

# Dudley LOC

local optical committee



## Business Plan

2023/24

## **Introduction**

After an absence of several years Dudley LOC was reformed on the 13th November 1996 following the creation of the Dudley Health Authority from the merger of the Dudley Family Health Services Authority with the District Health Authority. The intervening years have seen the LOC active with PCTs, CCGs, and now NHS England and the Black Country ICB.

## **Structure**

The LOC has an elected committee, roughly half of which are contractors and half are performers. 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the committee is elected at each AGM.

The current committee consists of:

Chair: Shamina Asif (Performer)  
Secretary: Paul Sidhu (Performer)  
Treasurer: David Wright (Contractor)  
Vice Chair: Jasheen "Sheena" Mangat (Performer)  
CPD Officer: Roseline Birhah (Performer)

Committee Members:

Charles Barlow (Performer)  
Gurdeep Dosanjh (Contractor)  
Hussain Ejaz (Contractor)  
Nicky Ferguson (Contractor and Hospital Optometrist)  
Sunnit Jolly (Contractor)  
Shazad Mahmood (Performer)  
Kay Reeves (Performer)  
Mark Tuffin (Contractor)  
Sonja Tyrell (Co-opted Dispensing Optician)

## **Principles**

- Achieve excellent eye care locally.
- Ensure a transparent and open organisational culture.
- Utilise officer and member skills to the maximum effect.
- Maintain excellent relationships with key local bodies, decision makers and stakeholders.
- Work with the Local Optical Committee Support Unit (LOCSU).

## General Aims of LOC

The functions of LOCs, as prescribed by law, are simply stated as being to represent local contractors and local performers. On the basis of past experience such functions, if not currently undertaken, may include the following activities:

1. Informing, advising and negotiating with NHS England or Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) on matters affecting, or liable to affect, local contractors and local performers, including, but not limited to:
  - 1.1. the efficient administration and payment of remuneration in relation to Primary Ophthalmic Services;
  - 1.2. the introduction and implementation of community eye care services, as well as the terms and conditions upon which any local community eye care services are provided and performed;
  - 1.3. Hospital Eye Services, in so far as they affect Primary Ophthalmic Services;
  - 1.4. Complaints against local contractors and local performers in respect of Primary Ophthalmic Services, local community eye care services in the area for which the committee is formed.
2. Responding to consultations initiated by NHS England, ICBs, the Local Eye Health Network, Public Health or any other local body.
3. Facilitating and encouraging local contractors and local performers to formulate collective views on the performance and administration of Primary Ophthalmic Services and local community services or community eye care services. In particular to make suggestions for their improvement within the scope of the regulations and to transmit them to relevant bodies.
4. Disseminating information about Primary Ophthalmic Services and local community eye care services among local contractors and local performers to help them to understand and comply with their contractual and other obligations.
5. Conveying the views of local contractors and local performers on Primary Ophthalmic Services, local community eye care services to the national representative bodies.
6. Contributing to the development of national policies on all levels of Primary Ophthalmic Services and related services by, inter alia, liaising with LOCSU and the national representative bodies, attending or making representations to the National Optical Conference, its successors or equivalent events.
7. Liaising with other LOCs and LOCSU to support the LOC in developing and achieving their objectives in respect of primary ophthalmic services and local community services.
8. Obtaining support, advice and training services from LOCSU and/or the national representative bodies to assist in the discharge of any of its functions and activities.
9. Carrying out such administrative activities as are necessary to perform the functions set out above.
10. Delegating any of its functions or activities, with or without restrictions or conditions, to such sub-committees as it may establish.
11. Where possible, providing opportunity for continuing education and training in order to maintain and improve the quality of eye care provision in Dudley.
12. When requested by a contractor, and subject to approval by LOC officers, an LOC member may attend practice visits initiated by NHS England to act as an independent observer. This may include contract compliance and post payment verification visits or other audit or investigation. The LOC member may provide advice regarding regulations to a contractor on these visits within the limits of the LOCs remit and according to current professional guidelines. They may not enter into negotiations on behalf of the contractor. The LOC officers may deputise a non-committee member to perform this function on the LOCs behalf.

## Key Organisations

Key organisations the LOC works with:

- NHS England
- Primary Care Services England
- The Black Country ICB
- The Local Eye Health Network (currently not functioning despite efforts by the LOC)
- Dudley Health and Wellbeing Boards
- Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust
- Public Health Dudley
- The Black Country & West Birmingham ICS
- Brierley Hill PCN
- Dudley And Netherton PCN
- Halesowen PCN
- Kingswinford & Wordsley PCN
- Sedgley, Coseley & Gornal PCN
- Stourbridge, Wollescote & Lye PCN

## Budget

The LOC receives its funding primarily from a levy on all GOS sight tests fees. Of this 0.5% of GOS sight test fees are used to fund the LOC's contribution to LOCSU. Since the beginning of calendar year 2021 funding has returned to levels similar to pre-COVID-19. In 2015 the LOC agreed a mechanism where the fees it pays committee members would increase in line with increases in GOS sight test fees, which rose for the first time in June 2021. However, it was decided at the committee meeting on Monday 18th October 2021 that it wouldn't increase them. It is the intent of the committee that fees will be reviewed annually at the first meeting after the AGM.

