Sandwell LOC AGM 20th March 2024

**In attendance**

Divya Sudera (Chair) DS

Peter Hampson (Secretary) PH

Louise Sarjeant (Treasurer) LS

Inderpal Bansal IB Wasim Sarwar WS

Paul Sidhu PS

**Apologies** – Peter Bainbridge, Jaspinderpal Bansal, Anisha Kaur, Majid Jawaid, Abrar Zaman, Clive Marchant.

**Minutes of last AGM** – accepted.

**Matters arising** - nil

**Chair’s Report** – Divya Sudera

It has been a year of LOCs collaboration and many meetings within the region and across the Midlands. The LOC has been proactive in preparing practices to move forward, EeRS will imminently be the way we send referrals directly to hospitals, rather than a GOS18s via the GP. Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS trust are now in the build process for us to utilise this service very soon. The LOC has been learning from our colleagues in Shropshire and other regions’ experiences, to hopefully have a seamless rollout of our service, we will arrange drop in events to explain and help with queries when the system is ready to go live.

Since becoming chair of the LOC, I have been having regular meetings with the Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB) and attending meetings which have led to invitations to get involved in Primary Care discussions locally. While nothing moves quickly in the NHS, we hope this will lead to commissioning of further enhanced services for us to offer to our patients. We know we have the skills to ease the burden of our secondary care colleagues and see patients in their local environment and will continue to put forward the case for optometry at every opportunity.

We are continuing to receive NHS funding for local workforce development, and this has been extended for another year, which means it is the ideal time to apply for higher education courses you have been considering. From experience, I can say they are a great way to keep your knowledge current, deepen your understanding when managing patients and give you a great sense of achievement. We also have further core local workforce development sessions being planned, focusing on local provision at hospital sites. These are in a wide range of core topics, do keep a check for emails about these, as spaces fill very quickly.

The annual LOC CPD day in collaboration with Dudley LOC in September was another huge success and depends on the hard work and dedication of our CDP officer Wasim. He expertly manages to put on these top quality events whilst juggling his other roles, we are extremely grateful to benefit from his continued commitment.

LOCSU have had a reshuffle and renewed their focus on supporting local optical committees. They have been engaging with us and our LOC colleagues to find out how they can best do this, and are involved nationally in discussions which may help to shape advancement in enhanced optometric eyecare provision.

The LOC is a fantastic team of highly dedicated practitioners, with a strong interest in advancing our profession and getting the best out of each other. The wealth of experience and support on the committee has made my first year as chair a comfortable and secure transition. I look forward to the next year of productivity and advancement.

**Treasurer’s Report** – Louise Sarjeant

2023 was a busy year for the LOC, which has seen our expenditure increase to pre-Covid levels compared to recent years. Our income from the NHS has been fairly similar to last year however is still significantly below pre-Covid levels. As a result we have reduced our reserves by over £3,000, although they still stand at approximately one year’s worth of expenditure.

There are several reasons for this increase in expenditure this year. Firstly, there is an overlap in the payments for LOC officers. These have historically been paid in arrears, but since the change to PAYE, they are now paid monthly, so this year’s officer payments account for a year and three quarters of payments. This will normalise next year.

There has been increased activity across the region, with the Workforce Development Fund and the EeRs roll out featuring heavily on the LOC agenda. Some of the EeRS expenses have been reimbursed by NHS funding, however we have had one more LOC meeting than usual this year to discuss these activities. We will return to having four LOC meetings a year, unless more are needed, and some of the external meetings are likely to reduce in number as activity stabilises.

There have been more meetings attended this year due to increased ICB collaboration and we had four representatives at the NOC, although the LOC only funded two places. There was increased expenditure for the AGM last year, which unfortunately had to be cancelled at the last minute due to snow and we were only able to get a partial refund from the venue.

Due to a delay in invoicing there is an outstanding bill for the joint CPD event which was held with Dudley in September. Sandwell be the lead host for this year’s event, so that will likely show as a significant expense this year, until the costs are split with Dudley and sponsorship is received.

Although we have adequate reserves, due to the increase in expenditure this year we will need to monitor outgoings more closely. The levy is currently set at 1.3% and this is likely to be adequate in the short term, but it will be easier to judge once some of the payments have evened out.

**Adoption of Reports**

Vote to adopt Chair’s report – majority agreed.

Vote to adopt Treasurer’s report – majority agreed.

**Elections**

There were four positions available on the committee and we had four nominations, so Inderpal Bansal, Jaspinderpal Bansal, Paul Sidhu and Majid Jawaid are elected unopposed.

**Adoption of the statutory levy for the forthcoming financial year**

LS I propose to maintain the levy at 1.3%, with the flexibility to vary it by 0.5% % if necessary – majority agreed

**Adoption of the contribution to LOCSU for the forthcoming financial year**

LS I propose that we continue to give LOCSU 0.5% - majority agreed

**Appointment of the Auditors for the forthcoming financial year**

LS I propose to continue using RJM accountancy – majority agreed

**AOB**

Nil