Avon LOC

AGM

&

Peer Review

Thursday 15 June 2023

Bristol & Bath Science Park

Emerson Green

Bristol

**Committee Attendance**

Amar Shah, Andrew Pinn, Amy Hughes, Lynne Fernandes, Mona Thacker, Carolyn Hudd

**Apologies**

Jenny Ogidi, Andrew Edwards, Mark Humphrey-Ali, John Hopcroft

**Minutes of the last AGM**

Agreed and approved (Proposed and seconded)

**Matters Arising**

None

**Chairman’s Report**

Amar released his annual report during the AGM notification process. This is included as follows:

This year has been one of the ICB- the integrated care board. In Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) this board is now fully formed. As an LOC, we have been involved in discussions with our equivalents at the Local Medical, Pharmacy and Dental Committees – to form a collaboration of primary care. This is ongoing and has been a lot of work but exciting to be part of the wider discussions around how local money will be spent for the first time. We are now involved with the right people to help commission new services. Head of primary care has openly said let’s try something and see if it works.

From April 1st 2023, the GOS contract was “delegated” to the ICB’s, meaning that it is no longer held at a national level, instead, we are still in the early days of what this means but have been a lot more involved in the discussions around this and this will be on going. There is no cap on the GOS payments.

The big news this year has been the roll out across the whole of BNSSG of post cataract care for patients treated at Bristol Eye Hospital (BEH) and a simplification of the post-op cataract check for practices, with a small fee increase. This brings the fee in line with the other providers, who in BNSSG will eventually need to move to a similar post op scheme, to make payment easier for the ICB. We have also been successful in piloting a data gathering scheme for BEH’ stable and suspect glaucoma patients, this is open to further practices in the BNSSG area and so please see our emails if you’d like to take part. The software used for this is one that BEH want to champion and will hopefully lead to more schemes and more joined up working.

There is also a glaucoma data gathering scheme taking place in Bristol. It’s an assistance scheme for the eye hospital to look after some of their stable patients but it’s a first step towards integrated care where data sharing is setup so you can share discs and field etc to and from the hospital with the right software. The scheme is also paid for.

Across the river in Bath the CUES service continues but we have not had any progress on other schemes as yet, despite trying. We have however, held a number of successful face to face CPD events in Bath and are hoping this is a sign of things to come for both areas.

Bath, Swindon & Wiltshire ICB is at an earlier stage of development than BNSSG. But Andrew Edwards has recently attended the first of the ICB meetings and hopefully the LOC is beginning to create a similar relationship. BSW ICB development is approximately a year to a year and half behind BNSSG.

Please do reach out if there are any questions or queries about our work, but we will continue to strive to improve patient care for you all.

Thanks to all my committee for all their work and support – especially this past year to John for helping to attend the multiple meetings with the ICB, Andrew Edwards and Amy Hughes keeping things going in Bath and Carolyn for her support.

As an aside, we welcome any feedback on the new website – which should be live and accessible via all platforms now.

Thanks for your time and looking forward to seeing more of you in person over the next year.

Treasurer’s Report

The treasurer’s report was circulated with the AGM notification. This is included as follows, written by Andrew Pinn:

I continued the treasurer’s role from January 2022 to today. My remit was to manage the incomes and expenses of the Avon LOC.

The figures in the accounts cover activity for the period 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022.

Avon LOC income for the period was £7862.75; this was almost exclusively from the statutory levy. The statutory levy is deducted by NHS England as a percentage from the NHS GOS sight test fee prior to payment to GOS contractors.

The Avon LOC proportion of the statutory levy remained at 0.6% until 31/03/2022 then reduced to 0.00% for the remainder of the period in line with my recommendation to the committee reported at the 2022 AGM.

Avon LOC will actively monitor its financial surplus and reintroduce its proportion of the statutory levy when appropriate. The proportion of statutory levy paid to continue our membership of LOCSU (LOC Support Unit) remained at 0.5%.

Expenditure by Avon LOC was £13563.72 which was comparable to previous years. Compared to last year; there was no ‘paid’ attendance fees for the National Optometric Conference. Expenditure on our website was similar. Expenditure on CET was more as we resumed provision following the COVID-19 pandemic.

LOC work was carried out by individual committee members and our administration secretary Carolyn Hudd. Support from LOCSU (LOC Support Unit) was provided as part of our continued LOCSU membership.

