

LOC CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2013-2014

Thank you all for coming this evening, it is very good to see so many of you especially as it is so close to the Easter Holiday.

Warwickshire LOC has had a busy year 2013-14. We normally meet bimonthly, but met seven times this year, as there was an extraordinary meeting with Miss Cilliers to discuss the Acute Macula Service, and the paperwork that pertained to it. She is going to give us a full update shortly, but much of the information that was needed immediately was posted on the Website.

Since the changes to the NHS restructuring we have been trying to establish our profession within the new CCGs, and get to grips with how it affects us.

Warwickshire and Coventry are now part of a wider area called the Arden Cluster, and are also regionally associated with Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Warwickshire is still divided in CCG terms into North and South which is very relevant to practices with regard to payments.

NHS England are in overall charge of our GOS contracts; dealing with GOS queries, vouchers, practice visits and issuing new contracts to new businesses etc. If you are planning to open a new practice you need to be in touch with them months before the practice is due to open. We have been advised that they cannot approve a new practice without at least 2-3 months lead time just because of all the official stuff that has to be done, and a change of ownership can take a similar length of time

The CCGs deal with the other services, not related to the main contract, such as IOPRR. so it is to them we have mainly been establishing new relationships. Many of you will have had meetings with or email communication with Jonathan Westwood, who is our main contact at the CCG. Chris Grey and I have tried throughout the year, with Jonathan's help to support your problems with the invoicing for the IOPRR. Further changes are in progress to make claiming for the service easier, and will be available for the April-June quarter invoices.

Can I mention, at this time, that it is essential that the invoices are sent to the correct CCG. If your patient has a NW GP and you are a SW practice NW CCG must be invoiced if you want to be paid. Cross border patients can be seen, but the claim is to their CCG. The new claims forms will, hopefully, not allow invoices to be generated with errors of this sort, so payments should be quicker and more accurately. Please can all of last financial years claims be made now, as they may run out of date.

We have plugged the use of Perkins tonometers at every opportunity, but the commissioners have no way of changing the current contract this year. We do believe though that they have definitely heard what we have said and that it will be in the future contract. The accreditation of new practitioners will still not go ahead until the new contract next year, either.

New standard NHS contracts are currently being sent out to practices. We do need these contracts to be approved by LOCSU so do not sign them until we have that approval. Chris has been especially active in working with Jonathan Westwood on the continuation of this service, which as you can see is far more complicated than it originally was, and my thanks to him for his work

We have recently been in discussion with CCG and are hoping that in the near future we may all be given NHS.net email addresses. This will also help with things like claims but also bring us into line with the governance requirements that all contractors to the NHS have to meet.

In February Francesca, Chris and Charles presented an Acute Eye Care proposal to the CCG gateway committee. It has passed their assessment and the recommendation has now been passed to the executive committee for final decision. We wait and see.....but my grateful thanks to those members of committee who have pushed and pursued the CCG for their attention.

NHS England invited us to a meeting of all the Local Representative Committees, where they introduced themselves and we were able to meet other groups - pharmacy, dentistry, medicine. Most recently there have been big changes planned in their staffing and bases, which may have effects in our practices as there will be fewer people to take calls and give advice.

The Arden Cluster, Herefordshire and Worcestershire formed a Regional Optical committee, which has met 4 times, and also, a Regional Primary EyeCare Company made up of the LOC Companies, which, with the aid of LOCSU will be a vehicle for payments when enhanced services are commissioned in the future. All 4 LOCs have agreed, subject to AGM approval, initial loans to PECC, which will be repaid when it is self funding via receipts. Meeting with the other committees has inspired some of our plans, as their enhanced services particularly are very well established.

I hope you have all had a chance to look at the website for Warwickshire LOC, which has been up and running for about 4 months now. And many thanks to Russell Peake for creating it, it's taken many hours of work and looks extremely professional. Please check it regularly as we are going to use it as a vehicle for getting information out to you. The updated information on the IOPRR invoicing, whilst still being problematic, did make life much easier for those making claims, and further changes will be on the site for you to see, and the acute macula referral forms are on it also.

Members of committee have also attended the meetings held by Suresh Munyal, who is chairman of the Local EyeHealth Professional Network, and is speaking briefly later. This group aims to bring together all professions associated with eye care. Public Health Doctors and Ophthalmologists are participants, as well as some patient groups. It is far wider than just LOCs and you can support the network yourselves. Please try and talk to Suresh later in the evening.

LOCSU have been extremely helpful this year in guiding us as an LOC through the changes to the NHS. As a profession we have never really been so affected by the detail and governance associated with NHS practises. We, at LOC, are no different to the rest of the profession and these systems seem very complicated to our optometry eyes!

The committee was also represented at the National Optometric Conference, run by LOCSU, in November, with 2 members attending on each of the days, and we will all endeavour to continue to work strongly on your behalf in the next 12 months.

Thank you again for your attendance and interest, and I hope you enjoy the rest of our evening together.

