



news

December 2011

Notes from the Chair

Those of you practising in the MK area will by now have received, from the PCT, details of the new Community Ophthalmology Service. For now, this will mean no change to the way that you refer, with all, except urgent referrals, wet AMD and direct cataract, going from you to the GP as before. If you haven't received this information from the PCT, please contact the LOC. Sadly, this move seems to spell the end of our hopes for a community optometrist glaucoma referral refinement service in MK, despite two and a half years of putting our case forcefully. The good news is that currently we are a little closer to achieving that goal in the Bucks PCT area. We are also hopeful that regular meetings of hospital consultants, PCTs and the LOC will be re-established in both areas in the new year, enabling better lines of communication.

Season's greetings to all.

Bruce Gilson – Chair Bucks Local Optical Committee

News in Brief

- * If you have completed training for the Bucks (not MK) **direct cataract referral scheme**, please contact Jill Ellis to advise her, so that you may be entered on the list of accredited optometrists.
- * Following the recent clustering of NHS MK and NHS Northants, we have a **new PCT contact** for MK: Diane Fenton, Head of Dentistry & Optometry Contracting 01604 651227 Diane.Fenton@northants.nhs.uk
- * **New to the Area?** Have a look at our website www.loc-net.org.uk/bucksloc to learn more about LOC activities, local referral schemes and eyecare pathways.

Education

- The **Chiltern Peer Review Group** will next meet at Amersham Hospital at 7.00pm on 14th March. Contact Anne Frier for details.
- The **Milton Keynes Peer Review Group** will next meet at Milton Keynes Village Hall at 7.00pm on 26th March. Contact Claire Ranger for details.
- On 31st January at MK Hospital, Ms Bina Parmar will be talking to us about **Paediatric Ophthalmology**. Other talks are planned for both MK and SMH, dates to be confirmed. Invitations for the lectures will be sent nearer the time. To be sure of receiving yours personally, please send your email address to Angela McNamee: bucksloc@hotmail.com.

Advice from our Hospital Representative

When we see a new referral, the hospital does its best to copy the referring optometrist into the GP letter. This is not always as simple as you might think! Most of the letters now are scanned copies, and if the practice stamp is not clear, or the handwriting is unreadable, you won't receive a copy. Try putting one of your referrals through the fax machine at reduced size and see if you can still identify who it is from. Bear in mind also that some patients choose not to have copies sent, even though they may have told you differently! Sadly there isn't enough money in the system to send you a letter after every visit.

When you get that copy letter, what do you do with it? Do you go back to the patient file to see if you got it right? A case came to light recently where a patient presented with moderate glaucoma, and the optometrist found it helpful to go back to the record to see, with the benefit of hindsight, whether any early signs were missed. Hindsight is always 6/5, but happily in this case, there really wasn't anything that might have been picked up earlier.

While on the subject of glaucoma, do you include information about fields and discs on every referral? It is used by the consultant when prioritising the appointment. The joint guidelines issued recently state that you should 'provide as much factual information derived from the eye examination as possible'. You might feel that having identified pressures above 21, a referral has been triggered and no further information is needed. Unfortunately that might give the *impression* that you haven't done those tests, and that isn't good for your reputation.

Finally, we are always happy to have optometrists sitting in on clinics. If that would interest you, contact me at david.sculfor@buckshealthcare.nhs.uk

News from the College of Optometrists

- The College of Optometrists is now taking bookings for its Optometry Tomorrow conference which will be held in Brighton on 18th and 19th March 2012, and includes a programme of lectures, seminars and workshops covering key topics, including AMD, OCT, dry eye, contact lenses, therapeutics, orthokeratology and contact tonometry and pachymetry. To book go to www.college-optometrists.org and click on the events tab and then Optometry Tomorrow.
- The College has relaunched CPD online which is an online tool to help manage and plan your CPD and CET. CPD online will have an up to date range of resources on hot topics. and the updated reports function will allow you to print summaries of your activities to contribute to appraisals. To check it out visit key resources at www.college-optometrists.org
- As one of your College Council members for the South East my role is not only to advise you of member benefits but to be your voice if you have any questions for the team at the College of Optometrists. If you would like to speak to me about any related matters please email me at rasmeet.chadha@college-optometrists.org

NOTES FROM THE OPTOMETRIC ADVISOR

Dry eye drops on prescription – Please be careful what you say to patients. Just because a patient is eligible for free prescriptions does not mean that their GP will prescribe what you recommend. Even if you write to the GP suggesting a specific dry eye medication the GP may not prescribe it, however, a letter is preferable to a verbal request via the patient. GPs have to be careful how their pharmacy budget is spent as they are responsible for what they prescribe. They are likely to try the cheapest option first or suggest the patient purchases it themselves.

Referring – Please give a provisional diagnosis whenever possible and state the urgency. The options are emergency (same day), urgent (within two weeks) and routine – most will be routine. Remember to give the GP's name or practice and the NHS number if available. All health care providers will have to use NHS numbers in future so please start to request this information from patients and note it on their record (it will always be quoted on any letters you receive from hospitals, etc).

Please note the triage service for the Bucks PCT area cannot see patients who are not registered with a local GP.

Performers List - every optometrist and OMP who works under a GOS contract must be on a PCT ophthalmic performers list. If you haven't worked during the past 12 months in the area of the PCT where you are listed then your name may be removed from their list and you should apply to join the PCT list where you do most of your work. PCTs locally have recently recovered significant sight test fees and associated vouchers from contractors who were found to be employing practitioners who were not on a PCT list at all. Contractors should always check that new employees and locums are included on a PCT list – do not rely on employment agencies.

TVPCA is currently undertaking a 'list cleaning exercise' on behalf of the local PCTs so you may receive an 'intention to remove letter' if it appears that you do not work in the area - if you do make sure you act upon it.

Retinopathy screening – Even if you take digital retinal images please ensure that your diabetic patients attend the Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Service (DRSS) accessed via the GP. The DRSS has a quality assurance system to ensure that the images are graded in a consistent way and patients are referred for treatment when necessary. You should not give patients the impression that you are offering something equivalent to the DRSS and the AOP specifically advises against using the word 'screening'. In fact if you missed something or misjudged when to refer and the patient suffered harm your position would be difficult to defend if you discouraged the patient from attending the DRSS.

GOC investigations – should you have the misfortune to become the subject of an investigation by the GOC or GMC you are obliged to inform your PCT. This applies to optometrists, OMPs and GOC registered companies.

[Buckinghamshire LOC](http://www.loc-net.org.uk/bucksloc)
www.loc-net.org.uk/bucksloc

CHAIR

Bruce Gilson
01628 664415
bruce.gilson@nhs.net

TREASURER

Jacqui Lucas
01494 862161

CLINICAL GOVERNANCE LEAD

Henry Leonard

MK LEAD

Claire Ranger
01908 695395

MID & SOUTH BUCKS LEAD

Bruce Gilson

PEER REVIEW CO-ORDINATOR

Anne Frier
01494 784141

HOSPITAL REPRESENTATIVE

David Sculfor
01296 315034

Barbara Nall
Raj Shah

LOC SECRETARY

Angela McNamee
07788 424152
bucksloc@hotmail.com

PCT OPTOMETRIC ADVISOR for BUCKS

Jill Ellis
07795 800222
jill.ellis@buckinghamshire.nhs.uk

If you have not received a personal copy of this newsletter, it may be because we do not have a correct email address for you.

Please help us to help you. Let us have your e-mail address today.
Send it to bucksloc@hotmail.com