### BUDGET 2023/2024

#### Income on Account of:

Statutory Levy and other income (e.g. CPD sponsorships)	£42,000.00
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#### Expenditure on account of:

LOCSU (0.5%)	£8,000.00
Chair Honoraria	£600.00
Secretary Honoraria	£800.00
Treasurer Honoraria	£400.00
Attendance allowance committee £3840	£4,000.00
Attendance allowance external £16728	£17,000.00
Secretarial Expenses	£650.00
Room Hire	£0.00
CPD provision	£5,800.00
Website	£250.00
Central Fund	£500.00
Voluntary Fund	£0.00
Other	£1,200.00
Accountancy	£500.00
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	£39,700.00
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Dudley LOC is committed to trying to keep the levy at the lowest figure possible whilst still running an active and effective LOC. Previously the LOC has aimed to maintain a balance in the bank of £20,000 in order to cover for contingencies such as non-payment of the levy by NHS England. However, experience of the extended period that the LOC were deprived of levy by NHS England during COVID will lead to an ongoing review by the committee regarding the level that that it is prudent to maintain. The LOC will always balance this with being mindful of the burden of the levy on contractors' finances.

## **Key local statistics**

Dudley had a population of 312,925 at the 2011 census (mid-2019 estimate 321,596). In the last full year (2013/14) we have available figures for, 83851 sight tests were performed. As of early 2023 there are 45 known mandatory services contractors in the area. Since NHS England changed the way that domiciliary services were “assigned” to LOCs the number of domiciliary providers active in the area is now unknown.

## **Fully Functioning LOC**

The LOC has identified the factors that characterised a fully functioning and effective LOC.

- An inclusive constitution – representative of independent and corporate sectors, contractors and performers and dispensing opticians.
- Administrative back-up and support for projects.
- A Business plan – the basis to deliver local objectives
- Officers – skilled in negotiating, influencing, lobbying, communications
- Adequate budget & statutory levy financing based on business plan
- Good local communications and contacts.

## **Regional Optical Committee**

Dudley LOC along with neighbouring LOCs formed the Heart of West Midlands Regional Optical Committee (HMROC) in January 2011. This is a collaborative committee consisting of officers from Birmingham LOC, Sandwell LOC, Dudley LOC, Walsall LOC, Wolverhampton LOC and Solihull LOC. This body has facilitated an area wide consistent approach to supporting practitioners and communicating with NHS bodies.

Additionally, it has been critical in allowing LOCs to share experience and knowledge as well as generally assist each other particularly with respect to the commissioning of enhanced/community services. Unlike LOCs, it is not a statutory body, and its decisions must be ratified by each LOC to ensure a democratic approach. It also receives its funding from LOCs.

As a result of the Long Term Plan 2019, DHSC White Paper 2021, and the national eye care transformation project, health and social care in England is changing significantly. The new NHS bodies have a much larger footprint, in the case of Dudley this encompasses the whole of the Black Country. In order to most effectively advance the interests of our constituents, the LOCs have proposed a formal Confederation of LOCs to speak as a single voice and a single point of contact. The Confederation will represent the interests of all LOCs in the BSolBC geography. The Confederation is not itself an LOC; it is a working group of all BSolBC LOCs. This has been agreed by all the LOCs at each of their respective AGMs and awaits necessary administrative tasks to be completed before it comes into effect.

## **Primary Eyecare Services**

Primary Eyecare Services is a not-for-profit company established by LOCs to simplify commissioning of services with the healthcare commissioners across the country. It allows an ICB or other bodies to have a single contract with the company, and the company then sub-contracts with individual optometry practices. Primary Eyecare Services handles the day to day administration and clinical governance of the scheme. The Opera platform collates data for all activities and produces a single monthly invoice for the ICB for all the episodes of activity in the scheme. The ICB pays this, and this is then distributed to the

practices that carried out the episode(s), minus a small not for profit fee to cover costs e.g. administration and training.

The company has signed a memorandum of understanding with each LOC setting out its duties and how it is answerable to the LOCs.

### **Enhanced/Community services**

The effect of the COVID crisis on secondary care hastened a nationally mandated (but locally commissioned) service known as CUES or Covid-19 Urgent Eye Care Service (CUES) to support the delivery of urgent eye care from optical practices. This replaced the MECS service that was in place. Going forward, it is expected that CUES will be overhauled to make it more streamlined and re-introduce some of the conditions previously covered by MECS that are not currently covered by CUES.

The following services have been commissioned in the Dudley area:

CUES (see above) which offers rapid assessment of people with recent onset eye problems.

IOP Repeat Readings which enables improved assessment of eye pressure in an eye examination.

Cataract Direct Referral, where patients are assessed and referred to their choice of provider for cataract surgery.

