



DEVON LOCAL OPTICAL COMMITTEE

GATEKEEPERS OF EYE CARE



Chairman's Introduction

As I write this report it has just been announced that the NHS is accepting that Referral to Treatment times (RTT) cannot be met for certain procedures and I thought this would be an opportunity to reflect on where the LOC, and therefore community Opticians can make a difference.

In the numerous meeting we attend with the CCG's and the NHS; money is without doubt the huge elephant in the room. But quite often this is allowed to overshadow the more pressing problem of capacity- the LOC is there to argue the case that often patients are seen (or not!) in the "wrong" place, where they don't want to be, by people who don't have the time to see them, at a cost greater than that which could be achieved in the community.

Devon LOC and its contracting company, Primary Eyecare Devon, are about to embark on England's biggest Community Enhanced Service as we take over the Diabetic Retinal Screening Service from the beginning of April.

This scheme will look after 19,000 patients in Community Opticians practices across Plymouth and the surrounding area's- place where over 98% of patients said they would prefer to be seen. We use our trained and qualified staff instead of overburdened NHS personnel, and have at the majority of times, appointments available "the same week". Cost wise a saving of over 35% compared to a similar NHS appointment is achieved. From an LOC point of view this has kept all of these patients visiting their local Opticians where we know the service is exemplary .

My role leading the LOC, is to ensure that this message is duplicated for every service we can offer- Minor Eye Conditions, Post Cataract, Glaucoma monitoring and triage, low vision and children's eye services. We also have the opportunity to play a huge role in delivering public health messages around eye and general health and I would urge you to look at the amazing work "Healthy Living Opticians" did in Dudley.

The message is being delivered by Devon LOC time and time again, and in certain area's the results are being seen. However this is not consistent across the county- yet, and our work will continue.

Recently we have seen an increase in consultant discharge letters referring to "follow-up by their own Optician". Examples include post YAG and naevi monitoring. It is important to reiterate again that this is NOT covered by the GOS contract and although individuals may choose to see these patients free of charge or under a private fee arrangement, it would be much more preferable that an enhanced service pathway was in place to manage their follow-up's. I have written to the consultants concerned explaining the situation and asking for their support in taking this forward to the CCG. If you do receive a request to supply a service which you feel is outside of your GOS contract please do get in touch.

To finish on a high I can confirm that after the fantastic success of the first Devon LOC MECS accreditation event we are planning more events- please keep looking at the Devon LOC website for details.

Max Halford, Chairman

FORMULARY AND SELF CARE INFORMATION

NEW Devon and South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) would like to let optometrists know about their self-care policy, through which patients are being urged to buy low-cost medicines and supplies from high street outlets rather than get them on prescription.

For more information from the 2 CCGs across Devon see the Devon LOC website [here](#)



OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF VISION CARE FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE IN EXETER

Vision Care for Homeless People is pleased to announce the opening of our seventh clinic in Exeter on

Tuesday 9th May 2017 2pm - 3:30pm.

The event will take place at the Clock Tower Surgery located at Wat Tyler House in Exeter and will include a clinic tour, refreshments and volunteer registration. Feel free to bring any friends or colleagues who might be interested - all are welcome.

If you would like to attend, please send RSVPs by 15th April 2017 to exeter@vchp.org.uk

