ESSEXLOC
LOCAL OPTICAL COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the LOC COMMITTEE MEETING

Held virtually on Wednesday 28th January 2026 at 6.30pm

Attendees

Emma Spofforth (ES)	Hayley Moore (HM)	David Dixon (DD)
Nick Hagan (NH) (6.50pm)	Maggie Glover (MG)	Vickie Hamilton-Barr (VH)
Reshma Patel (RP) (6.40pm)	Pooja Bij (PB)	Kiran Lal (KL)
Sara Porter (SP) (6.50pm)	Jasraj Bhangra (JB)	Bhups Battu (BB) (7.10pm)
Katie Kingcott (KK)		

Observers: Harriet Roots, Emily Searle, Aidan Moriarty, Mo Patel and Elin Jones.
PES: Pratik Patel and Sana Asif (arrived 8.35pm)

Minutes taken by KK

26/01 Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest

Welcome from HM. HM standing in as vice chair. Sheila taking some time away from the LOC due to health reasons. Officers been in communication from Sheila. Officers have sight over Chairmans email address and will forward emails on to the appropriate person. DD as Treasurer is sharing access and records of the bank accounts with ES and HM as vice chair. ES has sent correspondence out regarding contact details for Tom from PES whilst Sheila is off. Tom only works two days a week, so response won't be as quick as Sheila was. Most enquiries to go to the @hello email address. Apologies from Chris Rushen and Philip Bridgford. SP, BB, RP, NH running late.
No new conflicts of interest.
HM introduces observers.

26/02 Minutes of last meeting agreed

Minutes from previous meeting sent out on 15th January. No amendments. Proposed as true by MG, seconded by PB. VH to electronically sign and return to KK.

26/03 Nomination to vote in Harriet Roots and Emily Searle as committee members

Proposal for Harriet Roots as a contractor to join the committee, proposed by ES, seconded KL, all agreed. Proposal for Emily Searle as a contractor to join the committee, proposed by MG, Seconded DD, all agreed.

26/04 Action log – sent out ahead of meeting

VH screen shares action log. New layout to include attendance.
292 – ongoing. Now have Gloucestershire payment. Currently tracking other practices. Accounts checked each month to see which levy payments are missing. DD has had an email from Herts regarding this. ES raises concern – levy payments will go all over the place when become one ICB.

336 – ongoing. Herts have paid us. DD needs to reconcile. ES to check chairman's emails regarding this.
344 – ongoing. New committee members encouraged to do this.
357 – ongoing. HM to send ES some screen shots of the issue. Anyone else having problems email ES. ES will contact PES in Sheila's absence.
358 – update: VH has ordered name badges. Action complete.
362 – complete, moved to closed actions.
363 – complete, moved to closed actions.
364 – update: CPD being organised. Close action.
365 – move to closed actions.
All closed actions to be removed.

25/05 Secretary's report & questions including CPD plans for 2026 – report sent out ahead of meeting

VH developed a spreadsheet for CPD idea's for 2026. Spring event planned for 4th March. Bruce Evans to present a workshop on Myopia Control, looking for a second speaker, possibly linked to paediatrics. VH asks if anyone knows of anyone who could do a second presentation. NH suggests Hoya have accredited CPD on myopia management they could deliver. ES states we need to be mindful if anyone from acute trusts delivers a lecture that it needs to be optom friendly. Everyone asked to email VH and ES with any hospital consultants who may be able to present. Richard Harding and Linda Melvin suggested by Harriet Roots – based at Colchester Hospital.
AGM in June. Aman Chandra possible speaker.
September – thinking about hosting a foreign body and practical workshop. Elin Jones has allowed the use of Chelmsford Specsavers. Plan is to do six interactive CPD sessions over two hours to include WOPEC accredited foreign body workshop and skills workshop.
VH to email all committee members to check everyone's contact details are up to date.
Update to Clinical lead terms of service- CL appointment is two years from the start date of June 2024, with annual reappointment starting June 2026.
VH asks if anyone would like to help with clinical lead role – succession planning, attend meeting with ES.
VH asks for all committee members due to re-stand at the AGM to let her know if they want to stay on the committee – DD, JB and PB.
No questions.

25/06 Treasurer's report and questions - report sent out ahead of meeting

Last quarter slight decrease in funds which was planned for. Biggest expense is committee fee's, and biggest income from Levy.
No questions.

25/07 LEHN report and questions

Report screen shared. LEHN might not be continuing. Rupal has gone for voluntary redundancy. There's thought that the regional transformation team believe they can cover much of the LEHN's work. Lots of discussion around DVLA and three-year sight test period. Whether this would fit into current GOS recall periods. ES encourages everyone to contribute to the official consultation. Talk around some organisations trying to push for DO's to carry out refractions and the concerns with the legalities of this and risks of changes by opening the Opticians Act. Special Educational Schools Sight Test procurement is currently at standstill (legal term for we still cant discuss the outcome) for Mid/South Essex. This will also cover North East Essex and West Essex. Will know more from early February.

Next LEHN meeting booked for May.

25/08 Clinical Lead report and update - report sent out ahead of meeting

Issues with Broomfield rejecting referrals and asking practices to use Opera. ES had meeting this week regarding this and clarified to the hospital why practices use emails for urgent referrals. But important all patient name and addresses are filled in correctly on referrals [redacted]

Speed of referrals can also be incorrect eg: VMT referred to AMD pathway. ES encourages people to use correct pathway and is aiming to put out a Mid Feb newsletter to remind everyone.

Email going out from ICB's regarding sexual safety in primary care asking practices to complete a checklist. Do not think this is a requirement of GOS. ES flagged to optical sector bodies. Waiting for clarification as to whether it is a requirement or recommendation but will update practices on this matter.

Q: KL – Optegra told KL they can see mid-south px's in 4-6 weeks for cataract surgery, thought it had to be listed for 12 weeks onwards? ES explains about indicative activity plans for ISP's and how If a patient's GP is in MSE but they can go to an ISP with a Contract in a different area eg SNEE ICB. SNEE hold Optegra's contact but not one in MSE ICB. so that activity would not fall under the local cap. This is why some ISP's may be seeking business from neighbouring areas despite reaching their caps in the ICB where they have a contract. .Discussions around waiting times and ISP activity continue across England.

Mohammed Patel leaves meeting at 8pm.

25/09 AOB

MG been asked to deputise for ES for Mid and South Essex board meetings. Need an LOC email address for correspondence. DD says MG can have access to the IT email address. DD to set this up.

Q: NH – Post-Payment Verification PPV visits for GOS increasing? ES – requirement to do 10% PPV visits across contracts per ICB. Some ICB's are good at meeting this target. Pharmacy, optometry and dental are given budgets for primary care activity to each ICB by NHSE. [redacted] Issues include more people claiming benefits now and people living longer mean an increase in GOS activity. Likely to be audited for high uses of GOS claims and increase use of eg: 5.3 claims. Advice is to maintain thorough clinical records. If your 5.3 etc claims are accurate and well-documented, you can easily justify them during an audit.

Next committee meeting: April 8th, AGM June 17th, July 15th, October 21st

Meeting finished at 9.20pm.