

LOC Induction Conference Call 14th March 2018

Participants

Candidates: Sonia Tyrell (Dudley), Anne Freeman (Oxfordshire), Mark Humphrey-Ali (Avon), Deepal Burgess (Cambridge), Ambia Begum (Barnet), Nicole Bucys, Rumit Patel, David Gleave (all Ashton, Leigh & Wigan) Andy McGregor (Northumberland, Tyne & Wear) and Parminder Chohan (Solihull).

LOCSU: Simone Mason (DLSO), Richard Whittington(COO), Richard Knight (Head of Policy), Chris McGachy (Communications Manager) and Martin Russ (Commissioning Lead).

Apologies Katrina Venerus, Richard Rawlinson, Rupesh Bagdai, Zoe Richmond, Nizz Sabir, Meerat Gohlar.

Conflict of Interest

Q) Is being an LOC member and a practice owner a conflict of Interest to be declared?

A) In short, the answer is no, and there is no real need to declare it. You can be a member of an LOC as a contractor (a practice owner) or as a performer (an Optometrist). As a member of an LOC, the views of the committee are to reflect the views of the local constituents. The LOC is acting as a mouthpiece for all local practices. It is not a conflict of interest if you are a practice owner, DO, OO, work for a multiple or an independent, the main thing is you are making decisions on behalf of the LOC and not your individual practice.

Q) Isn't there a conflict of interest between a LOC which represents optical practices in its region and the Primary Eyecare Company which is a provider of services to the local commissioner?

The *Primary Eyecare Company* is established by the LOC as a contracting vehicle for the network of local optical practices to be able to bid for and deliver services as a single provider. LOCSU recommends that the Directors of the *Primary Eyecare Company* should not be officers of the LOC and that the Company should report regularly to the LOC.

Links: [Article in Optometry Today about Conflict of Interest.](#)

Dispensing Optician Membership of an LOC

Q) Does a DO have to be a contractor to be on an LOC?

A) As LOCs will know, dispensing opticians (DOs) play a significant role in the delivery of high quality eye health services to the public.

Under current legislation, Dispensing Opticians (DOs) – as contractors – are legally entitled to be members of LOCs (as are lay contractors). This is reflected in the model constitution. LOCSU and the national representative bodies also take the view that DOs who are not contractors should nevertheless participate in the work of an LOC. They are an integral part of the eye health professions. The national representative bodies believe it important that the professions speak with one united voice at both national and local level.

We are ensuring that all LOCs have at least one local DO who is not a contractor and is properly included in their memberships by means of co-option.

Attracting New Members

Q) Can you outline some of the approaches to attracting new LOC members

A) LOCSU Leadership course is available to all active LOC members and the aim is to specifically create a direct feed into the LOC from the leadership course or vice versa. The aim of the course is to create people who are ready and able to drive things forward and to bring new thinking into the LOC.

The LOC's aim is to engage with all local practices – regardless of whether it is a multiple or an independent, we are all primary care practitioners and should encourage all to attend meetings, not necessarily as an officer. CET is a good way of encouraging this.

Student Pre-Reg champion. Through this person, Chris McGachy (Communications Manager) from LOCSU is starting a project in Optometry Pre-Reg departments, the idea being for a local LOC to go into the department and present “What is an LOC and what it does” to the final year students or to have a presentation added as part of the career development: in this way we can catch them and create a new wave of practitioners coming into the LOCs.

Succession Planning – some LOCs are very active at recruiting and making way for new blood into the committee, some LOCs keep rolling their roles year on year. A good way to encourage succession planning is to elect a third of the committee every year rather than keep your role for a three-year term. So, a third of the members have a reduced term of one year, a third have a reduced term of two years and the final third complete the full three years. This will encourage new and dynamic people through.

Taking the opportunity to talk to people in practices and engaging widely.

ABDO are also very active in getting DOs onto LOCs using their team of regional and sub-regional leads, as well as their monthly magazine ‘Dispensing Optics.’

National Optical Conference (NOC) is organised by the AOP for the Local Optical Committee Support Unit (LOCSU) and the Optical Confederation (OC). This year it will be at the Chesford Grange hotel in Kenilworth on 15th November 2018. On the 14th, there is usually a Chairs /CGPL forum followed by a meal/entertainment for networking in the evening. The conference presents the latest in community eye services as well as opportunities to share experiences and knowledge with fellow practitioners. Delegates will also receive latest updates on NHS priorities and strategic outlook from primary care, updates from leaders across eye health and an overview of the commissioning landscape and extended primary care services. Optometrists, dispensing opticians, optometric advisers and Local/Regional Optical Committee are always encouraged to attend the conference. A typical NOC delegate is keen to keep abreast of the latest political and policy developments, flagged up at the conference, which will affect local community optometry and their own ability to negotiate and implement enhanced services with local eye health commissioners. The conference acts as a resource for LOCs to share knowledge and learn how to influence change in their regions. Delegates will experience

- An overview of new and emerging NHS strategies
- An understanding of national and regional delivery plans

- An excellent networking opportunity for LOC members
- A lively exhibition with the latest market developments.

Ideas that will be highlighted in November will be the latest in Primary Eyecare Company (PEC) mergers, GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), the latest from OptoManager and looking at competition and the future for extended primary care services.

