

## *Optical Leads take up posts*

LOCSU has appointed a team of Optical Leads to work with LOCs across England to ensure local eye health services are at the heart of the new commissioning agenda. The Optical Leads group, comprising of expert, experienced clinicians have been tasked with raising the profile of community optometry and eye health within their own local region. The role of Optical leads will be expected to represent LOCs in their region to senior officials including Strategic Health Authority transition directors, PCT cluster leads, GP commissioning leaders and local authorities. The Leads will also be supporting LOCs to build effective working relationships across the regional health system and to raise their profile amongst commissioning groups to get more enhanced services delivered across England. All will be in touch with LOCs in their area in the coming weeks.

Sali Davis, who is Chief Operating Officer for Optometry Wales and our LOCSU Associate in Wales will also be working as part of the Optical Leads group.

*Welcome to LOCSU news.*

*This newsletter will keep LOC and ROC members up to date with news from LOCSU. We will also be featuring examples of best practice from across England, Wales and beyond. If you have any ideas for future newsletters please contact Jenny Manchester, Communications Officer, on [jennymanchester@locsu.co.uk](mailto:jennymanchester@locsu.co.uk) or call 0207 202 8156.*



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West Midlands*



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*Bruce Gilson  
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*Vicki Macken  
South East Coast*



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Wales*

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## *LOCSU news round up*

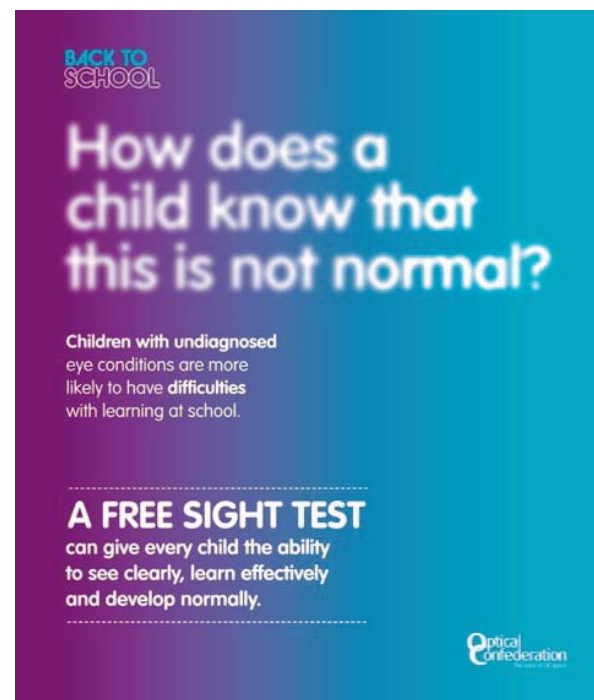
*Georgina Gordon*

Georgina Gordon, Head of LOC Support Unit, will leave LOCSU on 11 May 2011 to explore opportunities outside of the organisation. Georgina was the first Head of LOC Support Unit and brought to the role a wealth of expertise in clinical and general management gained from Board level positions in a number of major organisations. We would like to thank Georgina for her valued contribution to the work of LOC Support Unit and we wish her well in her future career.

In terms of the future, a further statement will be made in due course but in the meantime LOCSU is continuing to be led by Richard Carswell, Acting Head of Unit and Katrina Venerus, Director of Operations & Commissioning.

## *Children's eye health campaign*

The Optical Confederation is continuing its efforts to reach parents and school professionals by highlighting the importance of children's eye health. The campaign to date has tried to reach parents via schools and teachers. The 2011 campaign will build on this to ensure that the message is still getting across. You can help by communicating with your own patients. Why not talk about the importance of children's eye care in your patient newsletters and reminders? Giving a school talk is a great way to promote children's eye care and raise awareness of your practice locally. A resource pack will be sent out to all optometrists shortly, with a new campaign poster and tips for getting local media coverage. See the AOP's website for information about the campaign [www.aop.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.aop.org.uk/campaigns). If you can help with a school talk, please get in touch at [childrenseyecare@aop.org.uk](mailto:childrenseyecare@aop.org.uk)



BACK TO SCHOOL

# How does a child know that this is not normal?

Children with undiagnosed eye conditions are more likely to have difficulties with learning at school.

