

IN THIS ISSUE:

Pg2 Regional Roundup

Pg3 Merger opens door for PENE

Pg4 Children in Focus campaign

Pg5 Making the case to MPs

Pg6 Venerus' View

LOCSU

NEWS

LOC SUPPORT UNIT

SUPPORT FOR PRIMARY EYE CARE DEVELOPMENT

December 2015 Newsletter

Looking to become an optical leader in 2016? Deadline looms for applications

APPLICATIONS for 2016 Leadership Skills Module must be submitted by Monday 4 January.

LOCSU's Leadership Skills for Optical Professionals, is a 20-credit postgraduate module, and part of WOPEC's MSc programme at Cardiff University.

It provides an understanding of current leadership models and theoretical approaches and will give delegates the background knowledge and practical skills that will equip them to provide leadership in the optical sector.

The Module is open to optometrists with a BSc in Optometry and opticians who are FBDO-qualified.

LOCSU will be funding up to 10 places on the 2016 cohort. If you would like to be considered for a funded place please download the application from the [LOCSU website](http://locsu.co.uk) and return it to jacquehudson@locsu.co.uk.

Closing date for receipt of applications is Monday 4th January at 5pm.

Interviews will be conducted by conference call on Monday, 11 and Tuesday, 12 January 2016. Please indicate any preferences for dates and times in your covering letter.

Optical practices can be part of reform jigsaw agrees health minister



Optical Sector leaders meet Alistair Burt, front right

OPTICAL SECTOR leaders met with health minister Alistair Burt at the Department of Health in Whitehall last week to discuss the wider role optometrists and opticians can play in primary care.

The Minister of State for Community and Social Care heard from leaders from the Optical Confederation and LOCSU that optical practices could help the NHS to deliver reforms set out in the Five Year Forward View.

Speaking to *LOCSU News* following the meeting, Katrina Venerus, LOCSU MD, said: "The minister recognises that optometrists and opticians are well positioned to play a wider role in transforming health delivery with other primary care professionals. We were pleased to have

had such a productive and encouraging meeting with him. Mr Burt will be responding formally to the issues raised with him and we aim to report back in the New Year to LOCs. We welcome his interest in the sector and look forward to working with him in the coming months."

The Minister, who is responsible for commissioning policy and the GP contract along with ophthalmic and dentistry services, said he is looking forward to working with the optical profession more closely going forward.

Regional Roundup – West Midlands

■ *Optical Lead, Hayley Rowbotham, explains how the commissioning landscape is evolving and why LOCs can use their membership of a Regional Company to polish up their “CV” and make a breakthrough in securing pathways.*

THIS year’s Annual Report highlighted the development of “regional momentum”. The Commissioning Update section revealed how – with a larger footprint than many CCGs and 40 LOCs covered by a Regional Company – neighbouring CCGs were often drawn to the model for a basket of services creating a cluster of activity.

In my operating area in the West Midlands, we are seeing an interesting new interaction that is combining in a positive way for LOCs yet to breakthrough and attract community services.

The recent procurement by Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG and Solihull CCG has seen a chain of activity with a new cluster of services in the pipeline for Walsall CCG and conversations with Commissioners in other areas.

The underlying dynamic behind this is that CCGs are beginning to come out of their silos. They seem to be communicating and sharing information more.

We have already seen smaller CCGs piggybacking with a neighbouring CCG to share the capacity and costs required to run a tender exercise.

They are seeing what works in other areas and are keen to have a piece of the action, particularly where this has a downward drive



Hayley Rowbotham

on hospital A&E admissions.

Regional companies have the advantage of being able to share service specifications and data to support service redesign.

The Wolverhampton contract, a three-year contract worth over £600,000 and involving 40 practices, was the breakthrough in the West Midlands. Data from the PEARS scheme which showed a continuing dent in A&E admissions and that 80% of repeat readings were now being managed in the community following the introduction of the pathways put Primary Eyecare (Heart of West Midlands) in an enviable position. A local audit award from the hospital trust for Wolverhampton LOC underlined the eyecare company’s

credentials as a serious player. In addition to the Sandwell and Solihull procurement, Primary Eyecare West Midlands has just posted a success with Walsall CCG to deliver Pre Cataract, Post Cataract, IOP Repeat Readings and PEARS. Finally, discussions are taking place in neighbouring East Midlands where the CCG is keen to learn more.

