Sandwell LOC
18 Great Bridge, Tipton, DY4 7HA
email: secretary@sandwell-loc.co.uk

LOC Minutes 18/09/2025

In attendance

Divya Brar (Chair)	DB
Peter Hampson (Secretary)	PH
Louise Sarjeant (Treasurer/Vice Chair)	LS
Wasim Sarwar (CPD Officer)	WS

Inderpal Bansal	IB	Jaspinderpal Bansal	JB
Paul Sidhu	PS	David Wright	DW

Apologies – nil
Conflicts of Interest – no changes
Minutes of previous meeting - proposed as correct by PS, seconded by WS.

Matters arising – IB could the minutes be sent in PDF to help with access.
PS Dudley are going with Microsoft 365, but not implemented yet, so will see how it goes.

Co-opting a DO
LS spoke to a DO at CPD day, may be interested – will follow up by email.

Chair's Business - DB
GERS (Glaucoma enhanced referral service) is coming. Expecting same specs as Wolverhampton – VFs, IOPs and OCT if possible. WS will discuss OCT as commissioning stage - depends on fee. Aim of service is more accurate referrals, current schemes show 50% patients deflected.
Regular meetings with BC chairs. Discussing how to ensure optometry is well represented at ICB level.
Shamina Asif will be the LOC rep on the Primary Care Collaborative. The aim is for primary care to do everything it can to look after local needs and will look at holistic patient care. Looking to have a clinical voice as well, but no current LEHN, which would probably fulfil that role.
Dudley looking at a pilot for a CV AI risk recognition tool.
Met with BC ICB training hub programme manager about WFD activity. There's currently training for GPs and practice staff. There's no funding for us, but there are events they could invite us to. They have partnerships with places to put on CPD, such as colleges and football grounds.
NEHW next week - no plans this year, maybe consider promoting next year.
10-year plan came since last meeting. Locally, BC ICB is clustering with BSOL ICB. It's not a merger or partnership, unsure how it will impact us.
LCOSU membership development day coming up. There are spaces if anyone wants to get involved further.
Social media training on LOCSU website – any volunteers?
Cov/War had CUES decommissioned. May recommission in a better way than before.
Staffs looking at restarting glaucoma monitoring. Trusts in the area are keen. Also looking at SPoA.

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WS – GERS accreditation currently needs the Prof Cert Glaucoma. Suggestion about making more accessible with WOPEC 1&2 + local training/OSCES (could be funded by WFD). Maybe a MCN, as in some other areas. PH College are reviewing the prof cert. Wolves have Prof Cert so commissioners will likely want the same.

EeRS – DB

If any unreasonable rejected referrals, please let me know.
NHS midlands HSJ won a high commendation award for EeRS rollout.
Project team meeting with Cinapsis, trust, ICB and LOCS - RHH present, but SWBT not present. Want us to get more locums on board. Still some referrals not via Cinapsis and still some practitioners not using patient look up. Important to use as allows for better tracking.
RHH rejecting lots of glaucoma referrals, but CB talked to consultants and hopefully resolved.
In Bham some patients being sent out to optoms for IOP checks. IH/SP written to ICB to tell them it's not appropriate without commissioning. WS CES (community eye service) is a bolt on service for anything extra like that, but would need to know fees. The commissioner says that the HES are refuting that it's happening and want evidence.
IB had neuro referral rejected via letter a month later, advising me to send the patient to a local hospital. DB send me the Px ID.
DB update from BMEC about when emergency referrals are triaged, as no triage on the weekend. If patients need to be seen as an emergency, send them in with letter, don't await triage – send comms to practitioners.

Meeting about Cyber security – NHSE/DHSC. Doing a pilot across primary care. Business centred approach for contractors, to consider how a cyber-attack would affect operational security. There's an online toolkit: cybertoolkit.service.ncsc.gov.uk Takes about 2 hours.
Cybersecurity insurance not always worthwhile.

