

Chairs Report for Dorset LOC AGM on 15th May 2024

The LOC have had a busy time since I was appointed Chair & I would like to thank the LOC for their support & help.

Dorset LOC

We were fortunate enough to be able to appoint a new LOC administrator in September 2023, Carolyn Hudd, who also works for Avon & Wiltshire LOCs. Carolyn has been an enormous help & has greatly improved the efficiency & running of the LOC.

Unfortunately, 2 members of the committee have resigned. We were sorry to lose Alice Buckingham & Alix Trott. I would like to thank them for their time & contribution to the LOC.

3 of the new members who joined the LOC in 2023 completed the LOCSU LOC induction course at the beginning of 2024. Congratulations to Jo Kain, Christopher Quinton & Suzanne Flay. Suzanne is also in the process of doing the LOCSU Leadership course.

The LOC committee had a strategy meeting in February which helped to bring the committee together & enabled us to get to know one another better. We now have 6- & 12-month goals for the LOC.

Dorset ICB Eyecare Group meetings.

These occur monthly & are a useful forum for managers & the clinical leads from the 2 NHS Trust Hospitals, ICB & LOC to meet.

They are usually chaired by Annette Thomas (Chief Operating Officer for DCH). Standing topics have been GIRFT, Ophthalmology Recovery & Performance, & Ophthalmology Transformation.

I raised the issue of hospital placements for optometrists doing the independent prescribing qualification. Bournemouth Eye Unit have agreed to take 4 optometrists per year & Dorset County are also willing to offer placements.

Dorset Primary Care Strategic Oversight Group (PCSOG)

This a new group that was set up in November 2023 to replace the Primary Care Committee. Different members of the ICB & Public Health are invited to attend as well as the Chairs of the 4 representative primary care professions;

- Dorset Medical Committee representing GPs
- Dorset Local Pharmacy Committee
- Dorset Local Dental Committee (they haven't attended any meetings yet)
- Dorset Local Optical Committee

It is an opportunity for the different primary care professionals to come together to discuss matters affecting their members. I wrote 2 papers to take to the March meeting. One was on the history of the Community Ophthalmology Service & the pros & cons of the different providers over the years. The other was on the LVA service.

Wessex Medical Committee

I meet informally bi-monthly with the Chairs of Dorset (Andy Purbrick) & Wiltshire (Ed Rendall) branches of the Wessex Medical Committee. It is a useful opportunity to discuss issues that impact both professions. Andy was kind enough to attend the last LOC meeting & emphasised the Medical Committee's support for the LOC & keenness to work with us & the other representative committees.

SW England LOC meetings

These are held quarterly by the SW Collaborative Commissioning Hub who are responsible for monitoring & managing the GOS contracts in the SW region. All LOCs in the southwest region are invited to attend & to request items for the agenda.

NOC

This was attended by Suzanne Flay, Peter Beverley-Smith & me. It is always good to have the national perspective & to have the opportunity to meet members of other LOCs.

CHEC

Communication has been an ongoing issue in the past with CHEC. I was able to establish contact with them as they had a stand at the NOC. They have had various staffing issues. Their Dorset engagement officer Mel was off sick last summer & then left suddenly at the end of September 23. I had a meeting with the regional engagement officer Mike at the beginning of Dec 23 & he left suddenly at the end of January 24. I went over to their Poundbury site in January 24 to be shown round & I was supposed to meet their location manager Laura Mayo. Laura was unable to make it at the last moment due to staff shortages, so I met the health care assistant & ophthalmologist.

Mel's replacement Alicia started in March. Suzanne & I have a virtual meeting with her & Kevin, the national engagement manager.

CHEC's Community Ophthalmology contract was from 1st April 2022-1st April 2025. The ICB have not given any indication about whether this will be renewed, if there will be a new tender process or how they wish to proceed.

LVA Services

The number & spread of practices offering the service has greatly reduced. There are currently only 5 contracted practices, all in the East of the county. Wareham seems to be the furthest west & West Parley the furthest north.

There are obvious issues in expecting those with low vision to travel out of their neighbourhoods to access services. Dorset Blind have seen an influx of requests for aid. There are 2 practices, one in Weymouth & one in north Dorset who have expressed an interest in delivering the Low Vision Aid Service.

There were issues with Friths Swanage and Friths Weymouth as providers because they were under the same contract as Friths in Dorchester previously, however they are separate contractors so need new contracts. The ICB were only made aware of this recently. Friths Swanage and Friths Weymouth are not included in the 5 contracts currently held but have previously delivered the service and wish to continue. Therefore, these would be counted in addition to the other practice in Weymouth and the one in the North wishing to deliver.

The LOC's understanding is that the ICB are not issuing any new contracts despite the 2 Frith's practices wanting to continue to deliver the service & the practice in Weymouth & one in north Dorset being willing to deliver the service as new providers.

LOC e-mail addresses. All committee members have had the opportunity to have dorsetloc.org e-mail addresses. There is now chair@dorsetloc.org address.

For queries, please e-mail info@dorsetloc.org

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