

Rotherham and Barnsley Local Optometric Committee

MINUTES of the Rotherham and Barnsley Local Optometric Committee

Meeting Date and Start Time: Tuesday 24 November 2020, 7.30pm

Meeting Location: Zoom Meeting

Committee Members Present: Iftab Akram (IA), Sukhy Bains (SuB), Bhavesh-Dayasharan Patel (BDP), Peter Dand (PD), Tan Hussain (TH), Hassan Javed (HJ), Robert King (RK), Sean O'Brien (SoB), Aftab Rahim (AR), Nizz Sabir (NS), Liz Sooklall (LS) and Tony Wing (TW).

Attendees: Darren Howlet, Clare Sheppard, Rosemarie Siwek and Sarah Faulkner (SF) (Minute Taker)

Apologies:

Minutes of the Last Meeting: The minutes from the meeting taking place on 22 September 2020 were accepted as a correct record.

Matters Arising:

1. Welcome and Apologies

TW welcomed everyone to the RBLOC virtual meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. TW advised attendees to use the chat function to ask questions and requested that unless people were speaking they were to remain on mute. TW welcomed new attendees and expressed particular thanks to Darren Howlet, Deputy Associate Director of Operations and Service Manager for Optometry from Barnsley Hospital for attending. SuB then conducted formal introductions of all attendees to the meeting.

2. Declaration of Interest Forms

SuB confirmed that all forms had been received back from committee members. SuB reminded attendees that if there were changes around declarations of interest then the forms needed to be updated

3. Update from Barnsley Hospital

Darren Howlet introduced himself to the attendees advising that he was the Deputy Associate Director of Operations and Service Manager for Optometry from Barnsley Hospital. Darren Howlet noted that he was keen to maintain good connections and communications with community optometry. Darren advised the attendees that the current waiting time for cataract surgery at Barnsley Hospital was 4-5 weeks. However, the two Consultants are due some leave and so the wait will rise to 7 weeks for a short period. Darren noted that the 4-5 week wait had been maintained throughout the COVID period and encouraged attendees to ensure Barnsley Hospital services was offered to patients, as waiting times are minimal. NS reiterated the need to ensure Barnsley Hospital was highlighted and offered to patients as part of the choice agenda. SuB enquired if the 4-5 weeks is for first appointment. Darren clarified that the first appointment was offered in 3-5 days and the operation is 4-5 weeks. Darren also noted that the waiting time for a general new appointment was

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14 days, AMD was around 2 weeks and all school screening is up to date; overall a productive time for the service.

Darren then enquired if there was anything he could provide from a Barnsley Hospital perspective that would help community optometry. SuB suggested developing an update for the website from a Barnsley perspective. TW agreed that this would be useful as the LOC often get asked questions about what is happening in the hospital and any information Darren can share will be really helpful. Darren noted that he has an update form that he can share and will send this to PD.

TW enquired how Barnsley Hospital have managed to maintain the school screening during COVID. Darren advised that though some schools did not want the screening to take place, many did and the hospital have worked in conjunction with GPs, Health Centres etc. who have been able to supply COVID safe space that could be used by the screening team. The process involved keeping the children separated with a one in and one out process with the orthoptist.

SuB enquired if the hospital had any feedback for optometrists on referrals and if there were any issues with inappropriate referrals or referrals not coming through okay. Darren advised that the clinical lead triages every referral and 98% are accepted, the usual rejection reason is a lack of information. Darren advised that he will ask for specific feedback from the clinical lead and share if there are any areas for improvement. TW welcomed this and TW thanked Darren and Barnsley for the excellent communications.

IA thanked Darren for the update and enquired about glaucoma waits at Barnsley. Darren advised that the regular glaucoma specialist is in New Zealand on a placement and the hospital will be appointing to this post again next year. From January 2021 the hospital will have a 1 day a week specialist from Sheffield and links to Doncaster. NS advised that first appointments are still seen within 3 months, follow ups have been slightly backlogged, but are on track to catch up. Darren noted that there are nurse led clinics and ACP clinics taking place too so glaucoma patients are being seen. Darren noted that 1 patient had been referred to Sheffield, but there are no outstanding waiters. NS advised that everyone continue to refer as you would routinely, all patients will be seen in the network of hospitals.

TW enquired if there was anything that the RBLOC could do better for the hospital. Darren advised that he had asked his clinical lead for feedback and she had said she was happy with the working relationships so far. PD advised that he will continue to liaise with Darren and ensure regular updates to the LOC.

IA noted that Mid Yorkshire Hospitals have issues with the quality of referrals, particularly OCT where some optometrists are not including enough detail. There will be some learning sessions set up on this and IA is happy to liaise with the Barnsley Clinical Lead to take part in this education and training.

SuB thanked Darren Howlet for attending and invited him to attend future meetings. TW echoed this.

