

Avon Local Optical Committee

Chairs Report 2019/2020

Another year has passed and this one certainly ends in a very different way to the way it began! COVID-19 is going to change the fundamental way we live and work for the foreseeable future and a lot of what we have done to try and help local eye care will probably alter as a result of it. However, I think it's important to update you all on what we have achieved and what has been done over the past 12 months but I emphasise that a lot of the strategic work will yield different results as our national bodies help negotiate with NHS England for a plan for tomorrow.

So for BNSSG (Bristol, North Somerset and South Glos) we have worked closely with the CCG team on their eye health strategy and have been included along the journey in planning the next phase of eye health commissioning for the region. This led to an event co-run by Bristol Eye Hospital in a referral guidance update across all eye health specialities. It was really well attended and we hope will be the start of something different in community and BEH's working relationship.

For BaNES we continued to help community practices struggling with the commissioned scheme and its restrictions in fees and coverage; working closely with the hospital team in Bath to help the commissioners understand the challenges posed and faced. The commissioning team in Bath changed due to a new CCG merger towards the end of the financial year – and the newly formed BSW (Bath, Swindon and Wiltshire) CCG commissioning lead has had some very productive and helpful meetings with the LOC. They have confirmed that the incumbent provider in Wiltshire will not have their contract renewed. We have just received news that the Evolutio service in BaNES will end by October 2020.

On a wider scale we have engaged with the LPC and LMC (Local Pharmacy and Medical Committees) to work in partnership under the banner of primary care, to further discussions in terms of a whole integrated health partnership. These are in their infancy but it has meant that at the locality boards (6 in BNSSG) eyes are being discussed.

All of the above is in an element of turmoil with the pandemic that has hit our country and I cannot urge you enough to stay up to date with NHS England guidance and official guidance only. LOCSU will be publishing a weekly note with any updates and this will be on their website as well.

For any performer or contractor in difficulty in any shape or size, please do not hesitate to contact us in the usual way.

Stay safe and stay well.