**A FREE SIGHT TEST**  
can give every child the ability to see clearly, learn effectively and develop normally.

Optical Confederation

## *Get set for the NOC!*



### **Date for your diary!**

This year's National Optometric Conference will be held on Thursday 3 November and Friday 4 November 2011 at Chesford Grange Hotel, Kenilworth, nr Warwick, Warwickshire CV8 2LD

# National Eye Health Week — What's Happening?



National Eye Health Week is taking place from 13th –19th June. The aim of the week is to raise awareness amongst the general public of the importance of eye health and the need for regular sight tests. A sight test is a vital health check and a key tool in reducing avoidable sight loss. For Local and Regional Optical Committees the advantage of getting involved in this national campaign is the opportunity to highlight the benefit of community optometry including enhanced services in your region.

The key messages that LOC/ROC members should be promoting include:

- Easily accessible community eye care services will allow early detection of eye conditions in a greater number of people, leading to a reduction in avoidable sight loss;
- Local and Regional Optical Committees represent optometrists and dispensing in your local community, working to improve your local eye care services.

As part of LOCSU's part sponsorship of NEHW, promotional material is available to any Local or Regional Optical Committee that wants to promote this event . Any LOC/ROC who would like a poster, leaflet or balloons or to access the electronic media pack, should email [giles@visionmatters.org.uk](mailto:giles@visionmatters.org.uk)

For any questions about how you can promote the event please email [jennymanchester@locsu.co.uk](mailto:jennymanchester@locsu.co.uk)

## LOCSU Roadshows—What changed for you?

75% of Local and Regional Optical Committees were represented at our series of roadshows, this year. We have previously reported the very positive feedback from delegates who attended, but we want to find out what optical committees have been up to and if anything has changed as a result.

If you came along, how have you changed the way you work with your local primary care trust or health board, as a result? Please send details through to LOCSU's Director of Education & Development, Gill Brabner, at [gillbrabner@locsu.co.uk](mailto:gillbrabner@locsu.co.uk). Gill is also able to attend LOC meetings and run personal development training sessions.



SUPPORT FOR PRIMARY  
EYE CARE DEVELOPMENT

### News round up

Kent House has been appointed after a tender process to develop a new website for LOCSU's advice and information. The new website which will include a secure access area for LOCs **will take shape over the next few month, watch this space!**

The LOC Central Fund has launched a new website ([www.centralfund.org.uk](http://www.centralfund.org.uk)). The site gives more details of how the voluntary levy from eye health professionals supports projects benefitting the whole profession.

A research grant of up to £20,000 is being offered to optometrists by the International Glaucoma Association (IGA) for research into glaucoma. The grant, which is the first to be offered to optometrists by the IGA, is jointly run with the College of Optometrists.

**For more details check out The IGA's website (under research tab) at <http://www.glaucoma-association.com/>**

# LOCSU—in depth

## National Adult Low Vision Pathway launched



LOCSU's new Community Optical Pathway for an Adult Low Vision Enhanced Service offers adults with sight loss quicker access to low vision assessment and support closer to home.

This article gives an introduction to the purpose of the pathway, the benefits of a low vision pathway and why commissioners need to consider the problem of low vision in their community.

### Why have a low vision pathway?

It is estimated that two million people live with sight loss which can range from difficulties from reading a newspaper to leaving the house without assistance. The main purpose of this community optical pathway is to allow people with sight loss, often elderly patients to access services easily and nearer to home and to release capacity within hospital eye clinics to manage other conditions such as wet AMD and glaucoma. The key points that Local and Regional Optical Committees need to recognise is that this pathway offers commissioners a cost effective service with patients managed closer to home.

### What about training for practitioners?

A new training and accreditation package for low vision has been developed by LOCSU in conjunction with WOPEC (Wales Optometry Postgraduate Education Centre). The theoretical part is available free of charge to LOCSU members. WOPEC can support local areas to provide the practical training and accreditation. LOCSU recommends that practitioners, who hold the Association of British Dispensing Opticians Honours Diploma in Low Vision or the College of Optometrists Low Vision Diploma and/or have significant experience in low vision practice, should not be required to undertake further training to become accredited.