Often LOCs find it difficult to make that initial breakthrough. The creation of the Regional Company has allowed the model and the Webstar data to be shared. This has proved highly influential for LOCs faced with hesitant CCGs.

Any LOC involved can play the Regional Company “card” as part of its CV. It provides persuasive data for CCGs. And going to the commissioning table with Webstar as integral partners rather than as a third party is a massive selling point.

The Regional Company allows an LOC to showcase what community service can achieve given the footprint and scale, making it more cost-effective for commissioners and more convenient for patients.

So, if your LOC is looking to increase pathways, perhaps conversations about working with a Regional Company could be the place to start.

'Positive start' for Better Care Together Vanguard

AN ophthalmology-headed Better Care Together (BTC) programme has had a positive start following a first joint meeting with optometrists in North Lancashire and South Cumbria.

Covering the Morecambe Bay Trust footprint, the Vanguard has started its work in ophthalmology and has already held a number of engagement events.

And earlier this month, the Clinical Lead for Ophthalmology and Strategy Programme Manager hosted the first joint meeting with local optometrists to discuss the implementation plan.

"Both the turnout and enthusiasm – given the weather and the remote location – augurs well for the new approach," said Optical Lead, Zoe Richmond.

"It was a positive start, with lots of enthusiasm for a new joined-up approach involving community optometrists and although it is early days, I am optimistic that we can replicate this collaboration between the two professions across the country as a blueprint for the NHS and eye health professionals moving forward."

The Better Care Together strategy in North Lancs and South Cumbria used the meeting to set up Task and Finish Groups to take the implementation plan forward.

The overarching aim of the local programme promises a population-based approach to providing wellbeing and care, co-designed with primary care providers in out-of-hospital settings.

THE merging of three CCGs to form Newcastle and Gateshead CCG has seen a review of all services and means patients now receive a seamless delivery of services, offering Primary Eyecare North East (PENE) a significant advantage.



PENE has recently been awarded a contract for IOP Repeat Readings and Children's Cycloplegic Services. The new service will begin on 1 January 2016.

For the new Children's Service there will be no gaps in provision or cross-border issues from Northumberland, Tyne and Wear due to Gateshead and South Tyneside now also commissioning the service.

Similarly, with Newcastle West now also commissioning the IOP RR service, subcontracted practices across the whole of Cumbria, Northumberland,

Tyne and Wear are able to offer repeat IOP by applanation before first checking whether the patient belongs to a CCG that has commissioned this service.

With the pathway also now commissioned across the wider area, work can begin to ensure that no patients with unrefined pressure will be referred to hospital before being seen by a local practice.

"The CCG merger and the contract sitting across such a large footprint is a huge advantage for the Regional Company," explained Optical Lead, Zoe Richmond.

Changes to WOPEC Cataract Codes

WOPEC have updated the lectures in the online Cataract module which will impact on optometrists who are in the process of completing this module.

If you have recently activated a cataract code you must complete your answers to the MCQs by 31 March 2016 to be able to claim the associated CET points.

If you have a cataract code that you have not yet activated please contact info@locsu.co.uk to request a new code.

Vision assessment lacking in falls audit

THE first ever National Falls Audit shows only half of hospitals carry out vision assessments the Royal College of Physicians has revealed.

The results from 170 hospitals show that there is some encouraging news in the way in which some hospitals are assessing and managing older people at risk of falls. However, the audit also found much that needs improvement in terms of effective multifactorial assessment.



One such area was vision assessment; of the 5000 patients reviewed the results showed that – although 66% of hospitals included a vision assessment as part of their multifactorial assessment – this was actually undertaken only 50% of the time, indicating that opportunities are missed to reduce falls risk potentially associated with vision impairment.

Responding to the report, Katrina Venerus, said: “We know that vision impairment is strongly associated with falls and fractures. So it is important that falls services include a basic vision check and that they refer patients to community optometrists where necessary.”

Read the [press release](#) with link to full report.

