in plain English, and believe that the same should apply to these guidance documents.

In summary, the language needs to be more straightforward and address the reader directly, and with shorter sentences and paragraphs in plain English

Language is used that may be normal among clinicians but would read oddly to a lay person. For example, *"continuing in spectacles or contact lenses"*. Normal language would be *"continuing to wear..."* or *"continuing to use..."*, and *"worse than the driving standard"* would be better phrased as *"worse than the standard required to drive legally"*.

The sections on side effects are not clear and seem phrased in such a way as to exaggerate concerns and cause alarm. Better balance should be sought.

It is not clear for instance what evidence has been used by the College to support the use of the word "most" in the below sentence?

"Side effects are problems which most patients experience to some degree after surgery. They normally improve with time, but do not always improve completely."

This could easily be improved to:

"Side effects are problems which you may experience after surgery. Not everyone will experience side effects, but they are not unusual. In most cases they will improve with time, but occasionally they do not clear up completely."

Guidance on laser vision, paragraph 5.3 refers to the *"retirement age group"* – given that retirement age can widely vary and is increasing, it would be better to include an actual age, e.g. those over 65.

The guidance documents give quite a lot of clinical information, and it can be hard to follow for non-clinicians. We suggest that further thought be given as to how much clinical detail with regards to the various processes is actually needed or wanted by patients.