
Gloucestershire LOC

Annual General Meeting 2020

Chairs Report



Thursday, 04.05.2020

Committee members

Alvaro Borges, *Chair*
Amy Clarke, *Vice-Chair*
Susan Arnold, *Treasurer*
Adrian Street, *Secretary*
Ankur Trivedi, *Glos CGPL*
Kerry Irvine
Nigel Harris
Ian Shapcott
Clare Griffin



Introduction

Welcome to this year's AGM.

The purpose of this report is to highlight the work done by the Gloucestershire LOC over the course of the period between May 2019 and May 2020.

As a statutory body, it is our duty to represent our local contractors and performers. The year 2020 will certainly remain in our memories for a long time. The coronavirus pandemic has left an undeniable mark on us as a society and as community practitioners. Many in the optical sector question if we will ever return to the type of routine practice pre-COVID19.

I suppose only time will tell.

I hope by writing this report it will allow us to look back in years to come, and appreciate what was achieved and how all have strived to support our colleagues in these difficult times.

Personally, this was also my first year as Chair. A baptism of fire; however, with the support of my committee colleagues I can't help but to feel a cohesion and companionship that can certainly bring many fruits.

LOC needs analysis

Our LOC is a member of LOCSU. I believe that LOCSU provides an important role in supporting our activity. Last year a new Optical Lead was appointed to our county. Amar Shah attended one of our meetings and a LOC Development plan - Needs Analysis, was performed. The purpose of this subjective analysis was to understand what we were doing well and what could be improved.

The report revealed that we were engaged in the following activity aspects:

- Relationship with NHSE / PCSE
- Able to negotiate effectively with commissioners (NHS, public health, private)
- Regular communication with members
- The first point of contact for our members
- Functional Website
- We deliver opportunities for our members


And as a committee we have:

- A full and effective Committee with distinct roles
- Succession planning
- Representative of contractors and performers
- Good governance eg. DOI, GDPR, ICO
- Good LOCSU training
- We know what LOCSU does for us and who to contact for further support

The analysis did reveal areas for improvement, such as:

- Be more active in local STP / ICS groups
- Understand and engage with the recently created PCNs (Primary care networks)
- Work with multi-disciplinary teams in the area
- Improve further relationship with neighbouring LOCs

As an outcome of the above, a short, medium and long term plan was established.



Short-term: Gloucestershire LOC strategy for the next 3 years to be defined within the next 3 months. 1) Identify and engage with local contacts in ICS/PCN/ multidisciplinary teams. 2) Negotiate and implement expansion to a full MECs scheme that is worthwhile for both the public and eye care practitioners.

Medium-term: Review of the Children and Cataract services / More activity around education (CET events, etc). Build good working relationships with ICS/PCN/ multidisciplinary teams.

Long-term: Implement the LOC strategy plan. Cement relationships with ICS/PCN/ multidisciplinary teams so we can become an effective partner. Continue to engage with our members and try to encourage greater involvement by members across the whole optical community.

The LOCSU assessment of our work was that, despite the need for some improvements, overall our LOC was performing well when compared to other LOCs in the country.

Strategy planning

As part of the succession planning taking place at the LOC, we acknowledged the need for a strategy day, where work would be done on setting the pace and plan for the next three years.

The meeting highlighted the work done over the last three years.

Most of it was carried by PEG (Primary Eyecare Gloucestershire) which since has merged with PES, and supported by the LOC in the delivery of the several enhanced services that are now part of community optometric practice.

These are:

- Glaucoma: ECF (Enhanced case finding) / Repeat readings
- Pre and post-op cataract assessments
- MECS: Flashes and Floaters
- Children service
- OHT monitoring



In terms of planning the following was discussed:

- LOC meetings and role reviews
- Finances
- Communication plan
- Website
- Community engagement
- CET planning
- MECS
- OHT / Stable glaucoma enhanced service
- PCNs

All the committee members agreed that it was a very productive day and a list of actions and a plan was established as the outcome.

LOC members

The roles of each LOC member were reassigned and clarified

CET: Kerry Irvine (CET officer) and Clare Griffin (support)

Communication: Ankur Trivedi and Adrian Street

PCN engagement: Nigel Harris

IT & GDPR: Ian Shapcott

Treasurer: Susan Arnold

Secretary: Adrian Street

Vice-Chair: Amy Clarke

Chair: Alvaro Borges

Daniel Zawadzki has decided to no longer continue to be a member of the LOC. I would like to thank him for his time and input. The LOC will certainly welcome him back if he so wishes.

