



Gloucestershire Local Optical Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday 14th October 2025

Time 7PM

Location: Teams Hybrid Meeting / Workplace Cheltenham GL50 1JD

Attendees: Amy Clarke (AC) (Chair), Alvaro Borges (AB) (Vice- Chair), Nigel Harris (NH) Treasurer, Courtney Campbell (CC) Vice- Treasurer, Sid Maher (SM) (Secretary), Peter Greedy (PG) Events Lead, Rakhee Price (RP) Events Lead, Karen Gennard (KG), Ian Shapcott (IS), Ankur Trivedi (AT), Tom Gacek (TG), David Jeavons (DJ), Andy Partridge (AP)

Apologies: Emily Emm, Riz Choonara

Opening and Welcome

AC opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees.

Declarations of conflicts of interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

Review of Previous Minutes and Actions

The minutes of the last Committee meeting were reviewed. The minutes were approved as an accurate record, proposed by AC and seconded by CC.

Minute Taking

IS agreed to take minutes with SM's support through Teams recording and AI transcript generation.

Action Points from 12/08/25 Meeting

i.	Prepare 'New to Glos/ Locum' pack access by QR code	Ongoing
ii.	Request current GP surgery nhs.net email list from ICB	Ongoing
iii.	Committee to express interest in deputy roles to Sid	Complete
iv.	Distribute TIA referral form with covering comments	Complete
v.	Finalise 'F&F' document with Ben Clarke	Ongoing
vi.	Investigate options for a third member access to bank account (as back-up)	Complete
vii.	Review current Expenses policy	Complete
viii.	Committee to create a MOU for future tri county CPD events (time cost burden)	Ongoing
ix.	Determine if pre-reg can attend CPD Day with supervisor	Complete
x.	Marketing push for CPD Day	Complete
xi.	Bio & Photo to Ian by end of August for website	Ongoing
xii.	Develop consensus response to WhatsApp issue	Complete
xiii.	Try to obtain Pre-reg contact details via CoO	Complete
xiv.	Obtain cataract waiting times monthly & distribute	Complete
xv.	Committee to create MOU for partnership with Avon	Ongoing

i. The original concept was an e-pack using a QR code that directed new staff and pre-registrants to the 'New to Gloucestershire' page on the website. IS noted a lack of clarity around whether the existing webpage is sufficiently up to date and comprehensive. AC suggested that the Clinical team review and critique the existing 'New to Gloucestershire' & 'Referral Guide' website pages and report back to Comms team on recommended amendments before finalising the e-packⁱ.

v. Ben Clarke has not replied. AP will send a final email with a clear deadline for sign-off copying in Emily Fletcher (Clinical Director) on the email thread to escalate the requestⁱⁱⁱ.

vi. The committee agreed that third member access is unnecessary at this time.

vii. SM confirmed that a formal, comprehensive expenses policy does not currently exist, only a 'rough framework' or guidelines for what can be claimed. LOCSU plans to release an expense policy template and it was agreed to wait for this to be released before creating a formal GlosLOC expenses policy.

xv. This has seen little progress due to difficulties in engagement. AT has emailed John Hopcroft, Avon LOC chair, to try to move things forward.

Chair's Update - AC

2nd September CPG - Short meeting -important parts covered in Clinical Report.

Weekly COL meetings - IT platform is now set up and ready to use for Phase 2. Extensive discussion on where the responsibility lies in the A&G process. Unlike a formal referral, A&G requires the referring optometrist to chase the response and retain responsibility until the response is received. AC stressed that a lack of timely hospital response would lead optometrists to abandon the A&G system and revert to traditional referrals. Response times will be stratified by condition (e.g., Cataract: 3–4 weeks; AMD: significantly shorter/urgent).

22nd September - An initial meeting to map the system for all conditions was quickly curtailed after 20 minutes, as AB and others had previously warned that combining all conditions at once was unworkable. The team is now proceeding sequentially, focusing first on: Medical Retina, Glaucoma Drops Changes (where a new drop hasn't worked or caused allergy), Swollen Discs.

Pilot Plan: These three conditions will be piloted with ten practices in a mix of large and small to ensure the system works across different settings. Once successful, the scope will be expanded gradually to other conditions and other practices, avoiding a sudden "floodgate" opening. AB noted a concern that feedback is currently 'view only', creating a risk for the optometrist's records. AC to ask the IT group if the A&G feedback can be made printable/saveable for the optometrist's clinical records.

AT raised the issue of funding for A&G. If payment is not agreed upon before the system goes live, it will be very difficult to secure payment later. It is noted that a precedent exists with GPs being paid £20 per A&G request regardless of imaging used. AC can use this in future discussions to advocate for optometrist funding.

15th September - Clinical Care Council specialist meeting on how primary care can help secondary care in the winter. Other than encouraging people to have 'flu jab optometry's help was limited.

9th September South West LOCs - Lots of discussion about waiting times for cataract surgery and central referral hubs.

Clinical Update - AB

Cataract clinical protocol – The ICB are wanting to clarify the guidelines around cataract referrals, specifically concerning entitlement to 2nd eye surgery as a result of anisometropia. We await a final decision as to whether this will remain at 2D or change to 2.5D.

Cataract surgery waiting times - We are now sharing waiting times that the providers give us. It appears 14 week wait has not been strictly implemented yet.

POD group meeting update - When this meeting took place there was no chair of ICB in place. So there was general discussion about what POD would want to tell the new chair once they were in post.

TIA Form and guidance -The form and guidance has now been released and, after a few questions, seems to be working well.

PES Update – AT

AP is going to become Co-Clinical Lead for PES in Gloucestershire with AT.

