

LOC Chairs Report 2020-2021

I do not think anyone, save for Bill Gates, could have predicted the year we have just had. To say it has been a rollercoaster would be an understatement.

Avon LOC has pulled together in a different way this past year and I'm really proud of the work we have done, I know at times it has been challenging and frustrating on the ground but, as everyone has, we have had to adapt to an ever changing situation often with limited guidance or direction.

From sourcing PPE, to infection prevention control guidance, to NHS funding support, to commissioning CUES in Bath, to vaccinations, to general sector advice – we have been out of our usual working comfort zone for the majority of the year – and the workload at times has been immense. Thank you to each and every one of our committee, it's been a tough and fast paced year and there have been times where many have come to meetings/pulled together at last minute requests, to really help community.

As we bring the year post our last AGM to a close, I am pleased to say that dialogue with Bristol Eye Hospital and BNSSG CCG has re-commenced, with regards to their eye health strategy and discussions around an early 2022 post cataract and glaucoma scheme have begun. We are in the midst of on-going discussions for our Bath colleagues as to the future of CUES and what other services may come on board in the new financial year.

I've said this before, but the recent white paper from Matt Hancock has further cemented this, change is afoot within the NHS and the new format of working with integrated care at the heart of what the NHS do, will be an interesting roadmap for us to follow.

I have to apologise for not running more Q&A sessions as promised, but this is not a full time job and at times this year it has felt like more than a full time position.

I'm just glad we've managed to get a vaccination route for our sector across Avon LOC's footprint and the support of the Local Pharmacy Committee and the links we'd forged with them have been invaluable to that. We have strengthened our relationship with our regional NHS England/Improvement colleagues and conversations with the two CCGs in our patch are on going.

Primary Eyecare Services have had a busy year across the patch and I will ask our local Clinical Governance Performance Lead, Amy, to write to you all with an update and how you can get involved in their roll out of post cataract schemes in the area/CUES if your practice is in the Bath vicinity.

I don't know what the next year is going to bring for us, needless to say I don't think PPE is going away soon and I think for our sector some restrictions will still apply with regards to social distancing and IPC guidance. I encourage you to sign up to our mailing list if you have not already done so and suggest that any clinical colleagues that work for/with you to do the same. We really have done everything we can this past year to support colleagues in the community and I hope we can continue to pull together to get through the next phase of this chaos.

Finally, our annual plug for new members of the committee: you can only make a difference by being involved and part of the conversation, so I encourage anyone who has an interest or time to reach out to Mark (Vice Chair), Amy (Secretary) or myself to have an informal chat about joining the LOC.

Stay safe and stay in touch..... Amar