



MINUTES of the LOC COMMITTEE MEETING

Held virtually on Wednesday 15th October at 6.30pm

Attendees

Emma Spofforth (ES)	Sheila Purser (SAP)	David Dixon (DD)
Maggie Glover (MG)	Vickie Hamilton-Barr (VH)	Reshma Patel (RP)
Pooja Bij (PB)	Chris Rushen (CR)	Sara Porter (SP)
Kiran Lal (KL)	Bhups Battu (BB)	Jasraj Bhangra (JB) (7pm)
Philip Bridgford (PB) (6.40pm)	Katie Kingcott (KK)	

Observers: Harriet Roots, Emily Searle, Aidan Moriarty and Justin Eghaghara

Minutes taken by KK

25/54 Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest

SAP welcomes observers – Emily and Harriet second time observing. Aidan and Justin first time observing. Introductions from everyone.

Apologies from Nick Hagan and Hayley Moore who are unable to attend.

No updates to C of I. ES will need to be excused from discussion regarding LOCSU Levy.

25/55 Minutes of last meeting agreed

Taken as true record. Proposed by MG, seconded by KL. SAP to sign and return to KK.

25/56 Action log

292 – ongoing

304 – ongoing

331 – new bank account opened. Close action

336 – SAP chased 14.10.25

342 – remove

344 – ongoing

351 – update: first lot of optoms been given email address to register and order IP10 pads.

Comms to go out to all practices once fully set up. Close action

352 – Assumed destroyed now. Close action

354 – remove

356 – update: MECS OSCE being held on 22nd October. Close action

357 – SAP heard back and no issues. Keep open

358 – VH to take over this action

359 – update: SAP spoken to ABDO. Very expensive option. Close action

360 – close action

361 – close action

25/57 Strategy Day

Arranged for 16th November. All able to attend apart from JB. SP will attend the meeting only. Meeting at 10.45am at Escape Live in Chelmsford. After escape room go next door to Brew House. Needs analysis to be discussed. DD will send a survey through before strategy day and results will be discussed on the day. Response from contractor survey will be discussed. VH to send out final details and food options for the strategy day. Anyone ideas on things to be covered on strategy day let officers know.

25/58 Chairman report & questions (report sent out prior to meeting)

SAP asks if any questions.

Q - CR: what is discussed with GP's at the meetings? SAP: how primary care needs to work together in the future. Meeting again in November.

Q - KL: is there an extra fee for Optometrists who get FP10's? SAP: not extra fee, different fee per episode.

Q - Aidan: do you only get IP fee if used FP10? ES: yes, if FP10 not issued, then just MECS fee. ES explains governance and contracting issues.

Harriet: is there going to be plans for NE Essex? ES: discussed later in clinical lead report.

25/59 Secretary's report & questions (report sent out prior to meeting)

No questions.

Feedback from practitioners – would like more CPD on myopia control. VH looking into this.

25/60 Treasurer's report & questions (report sent out prior to meeting)

Reserves have increased over last three months. PSCE hadn't previously actioned request to change levy. This has now been updated.

DD looking for next volunteer for treasurer session – most members have done this now.

ES: lots of missing allocations of money. Recently contacted Suffolk LOC to see if they have missing payments. ES spoken to Suffolk LOC treasurer who is unsure how to check.

Gloucestershire didn't know they were receiving our payments until flagged by ES.

25/61 LOCSU Levy adjustment proposal

ES current AOP chairman. AOP is one of the three bodies who co-own LOCSU. Any decisions made about LOCSU levy are conflict of interest for ES in her AOP chairman role. ES leaves meeting at 7.20pm.

DD explains what LOCSU does. In Nov 2024, Essex LOC funds paid to LOCSU were reduced to £1000 as committee felt they weren't getting level of support expected from LOCSU. This was in relation to trying to correct the misallocation of the stat levy which was being sent to other LOCs instead of Essex LOC. Most noticeably to Gloucester LOC. Since then, LOCSU have provided some more support with this. LOCSU have since reduced levy from all LOC's across the country by 20%. Prior to this, Essex LOC used to pay £3000 per month. If now paid 20% less it would be £2400. New proposal from DD to pay £2000 per month to LOCSU.