**The pathway is shown on the next page, but to access a copy of LOCSU's low vision pathway, with explanations and more information, please contact Jacque Hudson, Office Manager, at LOCSU at [jacquehudson@locsu.co.uk](mailto:jacquehudson@locsu.co.uk) or call 020 7202 8156.**

### The view of the low vision experts

*Dr Michael Crossland, a low vision eye specialist based at Moorfields Eye Hospital, explained his support for LOCSU's pathway saying,*

*"In my work in low vision clinics I have seen first-hand the improvement which low vision rehabilitation can make on quality of life. Having more clinicians trained in providing these services is very important. The LOCSU enhanced service will ensure that more people with visual impairment can access high quality low vision rehabilitation at a time and place convenient to them."*

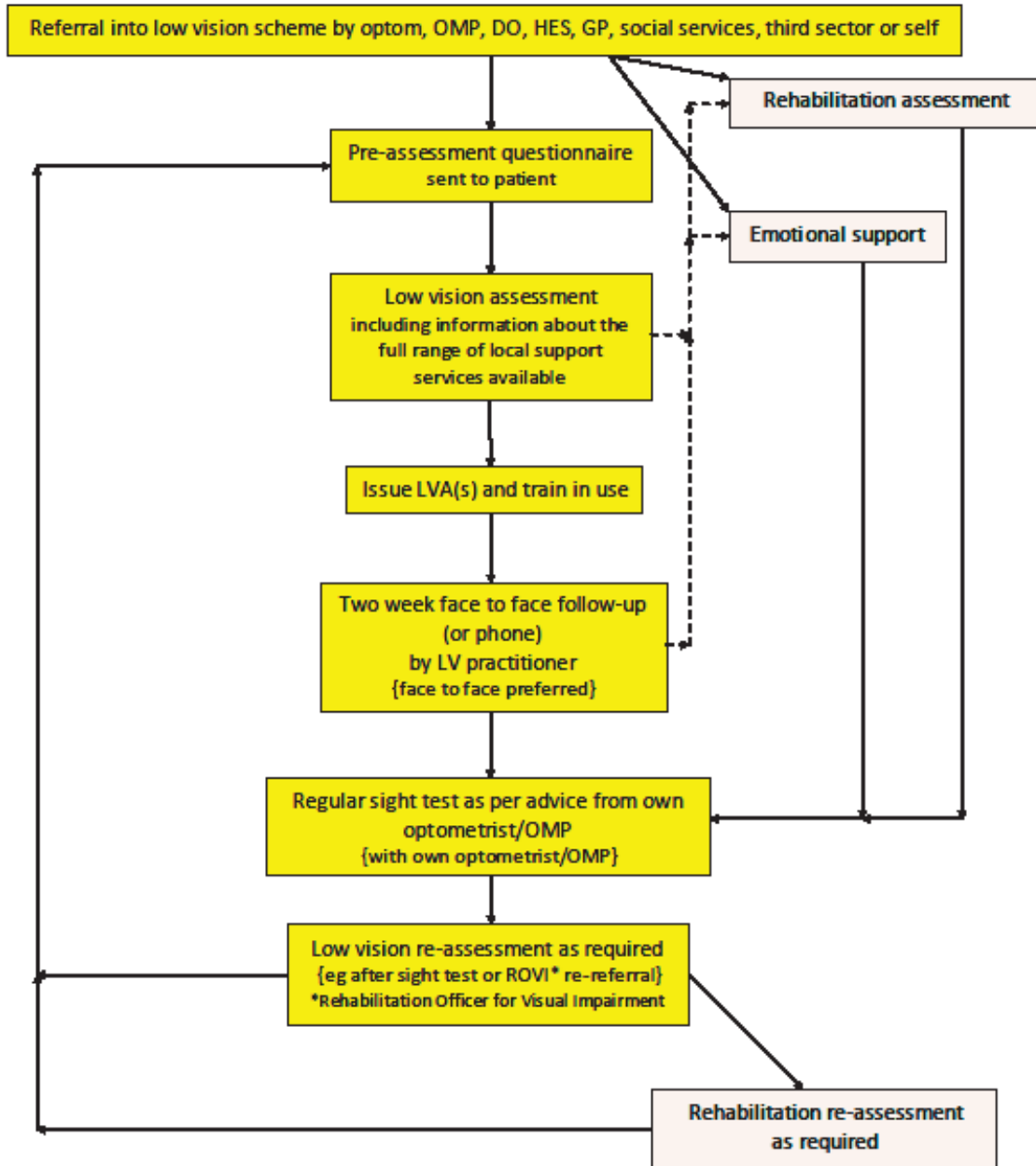
*Anita Lightstone, UK Vision Strategy Programme Director said:*