LOCs are being asked to contact their MP to urge them to support a new sight campaign that has already gained cross-party support and is the subject of an Early Day Motion in Parliament.



Siobhain McDonagh MP (below right)

The motion calls for a comprehensive, national programme and a properly-funded system to make sight tests available in all special schools in England.

LOCs can check if their local MPs are backing the early day motion introduced by Siobhain McDonagh MP (pictured above right).

The Mitcham and Morden MP tabled the motion after she visited the Children in Focus project at Perseid School in her constituency and then led an excellent debate in Parliament on November 2015.

Why not send an email

to your MP to ask them to support the early day motion if they haven't already?

You can check if their name is against the Early Day Motion by following [this link to the UK Parliament site](#).

SeeAbility has produced a sample response which can be downloaded from their website [via this link](#).

The charity says that, although not every MP will add their name to an early day motion, contacting them is a great way to encourage parliamentary support for change...and it will push eye health further up the political agenda.

SeeAbility National survey request

LOCs are being asked to promote a national survey by SeeAbility. The survey will help them understand if people with learning disabilities are getting good help to look after their eyes. An easy-read version is available for children over 14 and another version for parents with children with special needs under 14. Both surveys can be submitted anonymously and can be [downloaded from the SeeAbility website](#). The charity plans to publish the findings in a major new report in Spring 2016.

STAFFORDSHIRE LOC made the case for increased community eye health services during an MP's visit to a local practice.

MP for Stoke-on-Trent North, Ruth Smeeth, visited L. Thompson Optometrists in Kidsgrove on 8 October to find out why regular eye tests are so important in preventing blindness.

Staffordshire LOC Chair, Stewart Townsend, and optometrist, Amy Thompson, met the Labour MP.

Following the visit, optometrist, Amy Thompson, said: "Meeting Ruth was a great opportunity to discuss eye health in Staffordshire. It was really reassuring to know that she views her eye health and that of her constituents so highly. We discussed in length the additional services available within Staffordshire like the acute eye, glaucoma, cataract and paediatric shared care schemes and highlighted that other areas of the UK are not as fortunate to have these services in place." Commenting following her visit, Ruth Smeeth



Left to right: Ruth Smeeth, MP, Amy Thompson and Stewart Townsend, Chair, Staffordshire LOC.

said: "It was great to visit a local practice and extremely informative to see the great work that they do. Many people don't realise they are eligible for free sight tests, and I would urge everyone to make sure they are getting their eyes tested regularly."

MP hails 'admirable' work of Essex LOC

SOUTHEND West MP, Sir David Amess, has praised the collaborative work of Essex Local Optical Committee.

The Conservative MP said that the work of the LOC had helped improve the health of patients in the constituency – and across the county.

On a visit to Body's Opticians in Leigh-on-Sea in October Sir David said: "It is reassuring to hear how the constituents in my area and the rest of Essex are benefiting from the excellent work of Essex LOC.

"Their efforts to provide community eye care services for the benefit of patients is admirable.



Left-Right: Stuart Humphrey, Chair, Essex LOC, Sir David Amess MP, Emma Graves, Robert Graves, Paul Graves

The Shared Care Glaucoma Scheme demonstrates how close ties with Hospital Eye departments can forge excellent working relationships that benefit patients, opticians and hospitals alike."

The MP visit was arranged between Essex LOC and the MP with the support of the Optical Confederation's Public Affairs Team.

Venerus' View

A CONSTRUCTIVE first meeting with the health minister Alistair Burt last week was a positive note to end the year on. Recognition by the minister of the important role optical practices play is key and I hope the fact that we watched Tim Peake blast off into space from the minister's office at the start of the meeting is a good omen for the heights we will reach with community services in 2016.

News of successful LOC Company Any Qualified Provider (AQP) and Competitive Tender bids in the Midlands and the North East is another upbeat note to conclude the year on. Writing and submitting bids may be tedious and laborious at times for the LOCSU team but I suppose the old cliché "no pain, no gain" applies. The inclusive nature of the LOC Company model is providing an opportunity for practices of all shapes and sizes to get involved in community services without having to acquire the skills and capacity to write and submit a bid of their own. And when it comes to competitive tenders, having the whole optical community standing together under a single bid is tremendous.

