

Chair's report NWLOC. 2022

By the time you read this we will have finally transitioned back to the Green Phase and I hope are still in it! Hopefully this means that we can all start getting back to normal although the world continues to be a very uncertain place at the moment.

This year has proved to be quite a frustrating one for the LOC as, quite understandably, the commissioners have been busy trying to deal with the problems of the wider NHS. This culminated in the "eye team" being seconded to other COVID related roles for nearly 4 months and thus almost nothing progressed for us. Happily, the team are now back in place and very engaged in dealing with some of the issues which have been dragging on for a long time.

In case you missed it, we are now back to one whole area again, an Integrated Care System (ICS) and they are keen to unify services across the whole of our patch, wherever possible which should make some of the border issues easier.

We are at an advanced stage of agreeing a new post cataract assessment contract with a substantially increased fee. Once this is done, post op patients from the NNUH, Newmedica, Spamedica and the JPUH will all be handled through the Opera IT system. We will shortly be putting out a call for all practices and practitioners who wish to be involved to come forward for training, so that we can really roll this out properly.

We still hope to hold an OSCE for the glaucoma training but sadly not enough candidates have so far come forward to make it financially viable. We are exploring the possibility of running a joint session with Suffolk LOC, so it might still be possible. We will be in touch when we know more.

We have also put in a request for increased fees across all our other enhanced services and this will be dealt with once the cataract contract is complete. The LOC has also been asked to attend preliminary discussions around electronic referrals, EeRs, which is already up and running in other parts of the country. I will keep everyone posted on progress as this is potentially quite a big change.

We would also encourage you to read about, and engage with, the GOC's current consultation on changes to the Opticians Act. There are some fairly radical changes being considered in the consultation which will genuinely affect the way in which we all practice.

Sadly, we had to wind up the Local Optical Association (LOA) committee this year and so the provision of CET and training has been taken on by the LOC. We have made a slow start but look forward to providing relevant and topical CET for all.

Our speaker tonight is from a new initiative to provide support around health and wellbeing for all those in primary care practice, in Norfolk & Waveney including Optometry. We have information on our website, do please go and have a look, there is a wealth of help and information out there. And don't forget to register for and use the website, we are trying to keep it up to date and it should be your first port of call should you have a question for us.

It remains for me to thank the whole committee who continue to work on your behalf, giving up so much of their time for (hopefully) your benefit. We always need new talent for the committee, the East being under represented at the moment, so if are interested, please do let me know.

Many thanks for your continued support

Deborah Daplyn

Chair NWLOC