DD feels now is a sensible time to review. DD asks the committee to discuss if they feel they've had £2000 worth of work and help from LOCSU in the last twelve months. It was a dramatic change going from £3000 to £1000 back in Nov 2024. If committee feels £2000 a month is too much, happy to go in-between, and look at again in 6 months.

Q - CR: How much do we get back a month from Gloucester LOC? DD: over the year around £600. Discussions continue over LOCSU levy.

Q – RP: any pushback that we aren't paying enough to LOCSU? SAP: nothing directly from LOCSU.

RP also reluctant to increase to £2000. PB agrees with this.
MG proposes £1500 as an amount to consider. DD proposes change monthly LOCSU fee to £1500 per month ongoing. PB seconds. One abstained. All agreed, carried unanimously.

ES returned 7.37pm.

25/62 LEHN report & questions (report sent out prior to meeting)

SAP explains what the LEHN do. Representatives from ICB's attend meetings. Next meeting in January.

Q - CR: £2000 in Norfolk and Waveney – is that just to recruit optometrists in Norfolk? RP: yes – certain criteria they need to meet. Shortage of optoms in the area.

ES – no job security for anyone in ICB's across whole of England.

25/63 MSE ICB potential plans for the future of eyecare - Clinical lead

ES updates the committee on plans for the future. Essex ICB boundaries will go back to county of Essex. CEO and board executives have been appointed. Likely that everyone who works in SNEE ICB will be moved to Norfolk and Suffolk. Several meetings of commissioners to discuss what Essex ICB will look like going forward. Services have been mapped. ES recommended mapping of each hospital sites be done. Talk about potentially letting contracts run out, then doing a procurement in the new Essex ICB. Contracts either coming towards end or been extended already and will have run out by time new ICB is in place. Each of three commission areas (North East Essex, West Essex, & Mid & South Essex) between them have 4 different contracting modules. Problems with this going forward. Big discrepancy between services. Aim is to unify all services and get same services across the whole of Essex. Working really hard to get as much unification as possible.

Special school eye service is currently under commission for the new Essex ICB. National pathway being commissioned at local level. Lots of discussions on how services are doing.

ES has data from MSE regarding delayed follow ups. Figures of waiting times of 3-4 years for some follow ups for some patients with reports of around 40-50 people registered blind in the last 2 years.

Q - PB: have a lot of patients been seen on urgent referrals and its now been over a year since they were originally seen. [REDACTED]

Q – KL: what do you expect will happen to funding for standard MECS fee across Essex? ES: not sure. Will depend on if goes to procurement.

ES screen shares presentation 'Mid and South Essex care eye model for discussion'. Presented to various groups within Mid and South Essex by Jayne Mason. Plan is for Mid and South Essex, but it is likely to be rolled out across the whole of Essex.

Needs to go through commissioners and acute trusts. Presentation shows current care pathways. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ES talks about the eyecare strategic development programme set up by MSE ICB which includes two ophthalmologists (one from each hospital site), an ICB commissioner, the clinical lead for primary care (Dr. Tayo, and ES. The aim is to develop a strategic commissioning model and shift appropriate services into primary care

Q - PB: children in Colchester waiting to see ophthalmologist, where are the referrals coming from? ES: lot from school screening and other referrals from other optometrists. Discussion was had on the waiting times for paed's referred via the current school screening service to Colchester HES.

25/64 AOB

2026 committee meetings: January 28th, April 8th, June 17th (AGM), July 15th and Oct 21st. SAP

encourages everyone to put dates in diaries and try best to attend all meetings, especially AGM. BB points out October dates may conflict with school half term so VH will look to change this date.

End of meeting 8.30pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'VH', is placed over a light grey rectangular background.

Signed
Vickie Hamilton-Barr 30.01.2026
Essex LOC Secretary