So, with these successes and others in the pipeline, we can look forward to seeing several more dots on the [map of services Atlas](#) in the New Year.

As you might expect, the approach to commissioning was a major focus at the recent meeting of the LOCSU Board and staff to review our 2014–17 Strategic Plan. Although we continue to argue that it would be more efficient for the NHS to commission some core services at a national level, in the context of local commissioning by CCGs and further local control in some areas under Devolution, the likelihood of nationally-commissioned services is rather slim.



With that in mind, it is clear that our objective in the short-to-medium term has to be to drive local commissioning forward at greater scale and greater pace so that core services are available in all areas of England. We also need to do more to support the shift of care from

hospital to the community for the ongoing monitoring of patients with glaucoma, etc. Early in the New Year we will be consulting with LOCs on an updated LOCSU Strategy and proposals for its successful implementation. "Watch this space", as they say!

Supporting the development of local leaders has been a key part of LOCSU's Strategy since the organisation was formed and the Leadership Skills Course that Gill Brabner delivers for us with WOPEC continues to be very effective in producing a strong cohort of leaders every year. Succession planning for LOCs and developing future leaders is all the more important with the Government and the NHS being so focussed on localism. With a revised format and a fresh approach to make the Leadership Skills course even more accessible for 2016, I hope that many LOC Chairs will encourage colleagues to apply for a LOCSU-funded place.

Sticking with training, it is fantastic to see that the new LOCSU Coaching and Mentoring Skills course (See Pg7) is well underway. Having this optical sector focussed course accredited by the Institute of Leadership Management certainly puts our professions in a good place for the years ahead.

I hope you all have time to relax and enjoy the festive season. I wish you all a very Happy Christmas a great New Year!

Your comments and suggestions are always welcome: katrinavenerus@locsu.co.uk or [@katrinavenerus on Twitter](#).

Post-mobilisation planning a must, workshop hears

NOC delegates took advantage of the new workshops offering them practical skills to take back to their LOC.

The “Real-Life LOC Company” workshop pitted experienced PEC directors and business managers against LOC officers new to contract implementation. The fun approach to the “mobilisation game” allowed participants to test their knowledge and learn from others whilst still having a good time said organiser Matt Jkinson. “The top tip was how planning is essential in any mobilisation process. Have a timescale for the progress and ensure key milestones of the process are

met. A key thread throughout the whole of the mobilisation process is communication, with all stakeholders involved from the very start. The work does not stop when the service goes live; more needs to be done! What needs monitoring? Are you going to meet your KPIs? Can the service be amended/improved to enable you to provide a better service to the patient or a greater cost saving to the CCG? Crucially, will you get the service recommissioned at the end of the contract term?

Six workshops in total were held and the presentations from each NOC workshops are now available on the [LOCSU website via this link](#).

Mentoring network for LOCs taking shape

LOCSU’s new mentoring team is shaping up with our two cohorts making good progress towards the ILM Level 5 qualification. Now LOCs can register to make use and benefit from the network.

“Our aim is to have a national network of qualified coaches and mentors available from next year,” revealed LOCSU Learning and Development Consultant, Gill Brabner.

“If you are a newly-elected LOC Chair or if you are a CG&PL interested in supporting practices to deliver services and would benefit from using mentoring in your conversations about governance, please contact me.

LOC officers can register an interest by emailing [Gill Brabner](#).

Dates for your Diary

- [100% Optical](#) 6-8 February, ExCel Centre, London.



- Professor Sir Peng Tee Khaw (*pictured above*) will deliver the inaugural [Sam Gaussen Memorial Lecture](#) on 15 February 2016 in Bristol. For more information, contact info@nerc.co.uk.
- The College of Optometrists is hosting 25 [regional events](#) in the coming year.

- 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 course of the year. [Download the guide](#).
- [Optometry Tomorrow 2016](#) Hilton Birmingham Metropole 13-14 March 2016.
- [Optrafair](#), NEC Birmingham, 9-11 April 2016.
- Fight for Sight is making its research presentation roadshow available for LOCs. The presentations aimed at both optometrists and dispensing opticians, and are CET certified. Email [Julian Jackson](#) or call or call 07773 800073 for more information.

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.