



Hampshire LOC AGM – 09 June 2021

Chair's Report

Review of the year 2020 - 2021

This is Hampshire LOC's second virtual AGM as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and it has been a busy and sometimes surreal time. Shortly after last year's AGM I took over as Chair of the Committee. Sean was moving on to pastures new with his family as they moved to Northampton. It has certainly been a time of thinking on my feet and I am grateful to the Committee and Business Manager for their continued support.

As most of you will be aware CUES (Covid - Urgent Eye Care Service) was introduced as an alternative to MECS in order to provide eye care services during the pandemic. Whilst this was successful in some areas it had mixed reactions in others and as a result some of the coverage that had been provided by MECS was lost. Going forward it is expected that CUES will continue to be the main urgent eye care service however it will change from 'Covid' to 'Community'

The last 12 months has been a difficult time for Contractors and Performers alike from being closed and having limited remuneration based on previous activity, to re-opening and having to manage a rush of patients 'chair time' with correct PPE and managing patient safety by ensuring areas of work are continually cleaned between patients. This has not gone unnoticed and the Committee would like to thank everyone for their professionalism and fortitude in ensuring patients are seen as quickly and safely as possible. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our Business Manager, Ian for his continued support and professionalism in keeping us all updated with ever changing information throughout the last year and for his efforts in getting optometrists and their teams into the vaccination programme despite being given conflicting information at times.

Following last year's AGM we were joined on the Committee by Bryony Allen (Contractor Representative) and Helena Jenkins-Hewes (Performer Representative) who bring sound knowledge and experience to the Committee. This year we are sadly saying farewell to Roisin Carruthers who has been a long standing stalwart of the Committee for a considerable number of years and her knowledge and experience will be very much missed. We are also losing Anthea Reid who has also made great contributions to the Committee and has been a great help where clinical advice has been sought and has been very supportive of the working relationships between the LOC, CCGs and HES.

As a result of changes in the committee and existing vacancies we are looking for two Contractor representatives and three Performer representatives. Whilst any Hampshire Contractor or Performer is welcome to put forward their nomination to be a part of the Committee it would be great to have more representation from independent practices. If you are interested in joining the committee please talk to me or our Business Manager.

We are currently awaiting a contract from Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to implement a Low Vision Service across North and Mid Hampshire which has been ongoing since August last year. A number of practices expressed an interest in providing this service which will be directly contracted by HHFT and the practice supported by the LOC.



From April this year we will be seeing changes taking place in respect of CCGs forming clusters and working with Integrated Care Services which should lead to more standardisation of additional service contracts where there is an appetite to provide more services through community practices. There are various papers coming out from NHS England to mandate and support these changes in how services are commissioned with some ambitious timelines. As ever where there are new developments we will keep you informed.

There have also been a number of conversations regarding referral pathways around Hampshire and Isle of Wight and I would just like to take this opportunity to say that the LOC website does hold the current information regarding referrals and any changes or updates will be added to the website and circulated to our mailing lists.

We envisage seeing significant changes this year and next in Primary Care that will have an effect on the provision of community eye care services so we will keep you informed in conjunction with other agencies. Ultimately though, the Hampshire LOC Committee would welcome your support in helping us manage the journey through these changing times. We have an opportunity to make our voice heard; it would be tragic to waste it. If you can give up some time to join our meetings, maybe join the committee and share your knowledge and opinions it would be greatly appreciated.

Anne Gill
Chair - Hampshire LOC