

IN THIS ISSUE:

Pg2 Regional Roundup

Pg3 Putting MPs in the picture

Pg4 Deadline for NOC posters

Pg4 Final call on Induction training

Pg5 Venerus' View



September 2015 Newsletter

Countdown to NEHW

WITH National Eye Health Week days away (21-27 September) organisers are urging are LOCs to get involved.

Practices are being asked to display National Eye Health Week leaflets and posters and to ask sight test patients about family and friends.

This year's themes include children's vision, UV protection, nutrition, dry eyes, beauty and technology.

A range of new supporter resource materials has been published on the [Vision Matters website](#)

including flyers on men's and

women's eye health and an Amsler grid and guide to dry eyes.

Help get eye health trending on Twitter by signing up for their [thunderclap](#).

Register for your FREE supporter resource pack by sending your name, address and email details to info@visionmatters.org.uk

Post announcements about your plans on your website and social media channels. Use the hashtags #EyeWeek and #VisionMatters.

Help to work with your local media so they can tell your local audiences about the importance of eye health.



Putting final touches to 'unmissable' NOC

LOCSU is putting the finishing touches to the NOC programme and LOCs are being urged to make their bookings promptly to avoid missing out on the Conference taking place on November 5-6 at the Birmingham Metropole Hotel.



"The Future Vision for Primary Care Support Services" is the latest session to be added to the programme for NOC 2015.

Senior figures from Capita, the organisation that took over the running of NHS England's Primary Care Support (PCS) service from 1 September 2015, will provide an insight into their plans to modernise PCS services which include processing GOS claims and Performer List applications.

Katrina Venerus, LOCSU MD, said: "This year's exciting programme reinforces the NOC as the must-attend event in the optical calendar for LOCs and anyone interested in primary eye care."

In addition to the presentation by Capita, the programme includes strategic sessions on Delivering New Care Models and the launch of LOCSU's new national data repository. Professor Carrie MacEwen, President of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists will give the keynote speech on the opening day of the conference.

LOCs are encouraged to send a mixture of experienced and new committee members to the NOC. The programme includes a welcome event and buddy system for new delegates to get the most out of the workshop and network programme. Book now via the [LOCSU website](#).

Regional Roundup – Midlands and East of England

■ In the latest Regional Roundup LOC representatives on the LOCSU Board and LOCSU Optical Leads will be giving insights and updates from LOCs in their particular patch. Up this month are Stewart Townsend and Rupesh Bagdai outlining the latest developments in the Midlands and East of England.

Service success requires more than mere volunteer enthusiasm

I HAVE been the Midlands and East representative on the LOCSU Board for 18 months now, **reveals Board member, Stewart Townsend.**

The landscape has certainly changed in that time with the formation of LOC Companies of all different forms. The type that excites me most is the Regional Company. This has many great advantages; it covers a larger footprint and can contain many more patient episodes; this reduces costs and repetition of work.

There are challenges though. It requires the profession to think about the wider landscape and make connections with new colleagues from different areas. Regional Companies need finance officers, information governance leads, clinical leads and many other roles to be filled.

When a Regional Company is formed, it is a small business and needs to look like one to the commissioners. This requires time, planning and great communication. Most of all they need people. Company roles extend beyond “the few who do” who can be found on any committee. Company roles don’t even need to be filled by members of an LOC (and maybe it is better if some are not). Lots of time will be spent writing policy, liaising with NHS staff and keeping performers up to date.

All of this company activity needs paying for. Long gone are the days we can expect volunteer enthusiasm to drive community services forward. This requires good negotiation of contracts at the outset with the fees due for governance, IT, audit and service management worked out properly. This is where the experience of our Optical Leads and Webstar are reaping dividends.

We need to show that the primary care optical sector can deliver great value to the NHS beyond GOS. I feel the Regional Company delivering multiple services is the best vehicle to do that.



Stewart Townsend

Innovation will lead to better patient care across country

ACROSS the country, **writes Optical Lead Rupesh Bagdai,** we are seeing a mixed picture in eye health commissioning from complete redesign of eye health services in some CCG areas to others where there is little or no engagement despite the best efforts of the LOCs.

While many LOCs I have been working with are seeing progress with new services being commissioned, existing services being improved and recommissioned and innovative new models of care, a fragmented approach by CCGs persists.