Actions from strategy plan

While the list of actions is long, some of the more relevant ones were:

- Committee meetings starting at 19:00 and to finish punctually at 21:00. The frequency of the meetings (every two months) remains unchanged as well as the location. Action points introduced for improved follow up on matters discussed.
- An internal project management system was created using the platform Trello
- LOC Whatsapp group used for internal urgent communications
- Creation of a revised expenses policy and timesheet
- Investigate the cost of a new Website
- Investigate engagement with PCN's
- 2020 focus on enhanced services reaccreditation
- MECS negotiating strategy

Communication

We live in a world where good communication is key. Communication brings people together and in this rapidly changing society, the LOC needs to adapt in order to be closer to our community and more accessible.

A communication plan was created which involved some of the following points

- A new website (www.glosloc.co.uk)
- Countywide emails (allowed to be sent by all LOC members)
- Filtering of countywide email replies. Dedicated email accounts for General queries, Enhanced services, WOPEC codes, Unsubscribe and financial queries.
- Create a social media presence (LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook accounts)

The Coronavirus pandemic changed the ways in which we communicate and as such we also had to adapt.

As part of the plan to communicate effectively, the LOC had to move its meetings to video calls. This has proved very productive and as a result, the next LOC meetings will be done virtually every month and will last one hour for as long as the social distancing measures are in place.

Other communication tools were explored during the year, such as an “Advice and Guidance” service provided by Gloucestershire CCG called *Cinapsis*. Because of the pandemic, the conversions were put on hold.

NHS email uptake has been incentivised during the year. This will allow for a safer and GDPR compliant communication between primary and secondary care, as well as in between practitioners. Many of the new video call services being used for tele-optometry require an NHS email account to be able to access the service.

An emergency eyecare Whatsapp group was created to support the practices and staff providing triage/video and face to face consultation during the COVID19 period. This has proved very popular with 50 participants currently. I hope this can be a stepping stone for the improvement in the way practices and practitioners cooperate in the future.

Work was also done in keeping our website updated regularly during the crisis and a list of practices open for Urgent/essential services was made available and updated on a weekly basis. <https://www.glosloc.co.uk/covid-19-resources/>

CET events / OSCEs


OSCEs

As part of the LOC commitment of working towards a full MECS service, a MECS OSCE's session was held at Cheltenham General Hospital in July 2019, together with a Glaucoma OSCEs session. There was also an opportunity to deliver training in foreign body removal.

The sessions were well attended.

CET events

The LOC noticed a lack of CET events in recent years around Low vision and Vision impairment.



A CET event “Seeing beyond the eyes” around this subject was held in November 2019 at the Kingsholm Stadium in Gloucester. It had excellent attendance not only by the county dispensing opticians and optometrists but also by the county ECLOs.

The LOC had planned several CET Events for the year 2020 given that the Glaucoma and Children service was due for re-accreditation. As such a significant part of the committee, funds were earmarked for this purpose.

Given the current circumstances, all face to face CET events had to be cancelled or postponed. Despite this, at some point in time, these events will need to be held and the LOC will keep some of its funds for this purpose.

Accounts / Financial

The LOC has a healthy situation currently in terms of its financial funds. There was a serious discussion about reducing the current LOC levy given the surplus money, which would take place at the 2020 AGM.

I will propose, though, at the AGM to keep the levy unchanged. We expect a decline in LOC levy funding for the foreseeable future.

NHSE has fortunately arranged for a GOS grant to be paid to optical practices based on their monthly average GOS claims over the last 12 months.

However, as part of this payment to the practices, there is no allocation for the LOC levy. This in effect means that the LOC funding is now reduced by over 90%. We expect future significant expenses in terms of CET provision and Enhanced services re-accreditation. There has also been a very substantial increase in LOC activity during this crisis, which further has an impact on our financial position.

We also propose to cease reporting CET as a separate entity within the accounts. The reason is, that it is often difficult to define if a certain expense, as for example OSCEs is part of CET or committee expenses. It also aims to simplify the accounts and future audits.

