**Chair Report 2025**

It gives me great pleasure to present my first Chair’s Report for Wolverhampton LOC, reflecting on a period marked by innovation, collaboration, and a continued commitment to supporting local optical professionals and improving patient care across the city.

Over the past year, the committee has worked hard to strengthen clinical pathways, enhance communication with stakeholders, and deliver meaningful educational opportunities—all while navigating the evolving landscape of primary eye care. I am proud of what we have achieved together and optimistic about the direction we are heading.

**A Year of Firsts and Progress**

This year has marked a period of innovation, progress, and stronger collaboration for Wolverhampton LOC.

We were proud to host one of England’s first quiz-style CPD sessions at our annual January seminar. This dynamic, case-based format engaged performers in an interactive learning experience that was both educational and enjoyable. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with clear demand for more events of this kind. It is evident our performers value practical, confidence-building learning opportunities that support real-world clinical decision-making.

To strengthen ongoing communication with our contractors and performers, we launched a monthly newsletter. This regular touchpoint provides updates on CPD opportunities, service changes, NHS guidance, and prompt reminders—helping ensure our local optical community stays well-informed and connected.

Internally, we took deliberate steps to improve LOC operations by clearly defining committee roles and responsibilities. This has brought greater structure, accountability, and consistency to our work, leading to improved meeting attendance, more meaningful contributions, and stronger shared leadership across the team.

We have also been active in building relationships with neighbouring LOCs through our participation in BLOCA (Black Country LOC Alliance). This collaborative approach enables us to amplify our voice regionally and work toward consistent patient care and professional support across the area.

In terms of service delivery, our involvement with OPERA and primary eye care services continues to evolve. We remain committed to ensuring that optometry plays a central role in providing high-quality, accessible eye care within community settings.

Nationally, our committee has contributed to the development of improved clinical guidelines in partnership with LOCSU. This helps ensure that emerging national standards are shaped by both local insights and frontline experience.

Finally, we are preparing to adopt the new LOC constitution as part of our commitment to future-proofing governance. This change will promote greater transparency, inclusivity, and alignment with best practice models for LOCs across England.

**EeRS: Digital Transformation in Action**

One of the standout achievements this year has been the successful implementation of the Electronic Eyecare Referral System (EeRS) across the Black Country—and particularly within Wolverhampton.

* In the 12 months to April 2025, 2,177 referrals were made via EeRS by Wolverhampton practices—21% of the total across the Black Country (10,420).
* 73% of our 37 local practices are now either live or in-progress to go live.
* Of the 37 “live” practices, an impressive 34 have already made referrals through EeRS.

While this is encouraging, we know we can do more. With Walsall at 90% live, we are aiming to match and exceed that figure in the coming year. The value is clear: 75% of referrals are being accepted and booked, with only 1.9% rejected or redirected—this speaks to the high quality of clinical decision-making already in place.

Most of our referrals go to The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust (49.7%), followed by Walsall (31.2%), Dudley (10%), and Sandwell (9.1%).

Next steps for EeRS:

* Targeting 100% practice engagement.
* Launching free CPD on referrals and EeRS usage.
* Improved referral guidance and access to outcome documentation.
* EeRS links to GP Connect: providing access to NHS summary care records at point of referral.

In closing, I want to thank every committee member, peer, and stakeholder who has contributed to this year’s progress. Your dedication ensures Wolverhampton LOC remains a proactive, professional voice for optometry. Together, we will continue driving forward improvements for both practitioners and patients in our community.

We look forward to an exciting year ahead!

Warm Regards

Marium Hayat

Chair, Wolverhampton LOC