



## Chair's Report

Review of the year 2019 - 2020

Hampshire LOC AGM 2020

I am pleased to be chairing Hampshire LOC's first virtual AGM. It is fair to say that a lot has changed over the past year! The committee has changed as well, with a good range of experience and skills from members new and old. We decided to meet up in November for an away day, which was a productive day where we discussed our individual strengths and weaknesses and developed the LOC's strategic plan for the next three years. The strategic plan, which is available on our website, maps out what we want to achieve over the short and medium term, and has given more of a focus to the committee meetings.

Successes have been the implementation of the West Hants Minor Eye Conditions Services (MECS) contract, renewal of Southampton City's MECS contract, and implementation of the Lymington Hospital and Sapphire Eye Care post-cataract contract. Additionally, the entire committee now has a discrete role, and we have future-proofed through succession planning. A sub-committee was set up to organise CET and CPD events. Over the next year, our aim is to have uniformity of contracts across the county, by having all enhanced services managed by our provider arm, Primary Eye Care Services (PES), with all Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) commissioning all services.

The clinical lead role was introduced in 2019, with Anthea Reid taking up the post. The clinical lead's role has been to take on some of the clinical queries that the LOC receives, act as a liaison with the PES's clinical governance and performance lead, writing up to date referral guidelines for the eye units, engaging with local practices and promoting optometry across the county.

The new committee officers undertook the LOC Support Unit (LOCSU) LOC induction training. Following on from this, the LOC has developed a communication strategy, and in addition to our usual newsletters emailed through MailChimp, we are now active on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the LOC has been extremely busy. We have been fielding queries from practitioners, continually sending out updates and working with the PES and LOCSU to help practitioners to obtain PPE. We have used this as an opportunity to remind practitioners of the role of the LOC as a unified voice for optometrists and dispensing opticians at a local and regional level, and as the first port of call for any queries.

Additionally, the COVID-19 Urgent Eye Care Service (CUES) has been developed amazingly quickly by NHS England, with approval by the Royal College of Ophthalmologists and College of Optometrists. In cases where a MECS contract has been commissioned, this will be transferred over to CUES. Optimistically, many CCGs have expressed interest in commissioning CUES where they have not previously commissioned MECS. The idea of CUES is that it will also help hospital eye units with the transition out of lockdown and back to routine testing.

The next year will probably look quite different to the last! I wish you all the best for the coming months as we all adapt to the 'new normal'.

Sean Matthews  
Chair - Hampshire LOC