A good example is Leicestershire LOC. IOP repeat readings and pre and post cataract services are in place across the three CCGs in the LOC area but only West Leicestershire CCG have commissioned a Minor Eye Conditions Service (MECS) so far, creating a postcode lottery for patients. The LOC is working hard to get MECS introduced in the two neighbouring CCGs but it would be so much better if CCGs worked together to align their arrangements for eye health services.

In Essex, the LOC has been working closely with one of the Acute Trusts on a new model of care which aims to bring low-risk glaucoma patients into the community and reduce waiting times.

This new opportunity is expected to release around 7,000 outpatient appointments into the community and provide care closer to home.

Effective governance arrangements and the ability to share electronic patient records are two of the key enablers being worked on that will be essential to the delivery of this service.

So, while we are seeing variation across regions, we are seeing innovative approaches that, in time, will produce evidence to strengthen the case for community eye services and lead to better care for patients across the country.



Rupesh Bagdai

Putting MPs in the picture

■ *MP practice visits remain key to raising awareness of the valuable role optometrists and opticians play in primary care. Here we report on three recent*

visits by MPs to optical practices. All the visits were arranged by Local Optical Committees with the help of the Optical Confederation Public Affairs Committee.

MP agrees GPs lack equipment

SHERYLL Murray, MP for South East Cornwall, agrees an optician should be the first port of call for eye problems.

Speaking during a visit to a local optical practice in her constituency, she said: "As someone who has worn glasses or contact lenses for a number of years, I know how precious our eyesight is and I urge everyone to ensure they have regular checks.

"Opticians have a range of equipment that doctors, particularly GPs, do not have available to them. If you notice anything wrong with your eyes, even if your sight is fine, you should book an appointment with your optician as soon as possible."

The MP visited Specsavers Opticians in Saltash in August. Daniel Tabb, optometrist at Specsavers Saltash explained the importance of regular sight tests: "We enjoyed welcoming Sheryll to show her everything we do.



L-R: Daniel Tab, Sheryll Murray, Jon Eva (Chair of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LOC), Lauren Icke (Student Dispensing Optician) and Philip Gray (Dispensing Optician and Director of Specsavers Plymouth, Plymstock and Saltash.

MP hears high-street eye checks reduce pressures

NORFOLK MP, Peter Aldous, heard how community eye services can reduce pressure on ophthalmology departments on a recent visit to a local optical practice.



L-R: Practice owner and optometrist Martin Storey and Peter Aldous MP.

They minimize unnecessary referrals, the MP for Waveney was told during a visit to a local optical practice in Beccles.

During his visit in August, optometrist and practice owner, Martin Storey, told the MP: "Community optometry schemes are important in decreasing the load on hospital eye services and minimizing unnecessary referrals to them by refining

screening results using more specialized methods."

Commenting on his visit, Mr Aldous said: "I had a great time visiting Martin Storey Opticians in Beccles. It was very interesting to hear more about the range of conditions optometrists can detect during a sight test, and to see the advanced equipment they use in the community in action."

South Staffordshire MP visit

SOUTH Staffordshire MP, Gavin Williamson, visited Kelcher Optometrists in Great Wyrley. The MP said: It was wonderful to visit a practice which has been providing such an important service. I was fascinated to discover that an eye test can pick up other health problems such as high blood pressure and diabetes."



L-R, Alistair and Michaela Kelcher, Gavin Williamson MP and Staffordshire LOC Vice Chair, Shelley Stubbs.

Central (LOC) Fund Board Nominations

LOCs in the London and the South East can nominate a new Board member for the Central (LOC) Fund.

The nomination must come from a member but the LOC can apply for membership at the same time as nominating.

Nomination paperwork is currently being sent out and the mailing will include a membership application form.

The new director will be announced at the Fund's AGM at the NOC in November. For more information contact the Secretary Roy Brackley by email: rkbcentralfund@aol.com or telephone 07972 080053.

Induction final call

IT'S your last chance to sign up for a place on the induction training which starts this month on the new, interactive Noddlepod platform.

The planned dates and topics are:

- Sep 28–4 Oct: Orientation Week
- Oct 5–11: What is an LOC?
- Oct 12–18: LOC Functions/ Governance
- Oct 19–25: Communications

If you are a new LOC officer, why not book up on the forthcoming programme. Email info@locsu.

