

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Pg2 Regional Roundup – London

Pg3 Dudley pilot leads coverage

Pg3 Last call for NOC bookings

Pg4 Optics at political conferences

Pg5 Venerus' View



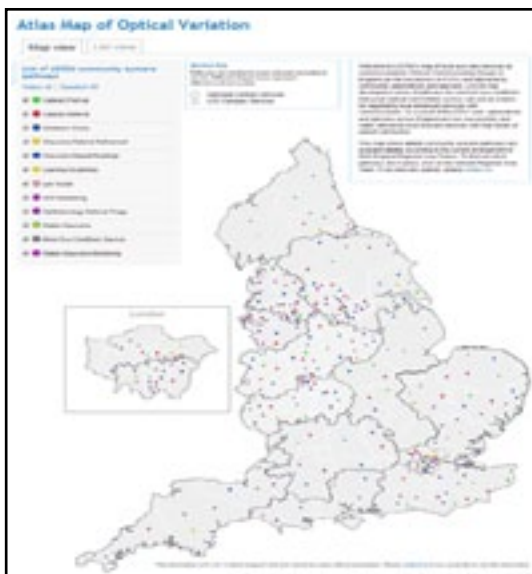
October 2015 Newsletter

## Optical Atlas updated

LOCSU has completed the first major update to the Atlas of Optical Variation.

For the first time, the Atlas now shows services delivered by LOC Companies as well as those commissioned via contracts direct with practices.

The map view shows services by pathway type, with geographic groupings by NHS regional team that can be broken down to LOC or CCG level.



Commenting on the updated Atlas, Head of Policy Richard Knight said: “The reality is community eye services are still a postcode lottery due to the absence of national standardised commissioning.

“The updated Atlas of Variation offers a snapshot of the current provision and gaps around the country.

“It will be useful for LOCs, for Commissioners and for the public to be able to see where services exist and how they are provided.”

The live Atlas can be found on the LOCSU website at: [www.locsu.co.uk/community-services-pathways/community-services-map](http://www.locsu.co.uk/community-services-pathways/community-services-map).

## Annual Report reveals ‘regional momentum’

REGIONAL LOC Companies are on the increase according to the 2014-15 LOCSU Annual Report published last week.

LOCSU reveals that “regional momentum” is a growing and defined development in the commissioning landscape in the report, entitled “Leaders at every table”.

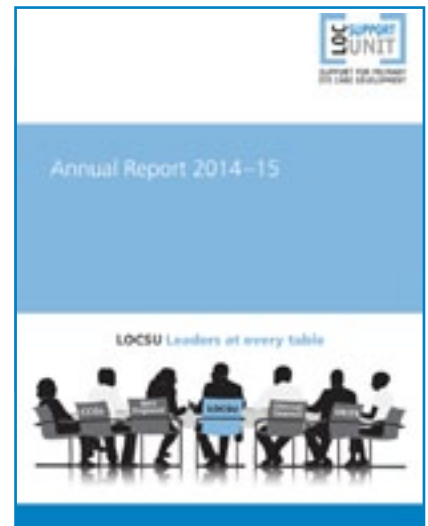
40 out of 78 LOCs are now covered by a Regional Company and a total of 63 LOCs are now promoting the single provider model to attract services. More than half of LOCs (44 out of 78) have at least one community service commissioned through a Primary Eyecare Company.

Outlining the shift, LOCSU Managing Director, Katrina Venerus, said: “We are seeing a clear trend from both Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and LOCs attracted to the benefits of the Company model.

“LOCs are drawn to its efficiency as it eases the administrative burden and allows practices of all sizes to participate in pathways.

“Similarly, hard-pressed CCGs understand the benefits of administering one contract but still offering patients a wide choice of practices for services.

“The Regional Company model is a turbo-charged version of the LOC Company offering CCGs a single provider across a wider area



and enabling LOCs to pool resources and combine expertise to successfully bid for services with LOCSU’s support.

“The end result is more beneficial for patients and more cost-effective for Commissioners.”