The LOC has also moved to electronic banking in order to streamline payments and improve management of the accounts.

As part of our commitment to support practitioners, the LOC bought PPE at the beginning of the pandemic. By the time this was delivered to us, practices were by then able to access PPE via the LRF (Local resilience forums). This was a significant expense and

we believe it was money well spent at the time of the events. I'm certain we will still need it at some point.

I have been in regular contact with NHSE regarding the LOC levy payment, however as of now, there are no expected changes to the LOC funding model. It is my hope that our colleagues understand why we are making this decision.

A treasurer report will be sent via email countywide and published on our website www.glosloc.co.uk

Activities

PCNs

A newly created entity called Primary Care Networks has been established across the country. The LOC already established what they do and their county geographical locations.

A meeting was held with the Tewkesbury PCN in order to start establishing how the LOC can cooperate with the wider primary care services.

Further work is needed, which hopefully we will be able to resume once the lockdown restrictions are lifted.

MECS negotiations

There were ongoing negotiations with Gloucestershire CCG regarding the expansion of the current partial MECS towards a full MECS service. Amar Shah (Optical Lead LOCSU) has joined our meeting negotiations and is providing support to our local case.

Virtual OHT / Stable glaucoma clinics

There was work done around monitoring stable glaucomas in the community. Newmedica has its own proprietary model, which the LOC attended to its demonstration. PES (Primary eyecare services) is also working on a virtual module which can be delivered

as a stand-alone if the practitioner has further qualifications in Glaucoma or with oversight by a PES Ophthalmologist.

A meeting was also held with Prof. Andrew McNaught at CGH in order to improve the quality of referrals and reduce false positives of ECF (Enhanced case finding) glaucoma referrals.

Post-op Cataract service

Ongoing discussions with Tetbury Hospital and Emersons Green on discharging patients to the community for first and second eye post-op cataract assessment.

Newmedica already discharging first and second eyes.

Work continues with the Trust on the merits of having first eyes post-op cataract follow up done at the community level. So far though, we haven't reached a solution to this matter.

Representation

In 2019 two members of the LOC attended the NOC (National optical conference). We continue to sit at the Gloucestershire CPG - Eye health board meetings.

Ankur Trivedi was appointed CPGL (Clinical performance governance lead) for PES (Primary eyecare services). It is certainly an asset to have as part of our LOC, and his input is extremely helpful in liaising with PES.

During the crisis, a South West LOC's group was set up. Gloucestershire LOC is represented at the regular meetings.

NHSE has also now regular virtual meetings, which I attend as a representative.

Hydroxychloroquine guidance

New guidance on the monitoring of patients taking the drug was issued by the Royal College of Ophthalmologist. The LOC in cooperation with GHNHSFT and the consultant Ophthalmologist Elizabeth Bristow has updated the local guidance which can be found on <https://www.glosloc.co.uk/news/hydroxychloroquine-screening-guidance/>

Eye tests for the Homeless

Gloucestershire CCG asked the LOC for help on how to tackle the health inequalities in the county. The homeless people were identified as an especially vulnerable group in need of support.

A draft business contract proposition was written and sent to the CCG and to NHSE for approval. While the amount needed to run the pilot scheme is rather small, this hasn't been given the final green light yet.

We have contacted GETT (Gloucestershire Eye Therapy Trust) which have expressed in principle their support to the project. This is truly appreciated.

The charity "Vision care for the homeless" has also given us their support and commitment to help deliver the service.

The community has been very supportive with this project and I truly hope this becomes a reality.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges presented during this year, I believe that we were able to support our community in these truly extraordinary times.

I now recognised that having set a plan in 2019 for the following years helped us navigate through the difficulties faced by this unprecedented crisis.

It would be my intention, at the end of this report, to establish our objectives for the financial year 2020/2021. Given the uncertainty, I'm afraid this is a commitment I can't accomplish currently. I can promise personally though, and I believe on behalf of the LOC, our dedication towards the continuous support of our local contractors, performers and the wider optical community.

I would also like to acknowledge the support received by LOCSU, Gloucestershire CCG and the NHSE-I regional team.

4th of June 2020

Mr Alvaro Borges BSc Prof. Cert. Glauco.

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