New Vision 2020 website

VISION 2020 has launched an updated website and resource hub. The new website promises improved navigation and better user functionality. Read the full press release and visit the site via this [link](#).

Interact on cataract

THE Ophthalmology Section of the Royal Society of Medicine is looking for optometrists to register for their upcoming meeting: "The frontiers of cataract surgery" taking place on 8 October. Further information can be found on the RSM website [via this link](#).

Enter the NOC Poster Competition – deadline for abstracts this Friday!

WOULD you like to showcase the work of your LOC or Local Eye Health Network (LEHN)? Why not enter the NOC 2015 poster competition?

The four categories are:

- Engagement Strategy
- Service Redesign Initiative
- Collaborative Working
- Public Health

This year we are looking for posters that tell the story of your LOC, LOC Company or LEHN achievements. We are not looking for academic posters.

A 400-word abstract must be completed no later than 18 September 2015. All posters will be judged externally at the NOC and an overall winner selected. Visit the [NOC section](#) of the LOCSU website for full details.



2014 NOC Poster winners Devon LOC with their award

Latest Devon LOC broadcast to focus on children's vision

DEVON LOC's popular TV broadcasts continue this month with a live event using HIBLIO TV to tie in with National Eye Health Week.



The broadcast will be on aired live on Wednesday 23rd September 2015 at 7pm. There is a link to the broadcast from the [Devon LOC website](#).

It can also be accessed directly through the [Hiblio site](#) as can earlier broadcasts on eye health issues that the LOC has been involved in.

Venerus' View



NOW that summer is all but over, we are making the final preparations for the NOC.

As always, the annual conference offers a mixture of strategic and practical insights as well as unrivalled networking opportunities.

One session that will be of great interest gives recent examples of collaboration between primary and secondary care. It is no secret that ophthalmologists and optometrists have not had the best of relationships historically so it is fantastic to see the emergence of much closer working between LOCs and Acute Trusts in a number of areas in England. Co-operative working with innovation brings exciting prospects for optical practices as well as for the patients we serve.

Sticking with joint working, I am delighted that Professor Carrie MacEwen is able to join us to give the keynote speech on 5 November and that other leading ophthalmologists are involved in the programme.

I understand that taking a couple of days out of practice to attend the NOC is a big commitment, however, I would urge all LOCs to make sure you are well represented at the conference. There is a real benefit in people with a range of LOC experience attending as they take back perspectives others will find extremely valuable.

Local leadership is the focus of the column by LOCSU Board member, Stewart Townsend in this month's regional roundup (see Pg2). Stewart emphasises the need for LOC Companies to

present a business-like, professional image to commissioners and cautions against relying on volunteer enthusiasm to drive community services forward. Good negotiation of contracts at the outset so that companies can cover the costs of governance, IT, audit and service management is sound advice from Stewart.

Alongside, Rupesh Bagdai has drawn attention to a couple of examples of LOCs that he has been supporting to push services forward and has highlighted some of the obstacles that they are working to overcome. As we have said over again, savings could be achieved across the system by agreeing national pathways with common standards and outcomes and experience measures that all areas would implement – ideally at one fixed fee to save costs. For now we will carry on joining the dots across the country.

It is great to see that MP practice visits have got off to a good start following the general election (see Pg3). We are very grateful for the support of LOCs in co-ordinating MP practice visits as the more MPs we have that understand the wider role optometrists and opticians can play in the NHS, the better. As well as the value of having a body of support in the Commons, many MPs are happy to help LOCs on an individual basis, for example, by writing to the local CCG to ask questions about commissioning decisions. And you can't always predict who will end up in a position of potential influence; **Heidi Alexander**, Lewisham East MP and newly appointed Shadow Health Secretary, being a prime example.

Don't forget to book your NOC place!

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

Dates for your Diary

- The ABDO conference includes a session on "All You Need to Know about LOC Companies. The keynote conference takes place from 20–21 September at Manchester Central. Book via the [ABDO events page](#).
- The College of Optometrists is hosting 25 regional events in the coming year. Details can

be found at: 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 course of the year. [Download the guide](#).
- 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](#).

- [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.