Case studies in the report also highlight LOC and LOCSU activities in the past year to develop new care models to show how optics can innovate to help reform eye health services.

To read the full Annual Report visit: [www.locsu.co.uk/about-us/annual-reports](http://www.locsu.co.uk/about-us/annual-reports).

# Regional Roundup – London

■ In the latest Regional Roundup LOCSU's Head of Policy, Richard Knight, and LOCSU Board member, Abi Page, outline the latest developments from the London area.

## London crying out for a joined-up approach on commissioning

AS the LOCs in the NHS London region know, eye care pathways vary from one borough to the next and the commissioning is extremely fragmented.

A number of CCGs have worked very well with LOCs, Acute Trusts and other stakeholders to implement services in primary care but many have not made eye health a priority.

Frustratingly, some CCGs have launched procurements for community ophthalmology services without considering what should be implemented in primary care first.

But some LOCs in London are now working more collaboratively with local Acute Trusts. With LOCSU's support, the recently reconfigured Kensington, Chelsea, Westminster, Hammersmith and Fulham LOC is working with Imperial Hospitals Trust to develop primary care services as part of a wide-reaching community service. As another example, members of their management team from Moorfields Eye Hospital have met with LOCSU to discuss how they can collaborate more with LOCs. LOCSU have also been liaising with Kings Hospital on behalf of BBG LOC.

LOCSU and LOCs are not the only ones calling for joined-up thinking across London; this is also the aim of the London Eye Health Network which is chaired by David Parkins, also President of the College of Optometrists. The report "[Eye Health Network for London: Achieving Better Outcomes](#)" launched by the Network in June 2015 recommends a co-ordinated and London-wide approach with local leadership in order to improve outcomes for patients.

Expert working groups have developed recommendations for specific integrated services, many based on the LOCSU pathways, to be used as a basis for discussion between Commissioners and providers.

The Network report was sent to all CCGs during the summer and I would urge LOCs to check that your contacts at CCGs have all seen and read it.



*Richard Knight*

## NOC perfect opportunity for 'newbies' to grow knowledge

I AM a Dispensing Optician and I have been the LOC Representative for London on the LOCSU Board for just over two years now, attending my first board meeting in June 2013.

London covers a large and diverse population with 32 CCGs and 14 LOCs. I am a member of Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich LOC and have met with some of the other London LOCs. I hope to connect with the rest of you soon and to see many of you at the NOC.

LOCSU held a meeting of London LOCs earlier this year to consider current geographical boundaries for LOCs and LOC Companies and to look at the potential to work together and share expertise. The reality is, it is difficult to define the optimum size for an LOC as there are pros and cons of small and large. However, LOC mergers and consolidating LOC Companies are concepts I believe we should keep an open mind on to ensure we are operating as effectively as possible.

With the NOC imminent, seasoned delegates can forget is how daunting an experience can be for a "newbie" committee member attending for the first time. I clearly remember my first NOC and recall feeling overwhelmed by the mass of acronyms being used by speakers. I learned a huge amount from attending and the experience definitely developed my skills as a committee member which in turn gave me the confidence to apply for the LOCSU leadership course.

This year, the LOCSU team have introduced a buddy system for first-time attendees. There is also a workshop for new attendees and newly-elected committee members, which I will be involved with. This year is the perfect time for new representatives – whether you are a DO or optometrist – to step forward and offer to join colleagues attending the conference on behalf of your committee.



*Abi Page*

## Dudley pilot leads media coverage

THE launch of the first Healthy Living Optician practice scheme launched in August has attracted significant interest in the optical, health and commissioning media.

LOCSU worked with Dudley LOC and the Public Health team to issue a national press release about the groundbreaking pilot. From this, the story was published by [Primary Care Today](#), and [Commissioning Review](#) and [Inside Commissioning](#), where it was listed as the Editor's Choice on the website.