*"People with low vision often find it hard to get the support they need when their sight first affects their normal day-to-day routine. This new pathway supports the aims of the UK Vision Strategy to deliver excellent services for people with sight loss when they need it most. Developed by a large number of organisations who are experts in this field, the pathway offers a rounded-approach to tackle the issues faced by people with low vision in their local community."*

## Low Vision pathway

The model of the low vision pathway is below:

### Pathway



The dotted lines in the flowchart above indicate information provision and signposting

## *Nominate to celebrate—first awards competition for optical committees*

Nominate your LOC/ROC for an award! New for 2011, the AOP is launching a prestigious annual awards ceremony, with the winners nominated and voted for by the profession itself. We all know a group, organisation or individual that deserves to be recognised for their contribution to optics, so here's your chance to thank them for their efforts. All nominations must be received by **June 30**. The entries will be considered by an internal judging panel, and a shortlist of three finalists per category will be produced. One of the categories is LOC/ROC/AOC of the Year (Local Committee Award) and will go to the relevant committee which has done the most to promote and expand optometry within their area. The finalists will be published in Optometry Today and readers asked to vote for the winners. Everyone who is shortlisted will be invited to attend the National Optometric Conference on November 3 where the winners will be announced.

Nominating is easy and will take you just a few moments.



*Photo courtesy of Optometry Today*



*Photo courtesy of Optometry Today*

Visit [www.optometry.co.uk/awards](http://www.optometry.co.uk/awards) and enter your nomination. Alternatively, post your nomination to: AOP Awards, AOP, 61 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0HL. You will be required to provide contact details for yourself and the nominee/s, as well as between 200-500 words describing why you feel this person or group should be nominated for the award. There should be evidence of true effectiveness related to the award criteria.

## *LOCSU on tour....*

Members of the LOCSU team have been out and about over the past few weeks attending both the College of Optometrists Conference in Liverpool in March and the Optrafair trade exhibition in Birmingham in April. The LOCSU stand was a popular stopping point with delegates at both events and the LOCSU staff and Associates were delighted to get the opportunity to meet so many members of the optical professions and to hear their views and concerns. Many people stopped by for a general chat to let us know about what was going on in their area, whilst others brought along specific questions or a request for advice on current issues faced by their LOC/ROC. Development of enhanced services was without a doubt the most popular discussion point, with many visitors looking for advice on working with GP commissioners. It was very encouraging that a great number of optometrists and dispensing opticians who are not currently active in their LOC/ROC came to talk to us about getting involved, and we have put several people in touch with the committee in their area. Thanks to everyone that visited the stand at both events.



**OPTRAFAIR  
2011**

April 9-11 2011  
The NEC Birmingham

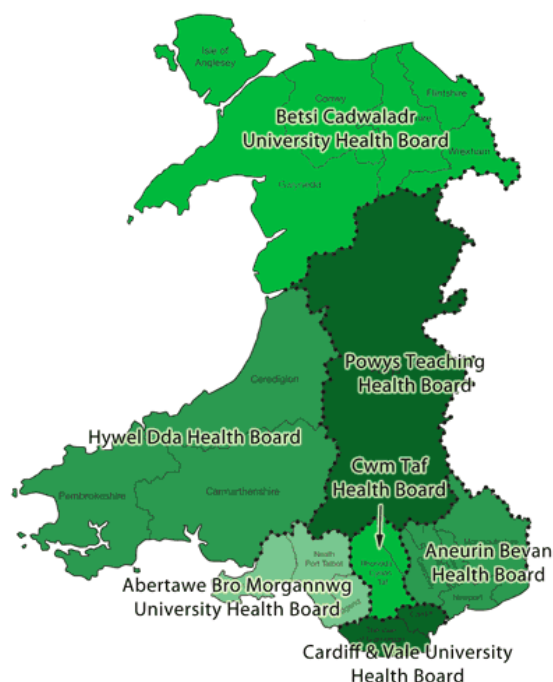
**Watch out for the LOCSU stand and people at the following events!**

- **15-16th June—NAPC Commissioning 2011, London Olympia**
- **16th June—Vision UK 2011 Conference, Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London**
- **21st June – How to meet Ophthalmology Service Demands, Maple House Birmingham (Katrina Venerus speaking)**

## *It worked for us! Lessons from Wales Cwm Taff Glaucoma Pathway*

South East Wales Regional Optical Committee (SEWROC) have recently audited their IOP and Visual Field Refinement Pathway and have reported some significant savings for the Cwm Taff Health Board in which the service is running.

