Minutes from Lincolnshire LOC Meeting – 19th February 2024

Held virtually on Teams – 19th February 2024 at 7pm

Agenda

To discuss the allocation of the Rural grant funding for the IP candidates

Attendees:

Annabelle Magee

Sab Bahl

Adrian Cobb

Manjeet Burgess

Deepal Burgess

Lynsey Doherty

AM: Need to get this sorted as many other things LOC needs to be focussing on.

It was Sab who secured the grant, Sab’s hard work. This is Rural grant fund for optometrists.

The money should not be sat in the LOC bank account, with the LOC deciding what happens to this money. They have come to us for guidance with what should happen to this money, but this was not awarded for the LOC to sit on.

From the meeting I went to last week, the new IP offer , the money goes straight to the university for a place and then £2000 will be put aside for the placement for the supervisor.

I think for autonomy we should treat this Rural grant fund the same. It is slightly different as we can’t pay the uni as candidates have already paid, so it will have to go to the candidates.

The new fund is 4 places

I have learnt from Deepal currently on the course we have Jason, Sam and Laura.

There is also Ryan, but not on the course currently.

SB: Ryan is based in Louth, Louth Vision centre, which is where Kandeep is also based, whose name is down for one of the four places with the new IP fund.

Not an issue with me to fund 2 people at same practice but neither are full time.

Amit, and Greg are also not on a course currently, could not get on the course so were going to apply for the next intake. I said this was fine, the money is there, when you enrol and pay let me know. The reason it was done this way was the money wasn’t going directly to the uni and I didn’t want to have to say you all had to go to WOPEC, Cardiff. I wanted people to have the choice to go where they wanted. Different cost for each course – so that’s why we came up with 10 people interested, 25K, so 2.5K each.

But we don’t have 10 people doing it.

With the new IP fund, they decide where you do the course – ASTON.

I thought we had four people, and I am not sure where Amit and Greg’s names have gone as they were supposed to be signing up in January – this would then give us 5 people on it.

AM: Where I stand at the minute, personally I feel we have 3 people proactively pursuing this. With a list of potential people, this could go on and on. Think we should treat this the same as offer on the table as the other course. So the 3 candidates get £2000 for placement and then they get course funded. The reason I say this is we have four places this year for Aston, we have been promised 4 places for next year as well for IP. Martin Jago has said tentatively this may carry on for 5 years. The others could then do the fully funded course.

SB: we were not aware of the extra fund initially so it’s hard to know what’s fair retrospectively- it was funded in a different way. We don’t have to offer it in the same way as the fully funded course. We did EOI, had ten people, so 2.5K each.

Want to know about Amit and Greg , not sure if Greg is COTATS accredited?

AM: He is not on Martin Jago’s list.

SB: so we can only really give it to someone on COTATs

AM: yes

DB: It may be like with Ryan, thought initially not COTATS accredited but is. He should be one of the four interested.

AM: Is Ryan on a course?

DB: Ryan and Kandeep are Louth vision care - were waiting to see about fully funded places. Martin said do need IP in Louth, happy to fund one of them not both. So Ryan could do the partially funded course.

AC: what has clouded everything is since we had the money, now have the fully funded places.

For fairness if we have 3 people who are on a course and are heading for a placement and that 25K will cover enough for them, think it‘s fair to treat them as it would be with fully funded place. Those who aren’t on the course have the opportunity to go on the fully funded place.

AM: I agree. To keep it fair, as everyone’s fees are different , we should pay the same as Aston. Aston has said they need £2790 and additional £620, so £3410. Plus £2k for placement.

AC: this is within the budget for the 3 on the courses, but what happens with the remainder of the money. If there are now the fully funded places and that’s what people will go on, will the money just sit there, or does it have to be spent on IP?

SB: Yes, we can hold it and use it for others. We still don’t know what fee Lincoln hospital will charge us for the placement, so may be more than £2k, which is ok as we can afford this for 3 places.

MB: regarding Amit ad Greg - the last LOC meeting. Amit said he didn’t make a decision as he did not know there was a time limit to it.

SB: the conversation I had was that he could not get on the course; I had said this was fine, but he had said we are on it for January.

DB: also he had said about having too many staff on study leave at the same time.

SB: that’s fine. Another reason I didn’t push for everyone to be on that course at that time was we wouldn’t be able to have everyone doing IP placements. So when Amit said they will start in January, thought it would work better with hospital placements. We need to know if Amit and Greg do want to do it ASAP

LD: With the people on the course, Jason, Greg, Amit and Sam are based in Lincoln. Was it not a rural fund and wont we end up with lot of IP in the same area?

SB: the rural fund was able to give us the money as Lincolnshire counts as rural and coastal. It doesn’t mean it needs to be spend on rural areas. Martin has rightly said there is no point getting more IPs in Lincoln when there could be some rurally who is happy to do it, we should prioritise that as we need a nice spread, so people can access it easily.