A joint press release covering the final report of the Tri-Borough Learning Disabilities pathway was covered in both the [specialist disability press](#) and on NHS Networks which has nearly 60,000 subscribers and through the Primary Care Commissioning Newsletter with 11,000 readers. The report showed that half of those seen in the pilot suffered an eye problem. Read the full report [here](#).

Finally a LOCSU Twitter response to the "Five Year Forward View: Time to Deliver publication" in the summer led to a request from LOCSU to write for the [NHS Confederation website](#).



In her blog, Katrina Venerus insisted community eye care must play a role in the transformation plans, arguing optics can make every contact count and tackle major lifestyle health risks to reduce upstream demand.

● For LOCs looking to develop a communications plan or media activities, Chris McGachy, Head of LOCSU Communications, will be co-hosting a dedicated workshop at the NOC 2015 on use of Communications and Social Media, offering practical tips and advice for LOCs. Book via the [NOC web page](#).

# Final chance to book for NOC

WITH less than a month to go, LOCSU is repeating its call to LOCs to ensure they are well represented at the NOC.



Katrina Venerus said: "We want LOCs to send a mixture of experienced and inexperienced representatives so that more committee members are connected to national issues. LOCs should also consider the NOC as integral to supporting succession planning."

As usual, the programme includes an array of presentations on hot topics that are relevant to LOCs and the community optical sector.

Hot off the press is the news that LOCSU plans to host the first-ever live NOC debate at this year's annual conference. "Should the optical professions support the concept of mandatory enhanced services?" is the question that will be put to NOC 2015 delegates in an interactive session on Day Two of the event.

Katrina Venerus, LOCSU Managing Director, explained the context of the discussion topic. "Commissioners have

been known to ask if they can make it compulsory for GOS contractors to sign up to deliver enhanced and community services," she said.

"Of course, the standard response LOCs give to Commissioners is that it is not possible but, with some regions signalling that they are looking for radical transformation of primary care, the question is likely to become more pertinent going forward.

"We are very aware that there are a range of different viewpoints across the sector regarding the idea of mandatory participation in certain services. Since the NOC brings together representatives of all LOCs across England and other key players in optics, it is the perfect platform to tease out the arguments for and against."

[Book your place now at NOC 2015!](#)

# Support for SeeAbility's Children in Focus campaign

LOCSU was a joint signatory of a letter published in *The Telegraph* last month which called for a national plan to ensure that children in special schools have regular sight tests.

The letter refers to An Equal Right to Sight, a report by SeeAbility, which reveals that thousands of vulnerable children with disabilities are missing out on crucial eye care, despite the high risk of sight problems.



Katrina Venerus said: "Children with learning disabilities are 28 times more likely to have a serious sight problem than other children and it is unacceptable that there is no national plan to meet their eye care needs. LOCSU has worked closely with SeeAbility in recent years to develop and promote our pathway for adults with learning disabilities and we are delighted to support the Children in Focus campaign."

You can read the letter [here](#). You can find out more about SeeAbility's Children in Focus Campaign at [www.seeability.org/petition](http://www.seeability.org/petition).

## Political parties hear primary care is more than general practice



■ Primary Care minister, Alistair Burt (centre), visits the stand.

THE Optical Confederation has united with Pharmacy Voice and the National Community Hearing Association for this year's political party conference season.

The joint lobby urged politicians to recognise that primary care is more than general practice and made the call for the NHS to make better use of opticians and optometrists, community audiologists and pharmacy teams.

Representatives met with health leaders from both main parties. During the visit to the Conservative Conference

in Manchester 4-7 October, the team, including LOCSU's Katrina Venerus, met with Health Minister, Alistair Burt (pictured above), responsible for primary care, including ophthalmic services. The previous week in Brighton during the Labour Party Conference Shadow Health Secretary, Heidi Alexander, (pictured below) visited the joint stand.



■ New Shadow Health Secretary, Heidi Alexander (third from right), visits the joint optical, pharmacy and audiology stand in Brighton.