Regarding Special Schools Project, ICB due to release a questionnaire, as not much uptake initially. Also due to share a draft SoP for ERS for Cinapsis. PH there's an invitation to apply for the Special Schools service but not seen any information to distribute it. It's a competitive tender in that if more people apply than needed, they will select who does it.

Treasurers Business – LS

Reviewed income and expenditure at mid-year point and we were due to spend ~£5,000 more than last year. Similar costs invoiced this year but for different projects. Last year work on the EeRS project was externally funded. We have scope to increase the levy to 1.5%, agreed at the last AGM, but we should also look at cost saving initiatives. Important to provide good value for money for the constituents. Will have to put strategy day on hold, and anything that will significantly increase expenditure. It may be that the activity in the second half of the year will be less than the first, but if we want to be more active as a committee then need to ensure reserves are steady. Not in any financial difficulty, but wanted to flag, especially if new schemes like GERS may take up more time.

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Discussion regarding the finances and options.

Outcomes:

- Committee voted to raise the levy to 1.5%.
- We will only hold meetings virtually for the foreseeable future and will only have 3 meetings this year.
- Review finances prior to next meeting and AGM.
- Consider repurposing an LOC meeting as strategy event, rather than a full day, and do any other updates by email.

Local Workforce Development

WS Goldman refresher session at Aston Goldman with 45 optoms. Feedback was good, but not enough tutors per optoms. Low-cost event. Lecture helpful. Proposal from PES for CPD day in collaboration with all 6 LOCs on enhanced services. Has been sent to WFD group to review. Likely 2026. It would promote enhanced services and qualifications with a WFD presentation.
DB – Wolverhampton neuro-ophthalmology talk. PH not received link to send out. WS still spaces available.
DB organising a FB workshop – 3rd November Monday evening @Aston Uni.

Primary Eyecare Services -WS

Working on GERS. Issues with Walsall not engaging with post-op cataract commissioning.
Minimum waiting time of 14 weeks implemented for cataract referral to surgery. Likely to be exceptions but no info yet – add to referral notes if patient needs to be seen more quickly, e.g. driver, only eye etc.
111 pilot – telemedicine hub has gone well.111 call the practice to book patient in. May look at expanding.
Looking at CUES marketing. Video filmed last year but not released. Looking at ICB funding. Marketing for both GPs and patients.
Post-cat webinar on Monday evening. EDI discussion workshop on enhanced services in mid-October.
IB awaiting payments from BSol on Opera. WS it has been flagged and actioned. If the delay longer than 3 months, PES will make the payment.

CPD Officer – WS

Had joint CPD event on Monday. Over 110 people. Got lots of feedback. Future requests are OCT for beginners and BV made simple. TBC date – may be November. Can put in a bid to WFD for CPD event next year.

May know an optom who will join committee and be our social media manager.

Secretary's Business – PH

AOP 10-year plan briefing has been published.
The medicines consultation is live for feedback – increase access to certain medications for all optoms and CLOs.
Planning framework for NHS in England has been published Includes the blueprint for regional teams and what the new structure will look like and some of the planning guidance.
GOS fees to be announced shortly but still not decided. CPD grant not been abolished, but it can't be accessed until the regulations have been made.

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AOB

IB are LOC able to support post payment verifications? PH AOP will be able to support members to some extent. Not sure the LOC have the skills available to attend/advise/support? DB could get advice from IH about what it entails. Maybe LOCSU can help?

PH AOP have audit tool. Individuals do honest self-appraisal and then if think reclaim is wrong, AOP would help argue. Don't think LOC can replicate AOP services. PS could be liability if we offer such a service. PH LOC could go as moral support, but unlikely to know all the regulations.

DB – contact membership body if issues – may be put on website. LS do we have FAQs on website? PS can add whatever want. Consider what to put on website. Ensure members have SLOC website on comms.

Date of Next Meeting

LOC meeting - Thursday 29th January 2026 – virtual

AGM – 26th March 2026

Action plan

LS to follow up potential DO member.

PS to review Office 365/email options.

PH comms to practitioners about BMEC emergency triage.

LS increase levy and other treasurer business outlined above.

Committee – consider any additions to the website e.g. FAQs.