

WOLVERHAMPTON LOC CHAIR'S REPORT 2023

This has been the year when we re-emerged from our remote meetings and began to engage face to face again. The remit of the LOC is to develop optometry in Wolverhampton and our meetings calendar is central to this – we began at the AGM last year and the January Seminar was a great success with nearly 100 optical professionals enjoying a day of high quality CPD.

The committee itself is developing and the process of evolving and reskilling has seen members improving their skills and leading in new areas as the committee becomes more inclusive with wider involvement. We have successfully reduced the statutory levy but we are aware that it is important for the LOC to ensure that members are adequately remunerated for the time they put in, or they may not make that commitment. It's worth mentioning that we also use the Levy to make a donation to the Central LOC Fund, which has been essential for example in setting up the LOCSU pathways that we now rely on. I would like to express my gratitude and that of the committee to the members who've given their time and skill this year, notably those standing back from their roles.

We're finally seeing developments with the NHS locally as the Black Country ICB becomes established and the GOS contract becomes locally devolved. There is real optimism that optometry services will be further developed across the Black Country, working in collaboration with our neighbouring LOCs). This will bring some challenges, including those of capacity and skill levels in our practices. Services being commissioned elsewhere in the country include community glaucoma services, using OCT in medical retina and paediatric services. In the meantime please continue to support the services that we have now by using the appropriate pathways especially for glaucoma and cataract patients. Remember there are full details on the LOC website <https://www.loc-online.co.uk/wolverhampton-loc/>. In addition, over the next year we'll see the rollout of EeRS, with the LOC centrally positioned to support local practitioners.

To support this service development, local LOCs have successfully secured significant training grants for local practitioners to undertake higher training, this is a great opportunity to develop your own and your practice's skill levels; we've already distributed 25k and there is a similar amount available now. Please let us know if you need further details, this can be a significant part of building your practices for the future.