## LOC sponsorship offer

Altacor, a UK ophthalmic company specialising in products that treat dry eye syndrome and eye health supplements, would like to hear from LOCs interested in offering sponsorship

opportunities for their LOC meetings and events. For more information contact Barrie Bell, National Account Manager, [barrie.bell@altacor-pharma.com](mailto:barrie.bell@altacor-pharma.com) or phone 07912 379412.

# Venerus' View



WHEN it comes to our Annual Report, articulating the breadth of work that LOCSU is involved in is never easy. Squeezed into the 28 pages is a mere snapshot but I hope it gives you some sense of LOCSU at work. It is fantastic to see that the LOC Company model is

bringing contracts for services to practices in many areas of England and the trend towards regional companies.

Another highlight for me is the impact of our learning and development programme. The report is available **online** and all LOC Chairs will have received a printed copy in the post. I hope that you will take time to read it and I welcome any comments or questions you have.

With just weeks till the NOC, our preparations have entered the final phase. We have a particular focus on making sure the conference provides both a welcoming environment and a positive experience for first-time delegates this year and LOCSU Board member Abi Page's reflections on her first NOC (Pg 2) prove how important this is.

I am delighted that we are adding some zing to the NOC programme for the second day with LOCSU's first ever NOC live debate on "*Should the optical professions support the concept of mandatory enhanced services?*" The concept of mandatory participation in certain core competency services generates a range of different responses and there are a number of arguments for and against the idea. I won't give away too much about the format but I can promise it will be a great finale to the conference.

Richard's column (Pg2) highlights the excellent report **Eye Health Network for London: Achieving Better Outcomes**. The report – the work of London LEHN Chair David Parkins and colleagues – was put together following extensive consultation with stakeholders including the formation of a number of expert working groups. What we need now is for CCGs and local authorities across London to take on board the recommendations and stop thinking about eye health services based only on their own geographical footprint. Sadly, we have seen recent procurements where it would appear the CCG has ignored the Network's proposals. There is a massive opportunity for a more efficient approach to commissioning across London.

Attending the party conferences with the Optical Confederation's Public Affairs team, alongside colleagues from pharmacy and audiology bodies, has been a time consuming but worthwhile exercise. In Brighton, the recently appointed Shadow Health Secretary, Heidi Alexander, made encouraging noises about wanting to get to know the issues faced by all – she will be hearing plenty from us. In Manchester, despite the junior doctor contract, GP contract and a seven-day NHS grabbing the headlines, we were able to engage on a one-to-one basis with a number of key politicians to raise awareness of the role community optical practices can play. Alistair Burt, the Health Minister responsible for ophthalmic services and Dr Sarah Wollaston, Chair of the Commons Health Select Committee, being of particular relevance. Jenny and Sophie did a sterling job (Pg4) and I was delighted to be able to help out.

**Don't forget to book your NOC place! I look forward to seeing you in Birmingham. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome: [katrinavenerus@locsu.co.uk](mailto:katrinavenerus@locsu.co.uk) or [@katrinavenerus on Twitter](https://twitter.com/katrinavenerus).**

## Dates for your Diary

- NOC 2015 will take place at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole from the 5–6 November 2015. One free delegate place is available to all LOCs and bookings are now open. [Follow this link to book a place.](#)
- A Royal College of Ophthalmology and College of Optometrists joint seminar takes place on **9 November**.

It focusses on working together in primary and secondary care to benefit patient care and improve cost effectiveness.

- The College of Optometrists is hosting 25 regional events in the coming year. Details can be found at: [www.college-optometrists.org/regional](http://www.college-optometrists.org/regional).
- The Association of

Optometrists (AOP) has launched its extensive programme of CET and CPD events throughout the country, offering over 200 CET points during the year. [Download the guide.](#)

- **Optometry Tomorrow 2016** takes place at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole, on Sunday 13 and Monday 14 March 2016.

If you have an item of interest for *LOCSU News*, contact Editor, **Chris McGachy**, Head of Communications. You are receiving this email from the Local Optical Committee Support Unit. If you would like to unsubscribe, please contact [info@locsu.co.uk](mailto:info@locsu.co.uk).