**Avon LOC Chairs report - 2024**

As you know the LOC is the statutory body representing providers and contractors to the NHS system locally. As a small group we have a dedicated group of elected committee members striving to do this. I would like to thank all of the committee whose hard work has enabled some of the progress that we have recently seen in our area. I would also like to thank the committee previous chair Amar Shah for helping to navigate through post-COVID and also strengthening some of the key relationships we have today in the system. The recently formed ICB’s have also been establishing themselves and re-structuring in response to budgetary constrains. As you know Optometry as with other primary care services are a delegated function. We continue to represent you at ICB level through various forums including the primary care committee where all key decisions for GP’s, dentists, pharmacy and optometry are made.

The committee has had a number of focuses, including bringing more commissioned primary care services into the community. We are starting to see green shoots with the new macular referral pathway and we hope to build on this success over the next year. The macula pathway is as a result of the LOC working with the system and Bristol eye hospital (BEH) to establish new sustainable, funded pathways. The first pilot of this is the new proposed macula referral pathway enabling referrals form community, including full DICOM OCT data, directly using the Opera platform which connects to the hospitals chosen system. The aspiration is that this will allow more pathways to be added and save face to face appointments at the hospital itself. In addition, this could also allow us to develop two-way image sharing, allowing new services from the hospital into community as well as access for practitioners to see more information on their patients when making decisions for example about referral.

The committee continues to focus resources on events that we feel can make impact, including the jointly hosted CPD event with Bristol eye hospital, that had great turnout and feedback. Recently a committee member attended the UWE conference to be able to talk to undergraduates about the important role that the LOC plays locally. We will continue to listen to your feedback on these and plan accordingly.

Our LOC also covers Bath and North East Somerset locality which is the only part of our area that currently has a CUES service commissioned. The service has been running for a number of years successfully and is currently under review and tender by the ICB. We are concerned that this CUES system redesign had been undertaken without extensive involvement of the LOC and have expressed those concerns with the ICB itself. We will continue to work with the ICB on any planned changes and advocate for the vitally important role of primary care in the system.

Last year the ICB proposed to move to a single model for post-op care in BNSSG and started working with ISP providers to do this however with changes in the internal structures this did not come to fruition. Currently nearly all ISP providers in Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) use the Opera platform to offer post op care in the community and we are working to enable these services in North Somerset. BNSSG ICB continue to manage the contract for BEH post-op through Medisoft and we continue to work across the system on this.

Finally as a committee we have started to reflect on this year’s priorities including further work on engagement and continuing pathway work. We value your feedback so please do let us know your thoughts and questions. If you would like to get more involved or attend any future committee meetings then please do reach out to us.

John Hopcroft – Chair Avon LOC