Thiss is about need – fair enough to have more in Lincoln as most of population is in Lincoln.

MB: who is funding the Rural fund?

SB:NHS

DB: So we could have 3 people funded from the rural fund, 1 other from Amits practice and Ryan. That would be 5 people and just over the 25K – could LOC make up the difference?

SB and AC: NO – don’t think the LOC should fund this.

AC: So should it be as there are 5 people, make it 5K each?

AM: should we just be funding those already on courses as it’s already Feb.

DB: There was an EOI with 2 extra, Ryan was waiting to see if could get on fully funded course but told no. They have expressed an interest and there was no time limit, so we should say they need to get on a course.

Martin said no to the fully funded places as he wants the spread.

SB: So we can put one of those on the original 25K fund. We need to know how much time before people will be on a course – it’s difficult to know who is doing it until they are all signed up.

Could someone check with Amit if he still wants to do and if he is signed up?

I think we should put Ryan on this one.

Then once we know all are signed up – split the money between them.

AC: Will Amit wait for one of the fully funded places?

SB: this will be practically fully funded

DB: so to confirm, we will offer the same as the fully funded course, and offer them 2K for placement?

AM : another issue is those on the fully funded course need a signature from ULHT for their placement. But those on the courses at the moment don’t have that guarantee.

SB: I will try my best to find them something.

AM: Yes, we need to support them – but will be easier if less people are doing it.

SB: We need to contact Greg and Amit to see if they want to do it.

AM: I will do this.

MB: I think they should have as much as possible out of the 25K now we know there are more placements – makes the situation easier and that we can fund the current people fully.

LD: It was a bit confusing from the LOC meeting about how long the funding would be available for.

AM: So we have have Jason, Sam ad Laura currently on courses. We will give Ryan the opportunity. I will contact Amit and ask him to confirm if Amit and Greg are going to enrol on a 2024 IP course.

SB: they had said they were going to enrol in Jan, need to ask if it has been done, and if it hasn’t been done and you don’t intend to enrol we need to know.

LD: Just out of interest where were the fully funded places advertised?

DB: it wasn’t advertised – ICB had to put names forward. So as EOI already done, Martin Jago said he wanted it spread, so there would be no fully funded places in Lincoln. Said no to Mabelthorpe, but will approach Skegness.

AC: we can’t indefinitely hold onto this money to wait and see what everyone else is doing - so should be based on those who put an EOI in, ask those are you enrolled on a course and do you intend to enrol on a course in this academic year, so we can know how to divide the £25K.

AM and SB: will need to find out from Amit/Greg by the end of the week whether they are still interested.

DB: so are we paying the course fees and the placement for them all.

LD: there won’t be any money if there are 6 of them

AM: So we do 2K each for the placement

SB: we don’t know what the placement will cost though

AM: there hasn’t been an agreement with ULHT for cost of placement or even if they will have people, difficult to get an answer.

AC: there is an eyecare delivery meeting on weds and it is on the agenda. A sticking point is can ULHT offer enough clinic time for all the placements? So we need an answer from ULHT and clarification for how much it will cost.

SB: ULHT’s priority is the medical students .

AM: the money for the placement is a good incentive for ULHT to take them.

AM: so to come to a conclusion – we will use the 25K fully within 2024. Do you want to have a physical invoice Sab, and pay what that invoice states? Or just agree one set figure for everybody?

SB: until we know what Amit and Greg are doing its difficult.

AC: so are we saying we will fully fund the academic side of it?

SB : if we cover the cost of the course if they send invoice/receipt . But they might pay for one module at a time – so might not have have all their receipts

AM: that’s why I used the figure as a reference, if we agree to do the same as Aston so they all get the same.

AC: does that mean that what remains in the budget will be used towards for the placements.

DB: that’s how I have worded it in the MOU

LD – can we not find out how many people are doing the course and then split the 25 between them, say we will fully fund your course and what is left over for the placement.

SB: only problem is if we pay for the whole course when they haven’t, that’s not appropriate use of funds

LD – but can we not release the funds as and when we have receive proof of payment, so they can put X amount towards their course – and then the remainder will go for their placement fees.

AC: ultimately we need to use the fund fully. What happens is there are only 4 people and there is money left, how will that be allocated?

AM: that could give us the opportunity next year, there is the 4 fully funded places, and if a 5th person misses out, we could use the money for that.

DB: we should know by the end of this week if there will 5 or 6, so can then make it either 5K or 4K each.

SB: so if it is 5, we can do 5K each, if its 4 we can include the IP placement. We just shouldn’t be giving them more money than its costing them.

AC: so we can create an MOU saying, for eg if 5 people – you will receive up to 5K towards your course and placement fees payable on proof of receipt.

SB: can we also be clear that we are paying the candidate the money for them to pay their fees, it’s nothing to do with the LOC.

AM: have they signed an MOU yet?

DB: we haven’t finalised an MOU as the amount keep changing

AM: Is everyone happy?

All: Yes