4. Website and Communications

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LS advised the attendees that all the background work on the new website was nearly complete. LS noted that the current website is slightly out of date due to issues accessing the platform. TW advised that he would help LS with access to the old website. LS noted that the new website needs just a few more amendments and encouraged people to assist with proofreading the content before it goes live. LS asked the attendees if they would be able to provide a very short biography to go next to their photograph on the website. TW encouraged this stating it would just be a couple of lines about what you do, what your role is in the LOC and where you practice.

ACTION: All committee members to send biography information to LS for uploading to the website.

TW, LS and HJ have all been working on the website and found it easy to update. LS noted that a list of practices that have specialities would be good to include on the website also.

ACTION: Any practices that have specialist services i.e. specialist dispensing, contact lenses etc. email in and this will be included on the website.

TW echoed the need for a proof-reader for the website content and asked for volunteers. SuB and TH volunteered to proofread. LS reiterated that for any changes required to the website if these could be emailed through updates will then be made. TW stated that new website will be launched in January 2021. LS noted that HJ has got a good list of all GP practices in Barnsley and Rotherham and extended thanks for this work. SoB enquired if the GP list includes email addresses. TW advised yes for Barnsley and no for Rotherham. TH advised that Optomanager has the GP email addresses in it so this can be utilised when needing to make contact with specific practices. HJ advised the attendees that the CCG have said that no email addresses are to be published on the website. NS agreed with this stating that GP email addresses should not be published on the public facing website. LS suggested putting these contact details in a private area and people have to request a log in to access the information and it can be granted only to relevant practitioners. AR advised that is what Sheffield LOC do. TW advised that the GDPR implications will need to be considered and so access to email addresses will be reviewed.

SoB enquired with the hospital eye department moving to a new location are the contact details changing. TH advised that he is waiting for the update on this from Caroline Pollard and will follow up. AR noted that the phone number has changed. SuB advised that the new numbers had been sent round to the LOC contacts. NS suggested putting together a contacts list in a PDF format for people to download and put up in practices. TW agreed this would be useful. TW said Rotherham Hospital were just working through numbers and when ready they can be shared.

5. CET Update

IA advised that there was a CET event taking place 25 November 2020 on dry eye. IA also advised that he had spoken to an Ophthalmologist at Sheffield to potentially provide a talk on oncology and had spoken to the clinical governance lead at Sheffield and a VR consultant who may also provide a talk. IA suggested that a talk on OCT would be timely to schedule. IA encouraged everyone to please interact at the dry eye event and ask questions. BDP enquired if there were any updates from Anne Marie at Barnsley Hospital about a CET event. It was noted that no conversations have taken place as yet in response to emails. BDP agreed to follow up. TW noted that the numbers for the dry eye event were around 40 people, 20-30 from Rotherham and Barnsley, but opened up to Sheffield too.

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NS advised that there is a LOCSU meeting at the same time as the CET event, which may have impacted on attendance. TW enquired if the LOCSU meeting will be recorded. NS advised yes and encouraged people to attend the CET event and watch the LOCSU meeting at a later time.

TW then advised the attendees that there are a number of sessions being provided by the National Optical Conference (NOC) and that the details had been shared by SuB. TW stated that it would be good to have members of the RBLOC on each of the sessions where possible and SuB concurred with this. TW advised that he had registered for the future of LOC and clinical pathways. NS stated that the sessions are open to everyone so please join and promote with colleagues. There will also be more events, but these will be capped at 100 attendees so when you receive notification sign up quickly.

ACTION: SuB to send re-send dates for NOC sessions via email and WhatsApp and people to volunteer to attend.

6. Treasurer Update

AR advised the attendees that a meeting was held on 9 November 2020 on LOC finances. This was a useful meeting in understanding where we stand in the region, the RBLOC are in the middle of the pack in terms of current financial balance. NS advised that the LOC treasurers have agreed to come together on a more regular basis to share and learn. AR concurred that the meeting was useful and future meetings will also be helpful. TW noted that he had been on the North East and Yorkshire regional chairs forum, which is great for sharing and learning and a similar one for treasurers would be equally helpful. NS enquired from a contractor perspective what percentage of activity there had been. AR advised that September activity was comparable to last year, but October and November have slowed down. TW enquired what kind of numbers are coming through from eGOS. AR advised not many so far but will be able to work out definite numbers at month end. Roughly 30-40% are eGOS and rest not eGOS. NS noted that eGOS was suspended until January 2021 due to COVID issues and system issues.

