

# Rotherham and Barnsley Local Optometric Committee

## **MINUTES of the Rotherham and Barnsley Local Optometric Committee**

**Meeting Date and Start Time:** Tuesday 11 February 2020, 6.30pm

**Meeting Location:** Carlton Park Hotel, Rotherham

**Present:** Sukhy Bains (SuB), Bhavesh-Dayasharan Patel (BDP), Terry English (TE), Tan Hussain (TH), Robert King (RK), Aftab Rahim (AR), Steve Shaw (SS), Liz Sooklall (LS), Tony Wing (TW) and Will Walters?.

**Attendees:** Sarah Faulkner (SF) (Minute Taker)

**Apologies:** Dave Brumpton (DB), Peter Dand (PD), Sean O'Brien (SO'B) and Nizz Sabir (NS)

**Minutes of the Last Meeting:** The minutes from the meeting taking place on 26 November 2019 were accepted as a correct record.

### **Matters Arising:**

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

SS welcomed everyone to the RBLOC meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. SS then conducted introductions and apologies. SS also advised the attendees that SuB and TW had successfully been accepted onto the LOCSU Leadership Course and congratulated them both on their success.

#### **2. Approval of Previous Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes from the meeting taking place on 26 November 2019 were accepted as a correct record. The actions were reviewed, and it was noted that there were some matters arising:

Contact with Rotherham Hospital: TW and TH advised that they had been in contact with Rotherham Hospital. Rosie Crofts from Rotherham Hospital had advised that from 1 April 2020 the fax machine at the Trust would be switched off and all optometrists, therefore, need to ensure they have an NHS Email account. TW advised that Lorraine Rogers at NHS England had also sent a brief survey for practices to complete regarding readiness for the technology switch over.

SS enquired what progress had been made with putting in place an electronic referral system. TH advised that this has been in train for a number of years but does not seem to be available yet.

TH advised that the Barnsley fax switch off has been postponed indefinitely but Rotherham Hospital are pushing to switch theirs off by 1 April 2020. SuB enquired how many practices did not have an NHS Email account. TW stated that this is information that needs to be gathered so they can be supported to have an account set up for the practice. A number of committee members and attendees reflected that it had taken up to 6 months to be given an NHS Email account and so if Rotherham Hospital are intended to remove the fax option practices need imminent support to begin the process of setting up an account. BDP noted that it would only be a matter of time before Barnsley Hospital switch off their fax machine and Spa Medica are also removing their fax machine

## Rotherham and Barnsley Local Optometric Committee

so would promote all practices getting an NHS Email account. Within Rotherham Specsavers each clinic room has a PC and referrals can be typed, saved as a PDF and emailed securely. This has not yet been replicated in the Barnsley practice. The attendees discussed that access to a PC for electronic referrals would be an issue in some practices. It was agreed that the information regarding the switch from fax to email would be sent round and practices encouraged to sign up for NHS Email accounts as soon as possible.

***ACTION: TH/TW to send on information from Rotherham Hospital regarding the fax switchover and try to ascertain how many practices do not yet have NHS Email accounts.***

***ACTION: TW to speak to NS for up to date information on how practices request an NHS Email account.***

Website: SS confirmed that responsibility for the upkeep of the RBLOC website had been handed over from OH to AR and LS. AR and LS will now take responsibility for running the website.

### **3. Contact Day Review**

SS introduced the notes and actions taken from the RBLOC Contact Day held in December 2019. SS thanked all those who had attended the day or contributed towards the information collated. SS advised that the objective of the contact day was to review the 2019/20 action plan and consider progress made against this.

SS advised that the **value proposition** of the RBLOC was good, the RLOC has been proactive throughout 2019/20. An area that was noted for improvement was around increased promotion of the profession in local areas. SS asked the attendees to suggest ways in which promotion of the profession in the local area could be undertaken. SS suggested utilising National Eye Health Week (NEHW). TH stated that the Barnsley Vision Strategy Group could assist with promotion, as they had been very supportive of the PEARs initiative and were a proactive group. TH advised that there is a group in Rotherham also but NS would have the details for this.

SS advised that Barnsley Vision Strategy had expressed an interest in doing something with school age children and this could be something that the LOC could link in to. SuB advised that NS had previously been developing a paediatric pathway and was looking at working with school age children. SuB advised that current school screening is being undertaken by level two nurses but is not a consistent service across regions and there is no clear pathway. SS enquired of the attendees if taking a school liaison role to promote the profession locally would be feasible. TH suggested scoping what the need was and then acting if it was in the best interest of contractors. SuB stated that the committee needed to consider its financial position before embarking on promotional work. TH suggested asking practices to register for the NEHW literature and then displaying that in practice during NEHW. LS advised the attendees that there were materials available to promote child eye health called "Eye Heroes", which could be shared with practices to promote.

