

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL OPTICAL COMMITTEE

Chairman: Wendy d'E Vallancey

Vice-Chairman: Daniel Harris

Treasurer: Eileen Gay

Please reply to: Gill Abbott: (Email: hertsloc@btinternet.com)

Website: www.loc-net.org.uk/hertfordshire/

February 2016

Dear Colleague

Chairman's Report – 2015

Your committee met four times during 2015 including the AGM.

It has been a very busy year for the LOC working behind the scenes and pushing to get some enhanced services on the way. The NHS is changing and we need to change with it.

The direct cataract referral pathway into Moorfields@Potters Bar is still running extremely well and it appears that most of you managed to make the accreditation events held last month. Anyone who is interested in joining this, please email us and we will put you in touch with the right people to gain your accreditation. We continue to talk to the leads at Lister, QE2 and Hertford hospitals to try to get the same service up and running there.

I have heard back from the Orthoptists in East Herts about the new arrangement for referral of school children directly from the school nurses into local Optometrists, who specified an interest in this work. This is running extremely well and these children are now being seen by a community optometrist within weeks of referral, instead of within months at the hospital. Please fill in the feedback forms so that the Orthoptists know these children have been seen. They can be sent back in batches every fortnight/ month to reduce costs.

Last year, we entered discussions with West Herts about setting up a pilot project in Hatfield and Welwyn for testing people with Learning Difficulties. We negotiated a fee for an extended eye examination and asked practices in the area to be involved. We are very close now to the start of the pilot which should run for around 12-18 months. We hope, at the end of this successful pilot, to go to the CCGs to extend this across the County. We will keep you informed along the way. One of the steps we had to take was to set up an LOC Company. This means that the CCGs can now negotiate just with one company instead of every individual optical practice (which has deterred them in the past). This is taking up a lot of the LOC's time and efforts (particularly with all the paperwork involved) but this will put us in a good position to apply for further enhanced services.

On the subject of enhanced services, many of you will have heard that some of the large multiples are pushing ahead with training their staff to higher levels in readiness for local enhanced schemes (ie Minor Eye Conditions Service, formerly PEARS). I feel this is a time for us all to take part and get ready. Everyone can do the online training on the WOPEC site for free with a code from your LOC (just email us a request). The LOC will then set up evenings for the practical assessments as we get groups of people ready. Please don't wait until it's too late - start your training now.

Our CET evenings continue to be very popular and we feel the Biopark facility at Welwyn is working well. The format enables us to apply for 3 points generally per evening with food provided. Please come along to them if you can and if you have suggestions for topics you would like covered, please email your suggestions.

I am pleased to report that no complaints were received by NHS England during the year.

As is usual, your committee sent representatives to the National Optometric Conference in November last year. This keeps us up to date with what is changing in the NHS and how other LOCs across the country are adapting to these changes.

You will find attached to this letter the financial statement of the LOC. The AGM will be at 8.00pm on Monday 21st March 2016 at Biopark, Broadwater Road, Welwyn Garden City AL7 3AX. All Hertfordshire contractors and performers are entitled to attend and vote on resolutions and we are always looking for enthusiastic new members. Please come along.

Best wishes

Wendy

Wendy d'E Vallancey
Chair

Any queries/ questions about this Report or any LOC matters please email to
hertsloc@btinternet.com

Please also see our website: www.loc-net.org.uk/hertfordshire/

**PLEASE SEE IMPORTANT INFORMATION BELOW REGARDING THE LISTER
TREATMENT CENTRE**

The Ophthalmology department at the Lister Treatment Centre has installed a dedicated phone line for GPs, Optometrists and Opticians to contact the Urgent Eye Clinic. This phone number must not be used for any other purposes or given to patients. The phone is red and situated on the main reception desk and calls to this number will be treated as an emergency and therefore take priority.

The process -

Phone number - 01438 288266

Receptionist will complete a brief proforma

Doctor in urgent eye or triage nurse will then call GP/Optician back within 30 minutes

Advice will then be given or an emergency appointment offered

Patients will still require a referral letter if they need to be seen

I understand that we can still send obvious emergencies straight there with a letter, but if you are unsure, you can now call them first.