



**THE INDEPENDENTS CODE  
(IC)**

**AN INVITATION TO BE A  
PIONEER SUBSCRIBER**

**APRIL 2016**

## **What is IC?**

The Independents Code (IC) is the quality mark by which Independent practices that deliver excellent eye care can be identified in their local communities and in due course throughout the UK.

## **Why was IC developed?**

The AIO Council and its membership wished to create a clear quality mark for the public and other health service providers to identify Independent practices that are focussed on long term eye health and eye care and provide an excellent service to the public. The quality mark would also raise public awareness about the Optometry profession and the role of Dispensing Opticians.

## **Who developed IC?**

IC was developed by the AIO following extensive consultation with its membership and external stakeholders. IC went through several iterations before the final launch version was arrived at and it has been reviewed by legal experts who contributed input to the final draft.

## **Does IC have any teeth?**

AIO was determined that IC should set demanding standards that are adhered to and not just be a badge for any practice to sign up to simply because they are Independent. To make this a reality an Independent oversight body has been established to regulate the Code called the IC Oversight Board.

## **What functions will the IC Oversight Board perform?**

The IC Oversight Board will be responsible for

- Processing applications to subscribe to the IC to ensure applicants meet the Code criteria
- Maintaining the IC Subscriber Register
- Conducting audits of subscriber practices including mystery shopping
- Processing annual renewals for IC subscribers
- Dealing with non-compliance issues including any disciplinary measures

## **Who are the IC Oversight Board Members?**

The IC Oversight Board is chaired by Julian Jackson who is very well known and highly respected in the world of optics. Angela Newton who spent many years at Which? has been appointed to serve as a public interest director alongside Julian. The appointment of an additional public interest director will be announced soon as will the appointment of two experienced practising Independents who will also be AIO members and IC subscribers. The Board will therefore be composed of 5 directors with a majority of public interest directors.

## **How much does it cost to subscribe?**

The annual subscription has been set initially at £600 per annum which will be discounted to £500 per annum for two years for the first 50 subscribers who will be known as Pioneer IC Subscribers.

## **What does the AIO tailored launch plan include?**

AIO will work with you to develop a tailored launch plan in your area that will include:

- An analysis of your local community to identify:
  - Local health care providers and organisations (such as CCGs and LOCs)
  - Local educational establishments
  - Local service organisations
  - Local media
  - Any other relevant stakeholders
- Preparation of:
  - Presentations for the selected stakeholders
  - Promotional material for use in your practice and with stakeholders
  - Press releases and recorded interviews for local media
- A schedule of:
  - Meetings with selected stakeholders
  - Presentations to selected stakeholders
  - Promotional activities
  - Press releases and radio/TV interviews

AIO will also agree with you a process for review and planning of future activities post launch in your community

## **Why should my practice subscribe?**

The immediate benefits of IC subscription will be:

- Being able to use IC as a quality mark for your practice with your patients
- Being able to use IC as a mark of distinction on the High Street and in the local community
- Being able to market your practice as subscribing to a quality Code that is independently regulated
- Being able to work with AIO on a tailored IC launch plan for your practice in your local community
- Being regarded as a good place to work
- Having exclusivity as the IC subscriber in your catchment area for 2 years
- Adding to your commercial success

The future benefits are projected to include:

- Better referral pathways in your local community
- Lower insurance premiums
- Better deals from the optical supply chain
- National promotion of IC and all subscriber practices

## **What is the timetable for the Code going live?**

A timeline will be agreed with each subscriber with 'go live' dates commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016

## **What do I do to become a Pioneer IC Subscriber?**

The first 50 practices to submit the attached form to the AIO Secretariat will automatically qualify to be Pioneer Subscribers, subject of course to successful processing of an IC registration application.

Only practices that are members of AIO may subscribe to IC.

**FILL IN THE FORM THAT IS PART OF THIS HANDOUT AND SUBMIT IT BACK TO  
AIO TODAY TO SECURE YOUR PIONEER STATUS**



## **THE INDEPENDENTS CODE (IC)**

### **FORM TO REGISTER AS BE A PIONEER SUBSCRIBER**

Mail it to:

AIO, The Old Rectory, Church Lane, Thornby NN6 8SN

Or e-mail it to: [admin@aiovision.org](mailto:admin@aiovision.org)

For more information call 0800 1300 486 and ask for Mike

[www.aiovision.org](http://www.aiovision.org)

[www.facebook.com/AIOvision](https://www.facebook.com/AIOvision)

[www.twitter.com/AIO\\_Secretary](https://www.twitter.com/AIO_Secretary)



To register as a Pioneer IC Subscriber simply complete this form

Name of Practice:

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Address:

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Telephone number:

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Name of contact:

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E-mail address:

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Are you, or is anyone in your practice, a member of AIO?

Yes/No