Cwm Taff is one of the largest health boards in Wales and is responsible for the provision of health care to over 325,000 patients in some of the most economically and socially deprived areas of Wales. The health board had initially approached SEWROC Chair Shiraz Megi to ask if the ROC could help them to cope with the impact of the NICE guidelines on hospital ophthalmology clinics. Shiraz and colleagues worked with Health Board colleagues to implement IOP and Visual Field referral refinement across the area.



As a practice owner and ROC Chair Shiraz has been pleased with the results of the audit and hopes that these kind of positive outcomes will encourage further collaboration and understanding about the benefits community optometry based eye care pathways can present to both the patient and the health board. The first quarter’s audit is reported below and shows significant financial savings for the health board, helping manage waiting times and consultant costs.



### **Cwm Taff IOP and Visual Fields Audit**

	<b>Patients Seen</b>	<b>Patients Referred</b>
<b>IOP Refinement</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>71 (24%)</b>
<b>Visual Field Refinement</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>92 (49%)</b>
<b>IOP &amp; Visual Fields</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>41 (73%)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>213 (39%)*</b>

\*includes 9 others referred

**Cost Savings in 6 months = £28,418 (population 325,000).**

Old pathway costs =£64,440 (secondary care only)

New pathway costs =£36,022 (which is made up of £10,462 (Primary Care) + £25,560 (Secondary Care))

Sali Davis, Chief Operating Officer Optometry Wales and LOCSU Associate said “Since the re-structure of the health boards in 2009 it has proved a challenging time for the profession in Wales in terms of dealing with legacy issues from the previous structure and the fragmentation of service delivery across recently amalgamated management teams. ROCs in Wales are now starting to see how best practice in one area and sharing that information can lead to a more cohesive service for the patient.”

## *Hold the back page!*

*Message from Katrina Venerus, Director of Operations and Commissioning at LOCSU*



By now you will have read about the appointment by LOCSU of Optical Leads across England, which I hope demonstrates how committed we are to ensuring the optical professions are adequately and professionally supported and represented at a regional level. A key priority for LOCSU and the Optical Confederation over the next year is to make eye health part of the narrative around commissioning of health services, and we need more than ever to be speaking with one voice. Despite the pause on the Health and Social Care Bill, commissioning arrangements are changing, and we must ensure that our professions are engaged at the heart of the changes.

### **NHS Networking**

The team of Optical Leads will work with LOCs across their regions and represent our professions to Strategic Health Authority transition directors, PCT cluster leads, GP commissioning leaders and local authorities, as necessary. Developing relationships with those responsible for leading transitional commissioning arrangements, and those driving the health and well being boards will be a key focus of the team in the coming year, and I am confident that having a strong voice promoting the optical professions at a regional level will ultimately lead to more widespread commissioning of community eye care services.

### **Development Programme**

All of the Optical Leads we have appointed will all be participating in a leadership development programme, led by Gill Brabner, LOCSU's Director of Education and Development. Gill has engineered a structured programme to target specific competencies that are vital to these roles, and the work of the team will be evaluated on an regular basis.

### **Regional LOC Networks**

Very importantly the Optical Leads will be developing networks within their region for LOC Chairs and Secretaries (and other key officers if required), which is something that many LOC Chairs have wanted to implement for some time, and in one or two areas a network has already been established. Sharing of experience and lessons learnt with colleagues across a region will reap many benefits, I'm sure.

### **LOCSU Associates**

I should mention that our LOCSU Associates will continue to provide specific expertise and support for LOCs and ROCs including the development of clinical pathways, business cases for enhanced services and IT tools, and we are also fortunate to have Sali Davis working for LOCSU in Wales providing bespoke support for the ROCs.

***LOCSU Contacts* - you can contact the LOCSU team by phone via **Jacque Hudson, Office Manager**, on 0207 202 8156, or by direct email:**

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- **Katrina Venerus** - Director of Operations and Commissioning - [katrinavenerus@locsu.co.uk](mailto:katrinavenerus@locsu.co.uk)
- **Gill Brabner** - Director of Education and Development - [gillbrabner@locsu.co.uk](mailto:gillbrabner@locsu.co.uk)
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