

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL OPTICAL COMMITTEE

Chair: Adam Holliday

Bi-Monthly Meeting

Nottinghamshire Local Optical Committee
Bi-Monthly Meeting
Tuesday 12th January 2021
Virtual Meeting – via Zoom

Present: Adam Holliday **Chair**
Indervir Atwal **Treasurer**
Andrew Spybey
David Cartwright
David Bennett
Sameen Qayyum
Mo Aslam
Ravi Chawda

In Attendance: Sam Stretton **Administrator**
Richard Rawlinson **Optical Lead – LOCSU**
Anthony Harvey
Janisha Seaman
Eloise Morrison

Adam Holliday welcomed everyone to the meeting

2. Apologies for Absence

Roma Malik Deputy Chair, Katie Franklin, Sonia Jethwa and Robert Blow

3. Minutes of previous meeting – 17th November 2020 - matters arising

NUH

David Bennett asked Mo Aslam if any more placements had become available at NUH. Mo advised that there are still currently three and no more had become available. This was expected to be the case for some time, given the current situation with COVID-19. Adam Holliday advised that this is not just a local issue having had conversations with colleagues in other areas of the country.

COVID-19 – Effects on Workforce & MP Visits

Adam Holliday advised that the LOC survey to capture the effects of COVID-19 had not been circulated. This was due to NHS England circulating a similar survey shortly after this was discussed at the last meeting. No one present acknowledged seeing this survey and Adam agreed to progress the LOC one.

Adam went on to say that Roma Malik would be progressing the agreed action over the coming months. This was in regards to raising the profile of the LOC and bringing the attention of the work being undertaken during the pandemic to MPs / Counsellors and the effects this is having on the workforce.

NOC

Adam Holliday asked Richard Rawlinson how the NOC went in November. Richard advised that it went very well and that LOCSU are currently putting together some feedback. There was representation from 70 LOCs out of the 75 LOCs. It was felt that the 'key messages' came across and the video playbacks have proved useful, with multiple views after the event.

Adam asked if information from the NOC was still available to view now. Richard advised that it was and is available via the LOCSU website. Adam asked Sam Stretton if she could circulate the link to the NOC information.

CET Events

At the meeting in November when this was first discussed, David Cartwright felt it would be good to keep this on the agenda moving forward. This would then link in with commissioned community services being provided in the county and arranging targeted CET education events.

4 & 8. Eye Health Strategy Board Update & Electronic Referral System

David Cartwright was pleased to be advised that a date had finally been set for the Pathways working group to meet with the CCG. This meeting is scheduled for 21st January 2021. David noted that Adam Holliday had been invited to this meeting. David suggested that one or two more committee members also attend. It was hoped that Roma Malik would be attending this meeting. There are a few members of the committee that Adam felt would make up a good strong team to drive this on behalf of the LOC and he would be speaking to them about this. Adam will then liaise with David and Richard about this.

David went on to say that the meeting would be the start of Trusts looking at various options to alleviate pressure on secondary care and get services into the community. There are various models around the country that set the scene for this.

The Pathways working group has the support of the National Outpatient Transformation team, the Elected Care Programme team and the Get It Right First Time group.

This is a really good opportunity for the LOC to put forward options which would benefit community optometry and David hoped that LOCSU would be able to help with potential models and advice on what the LOC could put forward. Richard advised that LOCSU would be on hand to support the LOC with this.

Those present then discussed the various pathways that are up and running nationally. The LOC needs a clear plan locally. It was therefore agreed that a meeting would be arranged for early next week for the committee put together and discuss the LOC plan. Adam asked Sam Stretton to arrange this.

Prior to the meeting, David Cartwright emailed Sam some power point slides on the Electronic Referral Service to screen share at the meeting.

David advised that NHS X one of many NHS arms, have secured a year's funding to support the implementation of an eyecare electronic referral service (EeRS) for all eyecare referrals. The funding needs to be used to develop this service and be spent by 31st March 2021. The national procurement hub established a purchasing system against a national specification for this service for the various regions. The Midlands specification is based on the national specification, but will also capture local stakeholder requirements. The final specification is due to be circulated to stakeholders by the end of this week for comment. Seven companies have been shortlisted to deliver the EeRS and they will all receive the final specification and decide if they wish to apply for this.

The e-referral system will be an electronic communication mechanism, a secure digital imaging sharing platform, offering advice and guidance where this is commissioned by the CCG and also notify patient as to where they are at in the pathway. The aspiration is that all eyecare referrals between primary and secondary care will be managed electronically. The benefits of this include better communication via a simple easy to use IT platform, more efficient use of resources, better use of primary care services to ease the burden on secondary care, improved patient outcomes, reduction in 'lost referrals' and provide feedback to the referrer.

Those present discussed this in more detail. Everyone agreed that this is a very ambitious idea, but an excellent idea.

5. LOCSU Forum Meeting

Roma Malik has been attending these meeting. As she was not present at tonight's meeting, Adam Holliday asked Richard Rawlinson if he had anything to share. Richard advised that the points from the last meeting have now been and gone, as they were around opening back up and seeing patients again. The key message at the moment is to recognise we are currently back in lockdown and the next meeting will be around bringing people together and supporting each other through this period, which LOCs will be activity involved with.

Richard went on to say that there is work currently being undertaken around vaccinations and LOCs will be asked to support the communications around this. It will also include domiciliary providers, locums and non-NHS practices. This is to ensure that every clinician supporting the optical profession in the NHS or privately are able to access the vaccinations.