***ACTION: LS to share information regarding Eye Heroes and TW to share with practices and promote joining the NEHW campaign.***

SS then moved on to discuss the session held on the contact day around **customer relationships**. SS advised that RBLOC had been very proactive in 2019/20 and had grown the contacts database over

## Rotherham and Barnsley Local Optometric Committee

the past year. SuB advised that further work is required on the contact database. SuB stated that the CET events had been a helpful resource to grow contacts but more work refining the list to understand who works at which practice will help to ensure that offers around CET and RBLOC activities are targeted at the local workforce.

***ACTION: SuB and TW to work on refining and updating contacts database.***

The attendees then moved on to discuss clearly defined roles for the committee members with accountability attached to these roles. SS noted that not everyone is able to give the same amount of time commitment to the activities of the LOC but that if people wanted to remain as committee members then a degree of time commitment needs to be given and people will be held accountable for this. TH suggested that the committee prioritise activities for 2020/21 and assign roles with deputies to each role. TH recommended focussing on a small number of priorities to ensure committee members could dedicate the necessary time. SuB suggested considering how much time was required by each role and then sharing out the jobs accordingly. SS agreed that it would be helpful to understand the time commitments for each role and then assign these, this needs to be undertaken quite quickly to ensure the committee remains responsive and that people are accountable and responsible for their areas of work.

The next area of focus was **revenue streams**. SS advised that the conversation around revenue streams at the contact day had been challenging and in January 2019 the committee had a balance of £23,800 and by December 2019 this had reduced to £12,078. TE advised that the balance to date was £11,243.88.

SS confirmed that the RBLOC levy is .75% and the contribution to LOCSU from this is .50%. TW advised that if the levy is increased then LOCSU still only receive .50% with the rest of the increase going to the RBLOC.

It was noted that the biggest expenditure was remuneration of committee members and meeting expenses and it was noted that all members need to start making use of the expenses claim form, for anything over and above meeting attendance, which will be signed off by the Chair to ensure there is a robust audit trail of expenditure.

***ACTION: Expenses claim form to be uploaded to One Drive and committee members to use this if claiming expenses over and above meeting attendance.***

TE noted that meeting expenditure in 2019 was high due to meetings over-running and people being paid for the additional time. TH stated that the previous agreement was that all committee members received £75 per meeting, regardless of the length of time that the meeting went on for. It was agreed that this would be reinstated to reduce meeting expenditure and encourage members to keep meetings to time. Will stated that the large CET event held, whilst good, did include optometrists from out of the local area and was expensive to host. SuB acknowledged this and stated that lessons had been learned with the future focus for CET events being local and to be either free, delivered by Barnsley Hospital, or sponsored to reduce costs to the LOC.

The attendees then moved on to discuss **CET**. SuB advised that the next CET event would be held at Barnsley Hospital and suggested holding the RBLOC AGM after the CET to encourage attendance from optometrists who would not normally come to the AGM. SuB advised that Barnsley Hospital

## Rotherham and Barnsley Local Optometric Committee

have suggested that RBLOC donate to the hospital for use of the room for the AGM following the CET event. SuB enquired what committee members thought would be a reasonable donation. The committee members asked SuB to enquire with the hospital about how much they would be expecting, with a ceiling of £200 for a donation.

***ACTION: SuB to enquire with Barnsley Hospital regarding the amount for a donation to hold the AGM after the CET.***

SuB advised that the CET would focus on red eye, would be held on Wednesday 22 April 2020 at Barnsley Hospital and that the hospital will provide drinks and catering. LS enquired if an Eventbrite page had been set up for the CET. SuB advised no.

***ACTION: LS to set up Eventbrite page for the red eye CET event at Barnsley Hospital on 22 April.***

SuB then advised the attendees that the intention for CET events in 2020/21 was to hold 3 events and try to reduce expenditure on these to a minimum. The April CET will be hosted by Barnsley Hospital for free and the intention is to have one hosted by Rotherham hospital and then one hosted by a sponsor, Spa Medica and a dispensing optometrist have already made offers to host a CET. RK enquired when the CETs would take place. SuB stated April, June and late September/early October. RK advised that Sheffield are hosting a CET in October and to ensure the RBLOC one does not clash. SuB suggested reducing the expenditure on CET from £2500 to £700 over 2020/21 and all committee members agreed to this.

The attendees then briefly discussed CET points and BDP suggested trying to make each CET 3 points rather than 1 point. RK also stated that applying for the points in a timely manner was important if expenditure on CET was to be reduced, as late applications for points incur a fine. BDP and TH offered to work with SuB and NS to take forward applications for CET points. TH also suggested drawing on NS skill set as a facilitator for future CET events. It was noted that Will was also able to facilitate and BDP agreed to look into becoming a facilitator.