Action point: Each LOC gets a free place at the NOC, so make sure you get it added onto your LOC agenda in the summer, and ask who is going. Is it the right person going? Will the LOC pay for more than one person to attend?

The delegate will be expected to report back from the event to the LOC on the outcomes. Presentations are all available on the [website](#) to provide a link when reporting the outcomes.

LOC Committee Makeup

Q) Is there a recommended number of Contractors (own practice) and Performers (Optometrists) that are required on an LOC committee?

A) It is recommended there should be around half of each. Some people are a contractor and a performer, but for the purposes of voting, they generally select which one they represent.

The way elections happen in LOCs up and down the country is varied and wide, some with quite formal elections taking place and others with a bit of arm-twisting, some officers who have been in the same role for decades and that's because no-one is there to come forward. That is why LOCSU work hard to engage with new blood.

LOC Progression

Q) Is it normally a more experienced LOC Officer that becomes Chair, Secretary or Treasurer?

A) The short answer is yes. Some LOCs employ secretaries, treasurers usually have a skillset in figures or book-keeping and Chairs may have been a Vice-Chair for a number of years before becoming the Chair. As a Vice-Chair you can then 'shadow' the Chair, for a period before taking over to development confidence.

Advice for treasurers would be to have a working knowledge of excel and book-keeping.

Challenges for LOC Chairs was mentioned as some people are very keen but lack time, and many just do not have the time. LOCs however, are becoming more professional and the superb advice available from LOCSU and the commissioning leads is bringing through more professionals who perhaps like the variety in their career and LOCs are now paying adequately for their time.

Clinical Governance & Performance Leads

Q) The role of a CGPL is perhaps a big role for one person. Could this role be shared?

A) The simple answer was it came down to budget. The LOC couldn't really justify two CGPLs attending the meeting at the same time. That is doubling up as against a job share, where one person could do the role and delegate out but only one can attend the meetings.

Pros

- Working together
- Fresh ideas
- Sharing the role
- Bounce ideas

Cons

- Cost of two people at a meeting – no point in doing that

It's about how you manage your time and workload in a job share.

Handling disagreements during committee meeting

Q) How do people feel about differing viewpoints within an LOC meeting?

On the LOCSU leadership course 2017, we learnt a great concept which you can view about allowing committee members to have their own viewpoint. Consider all differing opinions and use all the information to make an informed decision.

Resources to this topic:

- You Tube video explaining [De Bono's Six Thinking Hat concept](#)
- Leadership Blog: [Using De Bonos six hat theory for LOC decision making](#)
- Leadership Blog: [Extract from LOCSU Leadership course 2017: Habiba Bham's 'Leading Teams' blog](#)

Facilitated Induction on the Noddlepod platform

Q Inductees were asked how they found the Induction Course on Noddlepod

- Very easy to navigate and use
- They enjoy seeing other people's comments and feeling that 'you're not on your own'
- A survey of participants would be shared following the end of the course

Primary Eyecare Companies (PECs)

Q) What is the future direction for LOCs and PEC

A) There is an overlap between LOCs and PECs, because the LOC cannot work in isolation, the development of the LOC has to be alongside the PEC. The LOC negotiates the contract for extended primary care services along with the CGPL and the PEC delivers it on an operational basis and reports back to the LOC. We do talk about working together, but one of the issues is that we don't have enough people on some LOCs so that there isn't the ability to have that. In a perfect scenario you would have a separation of duties, but it sometimes all merges into one.

This relates back to the discussion we had at the beginning on conflict of interest. If, for example, the Treasurer of the LOC is also a PEC director – there could possibly be a conflict of interest.

Generally to establish a PEC – the LOC has to loan it some money. So they support one another but they are separate entities. How they co-exist will be one of the main topics at this year's NOC.

PEC = LOC Company (limited company) is a contracting vehicle set-up by the LOC in order to take part in contractual work with the CCG. LOCs can't enter into a contract because, on a practical level, LOC members would then be personally liable.

The LOC sets up a company, has its own directors and a CGPL and a team of expertise. The LOC still is involved in the negotiation part, for example, the initial service specification, but once the contract has been agreed, the PEC will continue to run it on behalf of the sub-contractors who are the optical practices.

The Directors are local people, generally appointed by members of the LOC. Sometimes, they are the same people but it is preferable to have different individuals so as to share the workload out. This is sometimes not possible in smaller LOCs.

It is important to remember that all practices in the area are by default a member of the PEC. Advantage of PEC is it brings together multiples and independents and treats all the same.

PECS are also merging/consolidating – because each LOC having its own PEC is now no longer viable. The cost is too great and this will allow us to become more credible in order to procure against national competition or even international competition that we now have to face.

Take Away Message for New LOC Members

Simone Mason, ended the call with a quote from Professor Brian Cox following the recent death of the greatest scientist of our day – Professor Stephen Hawking. “Knowledge is a thirst that we should all strive for”. A reminder to all of you taking part on this course – that you are on that journey where there is a huge amount of knowledge out there and you will always learn something new.

We hope you got a lot out of the course and enjoy the rest of it, and we look forward to meeting you at the NOC 2018. Thank you.