The hourly rate for committee work was reinstated to the pre-COVID-19 pandemic level of £80.00 per hour. As a committee we continued to build and maintain strong relationships with all eyecare organisations working in our area. Committee member attendance at LOC committee meetings is funded which is in line with the practices of other LOCs in England. In my view the time costs invoiced by the committee members in the last year has been significantly less than they could have legitimately claimed.

I would like to thank Ruth Davies for auditing the accounts. Ruth has diligently audited our accounts for many years but has understandably decided to relinquish this role.

I am happy to answer any questions you have and I can be contacted by email at [**andrewp@avonloc.co.uk**](mailto:andrewp@avonloc.co.uk)

**Elections to Committee**

There were two committee members up for renewal. Their applications were unopposed and therefore were re-elected unopposed. There are still 3 remaining positions on the committee. Anyone is welcome to contact the committee if they have an interest in joining. Come and observe at a meeting, find out more about what’s involved and get access to free training from LOCSU about the role you would play on the committee.

**AOB**

Voting in of LOCSU (National Body) - Of the last year we had Alvaro Borges, LOCSU Lead, which has been a vast support in attending meetings and impressing the importance of primary eyecare. Andrew Pinn and Amar have challenged LOCSU on the service that the LOC gets for the money if pays but one thing is intangible is their national piece and how that’s influencing things locally.

Amar proposed the continued membership of LOCSU and all were in favour.

**Q & A**

Gordon Batham expressed concerns over the recent webinar from NHS Business claiming the technicalities of doing an eye exam on anyone though the NHS or you may be sued. Concerned that the context insinuated optometry was no longer primary care, but secondary care. No one is trying to defraud the process. We now need an A4 file per patient to document all the reasoning behind our decision making so we don’t potentially get sued. Is this being discussed nationally? Amar - The AOP and FODO are lobbying to discuss that piece. It was to try and prevent patients being seen too regularly as a matter of course when there is nothing wrong. The environment has changed now and we are not paid enough to see unnecessary re-visits, so two year recalls are not a bad thing for those where nothing is wrong. Amar’s recommendation is to document all reasoning behind more frequent visits. Amar is happy to feed that furth**er up the chain to get some clarification.**

**Vision Care for Homeless People**

Karen Gennard (practicing optometrist in Gloucester 3 days a week and vision care for homeless people 2 days a week).

Vision care for homeless people is a very small charity, set up to run clinics in spaces that are easier for people to access help. Research shows reluctance to access eyecare due to anxiety about feeling welcome and anxiety about the costs. Many people that are struggling don’t put their vision on a high priority when they are trying to work out how they will eat that night. VCHP also see people in the refugee community, people sofa surfing, people accessing the drug and alcohol service and the women’s refuge.

VCHP aims are to put clinics where patients are happier to attend and to engage the profession to make their practices more welcoming.

At the moment there are 7 clinics working in, mostly, day care centres which means we can provided service usually one day a week. Services in London sometimes have up to two days a week.

There are plans to run this in Bristol. The Compass Centre in Jamaica Street will be setting up a clinic run by VCHP who will hold the GOS contract and will look after any of the training and on boarding of volunteers. Once the clinic is up and running, people from the GP service, the homeless shelter above or the women’s shelter close by, will use its services. Specsavers are also helping out with this in Bristol.

Things you can do to help:

* Happy to take volunteers for Bristol. Optoms, Clinic Assistants, Dos. Some volunteers work from home, for example, putting in GOS claims
* Fundraising in practice or outside
* Raise Awareness of the service and see if there’s anything you can help with in your local area.
* Donations of equipment

It is ideal if someone can regularly volunteer but it doesn’t have to be. Depending on the clinic it may be an appointment system or a walk-in service for people with more chaotic lifestyles. Preconceptions need to be left at the door and you have to be very flexible.

For more information contact [amy@avonloc.co.uk](mailto:amy@avonloc.co.uk) or karen.gennard@vchp.org

**AOB**

Mona has asked the community to fill out a survey sent out recently to aid planning and focus aims.

**Lorcan Butler – The Brain Tumour Charity**

Amar thanked Lorcan on behalf of the committee for attending after a difficult journey to the event. Lorcan then carried out a 3 point CPD per review on ‘Breaking Bad News’.