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**Advice Note**

**Role of the LOC Support  
Unit in Wales**



**LOC SUPPORT UNIT**  
**ADVICE NOTE #5**  
Available on line at [www.locsu.co.uk](http://www.locsu.co.uk)  
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## Advice note

# Role of the LOC Support Unit in Wales

November 2008

**The Health Service is undergoing a huge change to modernise the way patients are treated. The traditional role of services being provided by specific specialists is changing. Primary Care Services are an integral part of the modernisation of the health service in Wales.**

The Welsh Assembly Government has developed its vision to innovate and develop responsive methods of services that are to be delivered to the population of Wales. Gone are the traditional roles of “a GP does this” and “an Optician does that” to a more focused care pathway response whereby the patient is at the heart of their treatment.

The Health Service in Wales is going through another change with the proposed changes to Local Health Boards and the ever changing commissioning cycle. It is now an opportunity to develop the profession to be responsive to the change and be in a position to innovate and offer the expertise and experience that the ophthalmic profession can bring to providing effective patient care for the Welsh population.

The LOC Support Unit in Wales has been influential in working closely with the Welsh Assembly Government and Optometry Wales in developing new responsive business models that allow the profession to be at the forefront of innovation and allow the flexibility of the ophthalmic professional to be influential in patient care.

We work closely with the profession offering advice and support to allow these changes by

implementing robust and effective business models to local and national solutions so that the profession is at the cutting edge of commissioning.



## Supporting the profession in Wales

We provide independent advice and support to develop business intentions both in commissioning and provider services. We work closely with Regional Optical Committee's (ROCs) in developing commissioning intentions and act as a liaison between commissioners and providers. We provide effective professional advice to all opticians within the principality on the business development of primary care. We have experts who have worked in the commissioning of health services for over twenty years and know the systems and process inside out.

We will liaise with practices through the Regional Optical Committees locality meetings and also by responding to individual opticians and practices' requests. Most of this work goes on unnoticed in the background and falls into three main categories:

- Implementing and advising on national agreements, contractual arrangements, enhanced services, etc
- Writing business cases using Prince 2 project management

- Discussions on local issues, e.g. Eligibility for NHS treatment, Locally Enhanced Services, Clinical Governance etc.

However these are the “easy” areas as in general there are precedents to work to and compromise in some areas is often necessary to achieve gains.

The more difficult areas concern the individual groups of Opticians where precedent may not be of help and interpretation of the regulations is down to local agreement. It is here that the LOCSU can be of help to most Opticians, especially those unfamiliar with the areas in question. In the recent past below are the types of issues raised by Opticians;

- Familiarity with the regulations
- Discussions with the LHB about failure to fund service delivery improvements
- Access to Information
- Clinical Governance
- Discussions concerning contracts or the lack of them
- How to take forward grievances concerning contractual terms
- Applications to the Performers List
- Clinical Governance at LHB level and at Countywide level
- Guidance and dissemination, appraisal and continuing professional development

## How do we do this?

LOCSU have developed their own web site where as much information as possible pertaining to all contractual groups and their respective practices will be available.

We attend the ROC meetings and explain what services we can provide.

At these events topics of relevance to the group, i.e. joining the performers list, appraisal, etc as discussed.

## Achievements to date

Even though still relatively new in Wales, we have worked closely with the ophthalmic profession in developing the building blocks for a new ophthalmic contract for the principality over the last few months. This has been very labour intensive in ensuring that we obtain the best solution for the profession, not only by reflecting the ophthalmic profession as a leader in the primary care health environment, but also allowing for innovation and development of service provision. The new contract will be innovative and allow ophthalmic professionals the opportunity to manage the health needs of the patient in the community setting. This is responsive to the Welsh Ophthalmic professions vision for future services in the principality.

We have also visited each of the Regional Optical Committees throughout Wales explaining the support that the LOCSU can bring to the profession. We have been working to identify opportunities to maximise the developments in each region. We have been working on reviewing a children's eye services pilot in the South East and also reviewing commissioning options in North Wales.

We are also working with Optometry Wales to develop a strategic vision for ophthalmic services throughout Wales and working with colleagues to review pilot projects in glaucoma and post-cataract care services. We will also work with the profession to review the implementation of the clinical governance tool-kit.

Further and on-going work is being developed in the commissioning intentions of services throughout Wales in identifying opportunities that the ophthalmic profession can deliver. With the changes to the health service in Wales, we are working closely with each ROC to ensure that the profession is best placed to be at the forefront of change.