



DEVON LOCAL OPTICAL COMMITTEE

GATEKEEPERS OF EYE CARE



Chairman's Introduction

At the recent Regional events in February 2016, NHS England spoke about the appropriate use of GOS and there was a Q&A session around claims for Minor Eye Condition type patients.

In light of their comments, Devon LOC advises that you recall your patients at intervals you can justify as clinically necessary. You must state on your record card the reason for any "early" recall. Further guidance is included with this letter.

Minor eye conditions cannot be seen under the GOS contract. Please see our website ([here](#)) for a simple flowchart produced by Devon LOC to help clarify the issue. If the problem is refractive you can do an eye examination under GOS, otherwise you have the option to send the patient to NHS 111 or see the patient under your own practice policy.

We have sent letters to all GPs across Devon reminding them that minor eye conditions cannot be seen under GOS provision and that although optometrists are ideally placed, clinically capable and have the specialist equipment required to see these patients, the CCG is unwilling to fund a Minor Eye Conditions Service at the present time.

We hope this will highlight that as opticians we are very happy to see these patients but the patient will need to be charged until the CCG put in place a proper and sensible pathway.

Charles Bill, Chairman

MEL STRIDE MP VISITS SPECSAVERS OPTICIANS IN OKEHAMPTON

On Friday 18th March 2016 the MP for Central Devon, Mel Stride, visited Okehampton Specsavers to find out more about community opticians and what we can do to help the health service with local eye health services



Kath Dandy, Director of Okehampton Specsavers said: "I was very pleased to meet Mel who took a great deal of interest in our drive to bring a wider set of ophthalmic primary care services to the high street. This would not only bring these closer to the community, reduce waiting times but save the NHS money."

MORE HIGH-STREET EYE SERVICES NEEDED TO REDUCE HOSPITAL PRESSURES

CCGs are being urged to introduce more high-street eye services following revelations that hospital ophthalmology services are at bursting point.

The call follows the announcement by the UK's leading ophthalmologist that patients are at risk of irreversible sight loss because NHS eye clinics can't cope. Professor Carrie MacEwan, President of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, said follow-up appointments can be "delayed by years", meaning patients don't get treated on time.

Now, LOCSU and the Optical Confederation are calling on the 200-plus CCGs to end the eye care "postcode lottery" by commissioning community services.



The president of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists, Prof Carrie MacEwan, writing for the BBC's Scrubbing Up, warns the NHS is struggling to keep up because of a "perfect storm" of increased demand, caused by more eye disease in an ageing population which requires requiring long term care.

See the BBC news article from 16th March [here](#) for more details



We had a good CET event in Barnstaple on Monday 14th March 2016.

The event was hosted by Heidelberg on the subject of OCT

Details of further events will be issued shortly.

GOVERNMENT FREEZES SIGHT TEST FEES

The Government has today announced its intention to freeze NHS sight test fees in England at 2015-16 levels for 2016-17.

The government has also announced an increase in patient voucher values for 2016-17 of 1%.

Mike George, Chair of the Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee said:

“This is a heavy and extremely disappointing blow to a profession that has always supported and embraced reform and modernisation. It will be a bitter blow to many and we may see essential local services disappearing as a result.

As a sector we are playing – and continue to play – key roles in the NHS England Five Year Forward View plans to transfer care to the community to take pressure off GPs, A&E and hospitals, as well as in the Government’s devolution plans. And yet once again it seems that those who deliver fully against contracts are penalised whilst those who do not are rewarded.

Ann Blackmore, OFNC Secretary said: “It is frustrating that, despite our repeated explanations over several years that the fee covers the cost of the sight test and is not simply pay related, the Government persists in erroneously connecting the fee to increasing optometrist recruitment.

There is no way we can advise the profession to accept such an offer which is clearly not in the best interests of patients. But past experience suggests the government will impose it on us in any case.”

Papers relating to the 2015-16 fees negotiations round are available at <http://www.opticalconfederation.org.uk/resources/ofnc>

LOCAL CET EVENTS 2016/17

- Plymouth—Friday 15th April 2016 (more details on our website [here](#))
- Exeter—June 2016 (TBC)
- ABDO Devon CET Event—June 2016
- North Devon—July 2016 (TBC)
- Devon LOC Study Day – November 2016

The 2016 Devon LOC Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 11th May starting at 7pm at the Exeter Court Hotel, Kennford, Exeter

Further details issued in April 2016

Devon Local Optical Committee: Representing, supporting and communicating with local contractors and performers to ensure, as gatekeepers of eyecare, effective delivery of Ophthalmic Services across the whole of Devon.

Devon Local Optical Committee

Deer Park Business Centre, Haldon Hill, Kennford, Exeter, EX6 7XX

T: 01392 834026 @: www.devonloc.co.uk



Scan to view
Website (QR)



BUDGET BREAKDOWN—OPTICAL CONFEDERATION

The Optical Confederation has released a breakdown of key budget announcements optical practices and practitioners should be aware of.

Commenting on the budget, Optical Confederation Chair Chris Hunt said:

“After the recent bad news on optical fees this business-friendly budget will bring some welcome good news for the sector, particularly smaller businesses. All infrastructure investment is also to be welcomed, particularly for better transport links for the South and the Northern Powerhouse. We will need to continue to monitor the newly announced devolution deals to protect eye health in those regions, but in general this is a positive budget for optics.”

You can [download the full OC Budget Breakdown by clicking here](#).

DISCUSS STUDY : TEST YOUR SKILLS AT OPTIC DISC ASSESSMENT

Hollie McIntyre (final year student in Optometry @ Plymouth University) and Prof Paul Artes are conducting a study on how clinicians classify optic nerve head photographs from patients with glaucoma and ocular hypertension.

The experiment is online at:

<http://discusproject.blogspot.co.uk/> (and takes 10-20 mins to complete).

The website provides you with instant and anonymous feedback on your results, and you can repeat the experiment as often as you like.

Please write to Hollie (hollie.mcIntyre@students.plymouth.ac.uk) if you can help her with her Final Year project by participating in this study.

Your results will remain completely anonymous, and the participant with the best performance (as of 15 April) will get a signed certificate and a £20 book voucher.

FREE ONLINE CET WITH WOPEC

WOPEC provide a wide range of post-graduate taught courses as well as short courses for optometrists and eye care professionals in the UK and Internationally.



Devon LOC have **FREE** activation codes for online courses with WOPEC. These include Cataract, Glaucoma, Low vision, PEARS and Learning Disabilities.

If you would like to undertake any of these short online courses and would like more information please contact Jonathan Drew.

Chair: Charles Bill (chair@devonloc.co.uk)

Vice Chair: Max Halford (max@devonloc.co.uk)

Secretary: Fiona Hiscox (secretary@devonloc.co.uk)

Treasurer: Daniel Tabb (treasurer@devonloc.co.uk)

Committee Members:

Nicola Burke, Mark Bushby, Josie Forte, Eiohn Hayes, Ian Holten, Greg Mann, Peter Noakes and Nicki Pullen

Business Manager: Jonathan Drew (jdrew@devonloc.co.uk)