7. Hospital Updates

TH advised that colleagues from Rotherham Hospital have moved bases and are settling in. It is hoped that once they are fully established at their new base that there will be an opportunity to meet with them regularly to help improve the information flow from the hospital out to optometrists in Rotherham. TH advised that he will link with PD to review the information received from Barnsley Hospital to see if this could be replicated for Rotherham colleagues. TH advised if colleagues are having any issues that are linked to the hospital to please make contact and he will send across to Rotherham Hospital. TW acknowledged that the communication flow from Rotherham Hospital was not as strong as that from Barnsley Hospital. TW also noted that Rotherham Hospital colleagues are keen to appoint an optometrist in the hospital to provide enhanced services, but objections have been raised to this as the work needs to sit with community optometry.

PD advised that he liaises frequently with Darren Howlet at Barnsley Hospital and the information flow from the hospital is very good. There is no further update to add to the information shared earlier by Darren Howlet.

8. Meeting Dates for 2021

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TW advised that possible dates for 2021 meetings have been circulated and the proposal is that all meetings will be held via Zoom. TW stated that if there were no objections to the proposed dates these will be finalised and issued.

ACTION: If there are any glaring issues with the proposed dates for 2021 meetings please email SuB to highlight.

9. LOCSU/PES Update

NS advised that the National Optical Conference (NOC) goes live on 25 November and encouraged everyone to share information about the NOC conference with colleagues, practice staff etc. NS also advised that the North East and Yorkshire regional forums have been taking place and the learning disability pathway and guidance will be launched via these forums. The learning disability national programme are procuring a learning disability service and CCG commissioned pathways need to be developed and ensure that patients with learning disability requirements are receiving specialist care. All information on learning disability pathways and guidance will be published on the LOCSU website in due course.

NS advised that the Ophthalmology Transformation Group continues to meet and receives updates from the AOP and Clinical Directors. Glaucoma and macular degeneration are key issues with some care being suspended across Yorkshire and the Humber region. IA advised the attendees that cataracts have been suspended at Mid Yorkshire Hospitals. NS advised all attendees to be aware of the impact of delayed secondary care treatment on community practice.

NS then provided an update on PECs. NS advised that across Rotherham links had been made with 20 practices, but there were issues in expanding out into the Maltby area. NS also noted that the PECs service had received complaints recently from GPs, service users and practices. NS asked all attendees and PECs practices to please ensure they prioritise this care and give people an appointment within the given timescale of 5 days. NS also recommended that the care is shared out across PECs practices to maintain the waiting days timescale. NS advised that in terms of referrals only around 9% were self-referrals so there is more work to be done on awareness raising with the general public. Around 36% of referrals are from care navigation from GP practices and 11% coming from GP after patient is seen by the GP. Hospital eye services refer about 2% and as the service matures this might change. Rotherham Hospital are not really seeing MECs anymore, as they are being treated in community, so this is really positive. NS reminded all attendees that the PECs system supplier is changing to Opera and requested that all practices please complete the required DPST work and then start using the new system. Initial feedback is that Opera is better than Optomanager. TH noted that the change to the Opera system does not make clear that people need to complete the quality in optometry part, and it would be helpful to provide a clear message about this please. TH then enquired why is it required for each practice individually and why PECs could not complete on behalf of contractors. NS advised that it is due to holding multiple contracts, but that this issue is being looked into.

TW enquired if there was an update on the children's pathway. NS advised that there is an in principal agreement between LOCSU, the Trust and PECs on a single service children's pathway. This is for children who have been screened and require further investigation. This pathway will help with the backlog that has accumulated during the COVID-19 period. The pathway will be published on the

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website and everyone is encouraged to look at this and take part if able. The fee for the work will be a block tariff of £69 and £60 will go to the practice and £9 to PES. The block payment would be for all appointments, this may be just 1 appointment but could be more. If the practice dispenses glasses, there will be an enhanced voucher as well. However, all practices have to offer a range of free eyewear. TW noted that 6 practices have expressed an interest so far and 1 has given a clear rejection. NS noted that practices are under a lot of pressure and may not have the capacity to take on the pathway but recommend recirculating information to encourage participation. NS enquired if the £69 fee was okay for practices. TH noted that it was more than paid to Sheffield practices, but Sheffield includes a 6-8 week follow up appointment. NS advised that he is just waiting for final confirmation on the work from the Rotherham Hospital and will continue to feedback on progress.

Lastly NS advised the attendees that work had been done with 111 call handlers to ensure they advised callers that the Barnsley and Rotherham MECs service was appointment only. There have been issues where people have been advised by 111 that it is a walk-in service. This is not the case and 111 have said all call handlers will now ensure people are advised it is an appointment only service and apologised for any issues caused previously.

10. Any Other Business (AOB) (All)

There was no other business noted.

TW and SuB thanked all the attendees and extended especial thanks to secondary care colleagues for making the time to attend and for their contributions.

Meeting Closed: 8.45pm

Date, Time and Location of Next Meeting: 19th Jan 2021, Zoom