Adam advised that he had just picked up an email from today, which related to a meeting being held that afternoon to discuss vaccinations across Nottinghamshire, Sadly the LOC were missed off the distribution list. Adam is going to try and obtain feedback from this meeting and will share this with everyone. Those present were very disappointed that the LOC had not been included and did not have presentation there and that communication was then sent to the LOC as an afterthought.

6. SeeAbility – LOCSU Community Pathway

Adam Holliday advised that SeeAbility had been in contact and asked if the LOC would be interested in working with them around the community pathway. Adam felt that this had come at a good time as this along with the other pathways would be discussed at the meeting on 21st January.

7. COVID-19 Vaccinations Rollout For Healthcare Providers

This was touched upon in agenda item 5.

David Bennett went on to say that he was aware that community Optometrists in the North East had received the vaccine this week. Trevor Rowley is currently compiling a list of areas and Optometrists who have received the vaccine. Parts of Birmingham, Newcastle, Yorkshire and Derbyshire have also received the vaccine. David is hopeful that Nottinghamshire will be on that list very shortly.

8. Electronic Referral System

This was covered in agenda item 4.

9. GOS Ongoing Support Grants

Adam Holliday asked Richard Rawlinson if he had any information on this. Richard advised that LOCSU had raised this with the ONFC as it had been reported via LOCs, that practices are starting to see a significant drop in NHS patient activity. For example in London, this is around 30%. ONFC and the NHS will be having ongoing conversations about this. Richard went on to say that the profession is in a difficult position, given that we are being asked to support our patients and if practices choose not to, will then suffer reduced income. Andrew Spybey advised that it is not just NHS patients, but also private patients who like everyone else are listening to the Government advice and staying at home.

Those present discussed the Government advice, which is conflicting as it says stay at home, but then says health care should continue. The College of Optometrists advice is amber. Optical practices remain open to see patients routinely and also in an emergency, but are losing money as patients are not coming through the door. The financial support to practices during this time is none existent.

Adam asked Richard if the NHS had made the number of practices receiving top up grants available or have LOCSU enquired how many top up grants have been given. Richard said he had raised this, but as yet LOCSU had not been provided with this information. The ONFC may be privy to this information, but this has not been shared. Richard agreed to ask the question again.

10. LOC Financial Update

Indervir Atwal advised that financially it had been a turbulent past nine months for the LOC. The LOC have received just over £13,000.00 and £13,500.00 has been paid out. Payments have been made to Sam Stretton, along with some other invoices that have been received. There are still payments yet to be made, which would have to come out of the reserve funds. Over the past nine months, the LOC have received an average of £1,500.00 per month and the LOC expenses per month are around £2,600.00, which means every month there is a loss of £1,100.00. Payments totalling £9,900.00 are still to be made.

Going forward and over the next three months, up to the end of March 2021 when the financial year ends and while we remain in lockdown it is expected that monies will be the same as in November and December. On average this was around £850.00 per month. If this continues up to the end of March, there would be a loss of around £5,300.00. For the whole financial year, there will be a loss of £15,200.00.

Indervir went on to say that this isn't a bad position as over the past few years, the LOC has built up a reserve of just over £29,000.00. A problem will only arise at the end of the following financial year March 2022 and at that point, based on LOCSUs predictions, we will only bring in half of our receipts. We should have enough to see us through the second year also, but will have no funds to see us through any further lockdowns or to fund CET events. Indervir asked if the LOC wanted to start thinking and making cut backs now, to give us some type of financial cushion.

Adam Holliday asked Indervir if he could clarify that Officers had not been putting in any claims since the summer of 2020. Indervir confirmed that this was correct. Adam went on to say that meeting attendance fees needed to be reviewed. Other expenses including LOCSUs payments needed to be looked at too.

David Bennett said that Officers undertaking work for and on behalf of the LOC should be claiming their fees and that there is enough funds in the reserve to cover this.

Andrew Spybey stated that it needed to be made clear where the levy money came from and that it was important to keep in mind that practices pay their levy, some of which goes to LOCSU and that morally the LOC cannot keep this.

Richard Rawlinson said that since the first lockdown, through the summer and still currently, the majority of LOCs have been having conversations in regards to Officer payments. A number of LOCs have taken a similar line with Officers not claiming their fees. However, he also agrees with David's principles that there is an element of accountability and being paid appropriately. Richard feels the key is looking at where the bounce back will come and it is hoped that this will be in the spring. Some LOCs that have reserves are using this to faze payments to Officers over a period of time and not all in one go. Richard went on to say that he welcomes Andrews's comments, but can also see both sides of this. Andrew raised fazing payments to LOCSU and if this would be possible, like a payment holiday and asked if this seemed logical to Richard. Richard advised that any conversation around fazing would need to be had with the senior team at LOCSU as this is something that he could not make a decision on. Richard suggested a conversation with Lisa Stonham who deals with this side of things.

David Bennett congratulated Indervir on the work he has undertaken managing the LOC finances over the past nine months. Richard Rawlinson also congratulated him for the great work he has done on this and as Treasurer.

10. Any Other Business

None.

Date and times of future meetings:

Bi-Monthly Meeting – Tuesday 16th March 2021 at 7.00pm

AGM – Tuesday 11th May 2021 at 7.00pm