

**Minutes of The Cambridgeshire Local Optometric Committee which took place at The George Hotel on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2008.**

**Present:** W. Newsom(WN),R. McLaughlin(RM),R. Lovell-Patel(RLP),D. Hardiman-McCartney(DHM),G. Kirk(GK),A. Lask(AL),D. Harrison(DH),L. Hodgson(LH),V. Rosamond(VR), S. Urquhart(SU),C. Edwards(CE), G. Macalister(GM).

**Apologies:** R. Whitehead(RW),K. French(KF).

**Visitor:** J. Wallman: Commissioning Lead for Cambs. PCT

**Minutes of the Last Meeting:** The increase in the Diabetic screening fee is to £23.00 **not** £25.00 as in the previous minutes.

**Jeremy Wallman:** JW gave a brief presentation on his current role. The main focus of his role is currently the introduction of the Diabetic Screening Programme and the software link to Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. At the formation of Cambs. PCT all of the Diabetic screening systems were different, and there has been from pressure from the Department of Health to get the new scheme up and running as the PCT was seen as non-compliant, with regard to the Diabetic screening. The main areas of concern were: the fee issue; the admin.licences; the internal service issues at Hinchingsbrooke; the software supplies were an ongoing problem. These have all now mostly been resolved-the whole service structure is far more 'underpinned' with the service manager having much more back-up. The only remaining difficulty is that there is a reluctance on the part of some GP practices to provide up-to-date patient information for the Diabetic database.

**LOC Support Unit:** SU,CE and GM attended an LOC regional meeting, the first in a series being run by the LOC Support Unit to inform LOCs about Practice-Based Commissioning(PBC) and how to go about negotiating for contracts with the PCT. This was run by the NHS Alliance and was presented by a GP, a previous PCT Chief Exec. and an Optometrist. There was a presentation on PBC and what it is and how GP consortia work. There was another presentation on the nature of the Commissioning process, and then a third presentation on how Optometry fits into this. This was then followed by a group session on how to present a hypothetical business case. All felt that this was a worthwhile meeting to attend, and gave ideas as to how Optometry can move forward and negotiate with PCTs for contracts.

JW added that in Cambs. PCT the GP consortium is keen to work with Optometrists to find more cost-effective ways of implementing primary care services which could be appropriate to Optometry.

**PCT and Clinical Governance Update:** RPL gave a brief presentation on her new role as Clinical Governance Facilitator. She emphasised that it is important to have good communication with the PCT – especially with the new GOS contract in the pipeline and there may be some scope for local input. She also pointed out that every healthcare provider will have to register with the Healthcare Commission in the not too distant future, and to maintain registration will have to demonstrate that they meet the core standards as set out in Standards for Better Health(SBH) . Standards 1 and 2 are in the AOP toolkit, waste disposal is also covered by this –although this seems to be no real solution to this problem, at

present. The whole topic of SBH needs to be raised to the whole Optometric community in a Clinical Governance meeting. WN stated that Clinical Governance will be a priority for the LOC in the coming year.

RPL also informed the committee there is a Joint Investment Fund available for healthcare assistants. This could cover the provision of NVQ courses for practice staff in areas such as practice administration.

### **Shared Care Schemes:**

**Diabetes:** The scheme now seems to be working much better where it has now 'gone live', and is proving to be much better than the paper based system. JW pointed out that a lot of PCTs have gone with the Man in the Van system. The Optometry based system seems to be in the best interest of the patients and is a better quality system. He went on to say that there is no excuse for GP practices not to know about the scheme. There are currently three GP practices in the Cambridge area which are not releasing patient data onto the system these patients are unable to be seen on the new system. JW states that all Optometrists need to be aware of this.

**Glaucoma:** Fenland optometrists are ready to go with the shared care, but there is no agreement with PBC on this. JW said he would look into this to try and resolve the problem.

**Chairman's Report: (New areas for shared care)** WN has been doing an audit of referrals into hospital and there still seems to be poor feedback to Optometrists. If there was direct referral the reply would be addressed to the Optometrist primarily and the GP would get a copy. All the GPs in Huntscom want direct referral-it seems that 'Choose and Book' is holding this back. The matter has now gone for discussion at the PCT.

In Suffolk there doesn't seem to be a problem with direct referral and Choose and Book. If direct referral goes ahead it will be audited by PBC. Initially direct referral will be into Hinchingsbrooke and then move to Addenbrookes, this will be initiated from Huntscom GPs.

WN will be writing a letter about this to go to all Optometrists in the area. This will be sent together with leaflets on smoking and nutrition.

AL is to carry out a survey of acute red eye referrals from GP into Optometry practices and see if this is something which needs the introduction of a Triage service.

**Low vision:** The possibility of low vision assessments in the community has never been accepted-maybe due to transport being easier to arrange to HES. However Declan Flanagan is reviewing this topic again to see if it could be feasible.

**Treasurer's Report:** Docet sent £2598.93 for the 1-day conference. There is no balance available as yet as the treasurer has just paid the members their annual fees and is awaiting signed receipts for these.

**Programme:** Declan Flanagan is giving a talk on the 17th March on AMD. Louise Allen is talking on squint on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, Cooper Vision are giving a talk on Silicone Hydrogels on 17<sup>th</sup> April. There is to be a dinner at The Bupa Lea in May, with Mr. Snead giving a talk.

In Peterborough the last meeting of this session is on 8<sup>th</sup> April with Peter Allen giving a talk on communication skills and Mr. Vardy is giving a talk on IOL-VIP(using IOLs as a Galilean telescope system in AMD) on 17<sup>th</sup> April at the Fitzwilliam.

**Any Other Business:** The AGM will be held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June at The George Hotel Huntingdon.