### **LOC's aims and objectives**

The LOC feels there are gaps in the provision of Community Based Eye Care Services including:

Cataract Post-Operative Management

Glaucoma Referral Filtering (Enhanced Case Finding and Referral Refinement)

Glaucoma Monitoring / Virtual Clinics

Medical Retina – AMD referral Filtering & HCQ monitoring

Low Vision Provision

Special Needs eye examination provision

Childrens – Suspect Disc Pathway and a more appropriate children's vision pathway, to dovetail with any school vision screening scheme operating in the area.

We wish to engage with the PCNs, ICB, NHS England, the new Black Country Integrated Care Board and Public Health Dudley and aim to achieve:

Short term:

- Continue to support the Dudley Healthy Living Optical Practice Scheme
- To continue supporting the CUEs, Cataract direct referral and IOP repeat measures schemes
- To continue to encourage greater attendance of LOC committee meetings

Medium term:

- To increase uptake of the Dudley Healthy Living Optical Practice scheme by attracting more sites
- To continue to try to engage effectively with Dudley PCNs, The Black Country ICS and Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust in order to get further patient centred community services commissioned.
- To attract new active LOC committee members
- To upskill newer LOC members

Long term:

- To have a large number of Community Based Eye Care Services running locally, ideally with a region wide protocol to enhance patient access.
- To ensure effective mechanisms in the area of succession planning

### **Healthy Living Optical Practice Scheme**

In association with Public Health Dudley, a Healthy Living Optical Practice scheme is running in the area. This is the first such scheme nationally and has drawn a lot of attention within the profession and public health. The scheme is analogous to the Healthy Living Pharmacy scheme. Optical practices in the scheme offer services including cardiovascular assessment (NHS health checks), weight management and alcohol screening. We have had over 10 practices active in this scheme. The majority of the contact time spent is by auxiliary staff trained to a nationally recognised standard. This opportunity will promote optometry as a profession allied to healthcare, and Dudley LOC believes that this is a way forward for the future of optometry.

### **LOCSU pathways**

The Local Optical Committee Support Unit (LOCSU) has commissioned documents detailing the workings and commissioning of a number of Community Based Eye Care Services. These have been widely praised across the professions and by NICE, and have been adopted for successful enhanced services across the country. LOCSU also provide support and assistance to LOCs in the processes and procedures involved with commissioning these services.

Dudley LOC is committed to (wherever possible) promoting the adoption of LOCSU pathways in order to achieve better uniformity across areas. This benefits optometrists moving between areas, as well as patients. The service specifications for the services currently being tendered are broadly in line with the LOCSU pathways. The current pathways locally were commissioned in line with this

The LOC is committed to working with local ICBs and STPs to solve cross border issues, where a patient can conceivably live in one area, have a GP in another and attend an optometry practice in a third (e.g. near their place of work). Ideally the LOC would like a simple mechanism by which these patients can access services commissioned by the various ICBs/STPs at a location of their choosing, in a way that is straightforward for both patients and practitioners. This is key to ensuring the best patient outcomes.

### **Educational events**

In order to achieve the LOCs aim of improving quality of optometry services locally, it is committed to providing continuing education and training events locally free at the point of delivery. As well as on its

own, it does this in conjunction with Sandwell LOC, and has organised a series of CET afternoon/evening events with up to 90 practitioner attending. These have been very successful and have consistently been oversubscribed. Feedback from practitioners for these events has been overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic. There has been a huge impact to face-to-face delivery of CET during the COVID crisis. This has highlighted that remote CET has both advantages and disadvantages. This will inform our decisions regarding mode of delivery in the post COVID crisis future.

Dudley LOC, together with the other Black Country LOCs has successfully bid for and received a funding grant from NHS England for Workforce development across the Black Country system. Planning of the Implementation of this grant is underway. The development will include subsidised higher certificate training, joint development sessions with the local trusts and the long term establishment of local clinical champions with managed clinical networks.

## **Communication**

The LOC communicates with constituents and key organisations primarily via email. In the modern world, this provides the best way forward.

We also have Facebook ([facebook.com/locdudley](https://facebook.com/locdudley)) and twitter (@DudleyLOC) accounts. As well as general announcements, these are used to pass on information from third parties e.g. requests from charities to relay information, requests from contractors for locums, requests from for-profit CET providers to disseminate information, requests for pre-reg positions etc.

The LOC maintains a website at [www.dudleyloc.co.uk](http://www.dudleyloc.co.uk). This provides resources to practitioners as well as allowing the LOC to be as transparent about its business and finances as possible.

All LOC committee meetings are announced to contractors and performers, and all are welcome to attend. The LOC actively encourages participation and membership of the committee.

## **Conclusion**

Dudley LOC is enthusiastic and eager to improve and enhance eye care provision in the area especially with respect to access, choice and quality. Optometrists have the skills, the outreach and the desire to achieve this.

We are keen to engage with all groups and stakeholders from patient groups right through to commissioners.

Dudley LOC's business plan outlines a blueprint to move Optometry forward in locally. We hope this plan will be accepted and supported by all eye care professionals interested in delivering improved patient care and satisfaction.

## **Contact us**

The LOC is always pleased to help and assist practitioners, commissioners and any other person who has an interest in eye care. Feel free to contact us at any time at [whitestar123@hotmail.com](mailto:whitestar123@hotmail.com)

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