***ACTION: BDP to look into becoming a facilitator for CET events.***

The attendees then reviewed the **room for improvement** discussion held at the Contact Away Day. SS enquired of the committee members if RBLOC should produce a newsletter. Will suggested using the website to promote news and TH suggested promoting the LOCSU newsletter that is already produced. All committee members agreed to this approach. SS then enquired around what action should be taken to promote NEHW. SS agreed to work with Barnsley Vision Strategy to promote the week in Barnsley and Will suggested working with Sight and Sound to promote the week also. AR suggested highlighting the NEHW to practices and prompting them to raise awareness, LS volunteered to assist with this and TH advised that he would speak to some sponsors to help with promotion also.

***ACTION: LS to help promote NEHW with practices by encouraging them to sign up to receive the promotional material and TH to speak to his contacts to promote activities around NEHW.***

The attendees then reflected on **finances**. SS highlighted that there was a significant difference between the opening and closing balance for 2019/20 with an income of £6231 but outgoings far exceeding this. The biggest spend, at £9568, was on meetings, though it was noted that the

## Rotherham and Barnsley Local Optometric Committee

committee met more frequently last year, had longer meetings and some meetings also included food. TH asked if the longer meetings provided more value or if the committee should work to be more efficient with its time. Attendees agreed that the meetings needed to be more time efficient and agreed that they should be capped at 5 meetings a year, 12 committee members and a fee of £75 per meeting regardless of meeting length. All attendees agreed to this.

TE stated that members needed to confirm attendance in advance of the meeting so the correct number of refreshments could be requested to ensure expenditure was kept to a minimum. It was agreed that attendance would be confirmed via WhatsApp on the morning of the meeting.

***ACTION: All to use WhatsApp to confirm attendance of meetings.***

The attendees then discussed the **AGM**. It was agreed that all roles would be up for election this year. LS suggested that the RBLOC closely follow the LOCSU guidelines for the election. SuB noted that the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer definitely needed to be elected and ideally an election for all other roles needed to be held too and the positions would be for 3 year tenures. LS enquired how many committee members there were. TW advised 12 and advised that if members do not attend for 3 meetings in a row, without good reason, they will be considered as having stood down from the committee. TW stated that a process for the elections needed to be discussed as advance notice of the AGM and the elections needed to be given to all optometrists in Rotherham and Barnsley.

***ACTION: All members to use WhatsApp Group to agree upcoming election procedure at the AGM.***

The attendees then moved on to discuss the **draft budget**. It was agreed that meeting costs should stay at £5500 but attempts to reduce this should be made over the year if possible. It was agreed that CET could be reduced to £700. It was agreed that website costs should be reduced but stationary costs can remain the same. The attendees discussed whether to reduce Chair costs but agreed to leave currently but review throughout the year. The costs for newsletters could be removed, NEHW to remain and Treasurer and Secretary costs to remain the same, though it was noted that the RBLOC account needs to be separated from TE account and access be given to a deputy treasurer. MECs costs could be reduced as this should be being paid for by PEC.

SuB enquired what the support offer was from LOCSU with their part of the levy. TH stated that NS gives the committee a lot of support from a LOCSU perspective. BDP suggested that it would be good to discuss this on the next meeting agenda so everyone had a clear understanding of what was available from LOCSU to ensure this was being maximised.

***ACTION: A discussion around LOCSU support to go on next meeting agenda.***

The attendees then moved on to discuss the levy. SuB estimated that expenditure had been reduced from £12,000 to £9000, which will reduce the deficit but enquired if the levy should be raised. SS advised that he had produced a worksheet around the levy and given the contingency fund in the RBLOC account suggested not raising the levy yet, but having the option, agreed at the AGM, to review the levy in 6 months. RK stated that the levy should be increased. TW suggested producing a worksheet to show practices what an increase would cost them, TW noted that for some practices a levy increase would only be a matter of pence. AR stated that there was enough in the RBLOC account to leave the levy as is for now but agreed with the option to review in 6 months. TH stated that with the committee aiming to be more efficient financially this year there should be no need to

## Rotherham and Barnsley Local Optometric Committee

raise the levy. LS and Will advised that they did not hold a strong opinion either way and SuB advised that there was enough in the RBLOC account to leave the levy as is for now but if this drops below £7k then a levy increase needs to be discussed. SS asked members to vote on keeping the levy as is with an option to review. 6 members were for keeping it the same and 5 were against.

#### 4. NEHW

Please see the NEHW update in the Contact Day Review section, under the room for improvement section.

#### 5. MECS and Primary Care Updates

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

#### 6. CET

Please see the CET update in the Contact Day Review section.

#### 7. Any Other Business (AOB) (All)

E-GOS: SS enquired if LS had attended a training session on E-GOS and if there was any learning to share. LS advised that she had obtained contact details for the person who delivered the training and they had advised that they could attend a meeting to demonstrate the system or provide a webinar.

**Meeting Closed: 20:30**

**Date, Time and Location of Next Meeting: AGM: Wednesday 22 April**, following the CET Event at Barnsley Hospital.