COL is keen to get bordering practices onboarded. To include several practices in Bristol Cribbs, Wales (Monmouthshire), Worcestershire (not an exhaustive list). BlueWorks has committed to 10x12-month practice licenses to allow for evidence-gathering to show it is valuable and scalable.

New Glaucoma Consultant - A new Ophthalmic Consultant, Gavin Reynolds (from Bristol) has been appointed at the Trust with the objective of overhauling Glaucoma services. AB confirmed he has had productive virtual conversations with Mr. Reynolds, who is keen to devolve more services to community optometrists. The goal is to expand the existing service that include monitoring Ocular Hypertension (OHT) and treated OHT/Glaucoma suspects (OHTS). It is noted that ensuring proper remuneration and streamlining the data process is key to preventing the small number of current providers from being overwhelmed. AB to coordinate a meeting between the LOC, PES and Mr Reynolds to discuss the expansion of the community Glaucoma service^{vi}.

Glaucoma Referral Pathway Non-compliance – There is concern about the number and quality of suspect glaucoma referrals that do not use the established pathway. The committee noted that Tom Dawson has a CPD-approved presentation ready to encourage Glaucoma pathway use but AT acknowledged that the challenge is engaging the practitioners who currently bypass the service^{vii}.

Will Dean is coming to the end of his time as Co-Speciality Director (SD). Emily Fletcher is to continue as sole SD.

Treasurer's report - NH

NH reported that the organization has a solid financial standing with over £59,000 in total accounts with most of the expensive events for this financial year having passed.

CC ably deputised during NH's absence and continues to take more responsibility as deputy treasurer.

It seems very likely that the CPD day will have covered its own costs.

The longstanding problem of incorrect levy payments from Essex has now been corrected.

It was agreed that AB & AT's accommodation and travel expenses will be covered for the HSJ Awards ceremony.

Events Update - PG

The recent CPD Day was a success with good turnout and break-even on costs. All the exhibitors were happy and both charities (Insight and Cotswold Listener) expressed their thanks.

The Pub Quiz on November 14th is almost fully booked. Newmedica are partially sponsoring the cost. After discussion it was decided that any additional cost could justifiably be met from Committee surplus funds.

RP to take over as events lead from January 2026 when PG steps down.

Communications Update - IS

The Autumn Newsletter was distributed successfully and there have been no queries concerning the TIA form and F&F protocol included therein.

Comms team to revise website/comms material to include 'HSJ Award Winners'^{viii}.

WhatsApp guidelines have been updated both on WA and the website.

AOB

Proposal to change meeting updates delivery (SM)

SM proposed changing the delivery of meeting updates to be more efficient and accessible, requesting that Leads can submit updates around 2 weeks before a meeting to SM. SM can then collate all updates for members to read before each meeting, freeing up meeting time, to solely focus on main topics and decision making. The committee agreed to test this

method over the next few months. SM will remind Officers and Leads to submit updates around mid-November, for the next meeting on 2nd December.

LOCSU request for LV & Glaucoma case study support (SM)

LOCSU have asked for case study support relating to Low Vision (LV) and Glaucoma to help inform national policy and funding discussions. AB, SM and AT are currently supporting the request.

Vote on Vice-Secretary (SM)

The committee held a vote for the appointment of a Vice-Secretary. KG was unanimously voted in as the new Vice-Secretary.

Confirm LOCSU Members day attendees (SM)

Confirmed attendees for the LOCSU Members Day are AP and KG with RP likely to attend but on waiting list to be confirmed.

Welsh GOS Claim (AB)

AB raised the issue of ongoing difficulties related to Welsh General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) claims for practitioners near the border. The problem arises because of non-compatibility between Welsh paper-based claims and English eGOS. AB & SM have raised this with LOCSU who will escalate to OFNC and sector bodies.

NHS Contracts (CC)

CC led a discussion regarding the challenges and complexities of i) getting an NHS contract and ii) PPV visits and suggested that, as an LOC, we should be in a position to offer support in a more formal way than has been the case in the past. DJ echoed this, sharing his difficult experiences with PPV visits. AB suggested that DJ attend the next meeting of NHSE South-West to air his views. AP expressed willingness to assist DJ on a Compliance sub-group.

Considered Responses as an LOC Member (AT)

AT raised a recent episode where an LOC member's WhatsApp response to an issue could have been misconstrued as encouraging circumvention of approved pathways. This is a reminder for committee members to be considered in their responses in view of their LOC role.

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 2nd December 2025 (inc. meal)

Actions:

i.	Liaise re preparation of 'New to Glos/ Locum' pack	Comms/Clinical
ii.	Request current GP surgery nhs.net email list from ICB	AT
iii.	Email to Ben Clarke (copied to Emily Fletcher) re F&F	AP
iv.	Bio & Photo to IS for website	CC, KG,RP (and bios for RC, DJ)
v.	Ask the COL IT group if the A&G feedback can be made printable/saveable for optom's records.	AC
vi.	Coordinate a meeting between the LOC, PES and glaucoma consultant Gavin Reynolds to discuss the expansion of the community Glaucoma service.	AB
vii.	Investigate possibility of setting up a CPD event focused on Glaucoma Pathway compliance (Zoom/Teams setup) with Tom Dawson.	Clinical/Events
viii.	Revise website/comms material to include 'HSJ Award Winners'.	Comms

Abbreviations

ICB	Integrated Care Board
TIA	Transient Ischaemic Attack
COL	Community Ophthalmic Link
F&F	Flashes & Floaters
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CoO	College of Optometrists
LOCSU	Local Optical Committee Support Unit
A&G	Advice & Guidance
POD	Pharmacy/Optometry/Dental

SD	Speciality Director
HSJ	Health Service Journal
VCHP	Vision Care for Homeless People
OFNC	Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee
PPV	Post Payment Verification