

News Release

23.6.2011

LOCSU MEANS BUSINESS WITH ANNOUNCEMENT OF TWO MORE OPTICAL LEADS

Katrina Venerus, LOCSU's Director of Operations and Commissioning, has welcomed the government's recent response to the NHS Future Forum and announced two new Optical Leads to work with senior commissioners regionally. She said:

"We are delighted that the need to widen involvement in clinical commissioning groups has been recognised in the government's response to the Future Forum's report on the proposed NHS reforms. It is clear that developing eye care services in the community is central to QIPP and Right Care delivery, and LOCSU is undertaking a number of initiatives to ensure that commissioners are aware that optometrists and dispensing opticians provide an ideal solution to improve patient access, convenience and choice.

"From engaging with GPs through our stand and event at the recent Commissioning 2011 conference, we know that many are keen to involve representative groups so that NHS makes the best use of resources to put the right care in the right place at the right time.

"The appointment of a further two Optical Leads, means that every region in England now has an Optical Lead to help LOCs influence senior current and future commissioners and maximise opportunities for our professions."

Experienced clinician and Chair of Barnet, Enfield and Haringey LOC, Sue Leighter, has been tasked by LOCSU with raising the profile of community optometry within London.

Joan Myhill, who is Administrator and Liaison Officer for Cambridgeshire LOC, has been appointed as Optical Lead for East of England. Joan has a wealth of ophthalmic experience combined with business experience of the utilities software sector for 3 global companies.

Katrina Venerus added:

"It is important that we have within our team of Optical Leads a broad range of skills and experience to maximise the opportunities at a local and regional level. Sue's involvement in setting up enhanced services as an Optometric Advisor for example, means that she has considerable experience in influencing senior commissioners in making the case for local eye health. Whereas Joan's appointment brings such a wealth of commercial knowledge and experience to the group, in addition to her optometry background, and this will be vital in enhancing the team in this very important area. **MORE 1/2**

Sue Leighter said:

"I am delighted to have this opportunity to be the face and voice of LOCs across London. Being chair of an LOC, I know the challenges that LOCs face in getting eye care on the agenda of local commissioners – so I am looking forward to helping them open the door to ensure eye care services become more accessible across very diverse communities."

Joan Myhill said:

“My commercial experience and insight will help me support LOCs in making the case for enhanced pathways to senior commissioners in the East of England. I am pleased to be taking on this role to further raise the profile of community optometry.”

LOCSU has appointed Optical Leads throughout England to:

- Represent LOCs in their region to SHA transition directors, PCT cluster leads, Clinical Commissioning Group leaders, local authorities
- Support LOCs to build effective working relationships across the regional health system and to raise their profile amongst commissioning groups to get more enhanced services delivered across England.
- Contribute to national policy development.

In addition to these appointments, Regional Optical Committees in Wales will continue to be well supported through the work of Sali Davies on behalf of LOCSU and Optometry Wales, and of the LOCSU Team.

Ends

Notes to editors

Sue Leighter has a house practice in Edgware and has previously worked as a locum in London. She also has experience as an Optometric Adviser. She has been active in Barnet, Enfield & Haringey LOC for many years and currently chairs the LOC. She has previously sat on the Barnet PEC. As an AOP councillor she has represented the profession on several outside organisations and currently sits on the Macular Group of Vision 2020 UK.

Her main interests are clinical and she has been involved in setting up schemes in Diabetic Retinal Screening, Pre-op Cataract Assessment and Glaucoma Referral Refinement and she is also a WOPEC Glaucoma lead assessor. She also has experience of carrying out evaluations into several enhanced services.

Joan Myhill is an Optometrist having qualified in 1980. Working as Practice Manager in the early 80s, Joan went on to provide locum services to mostly small independent practices in the East Anglia region. As well as many years of Ophthalmic experience, Joan also completed a Masters Degree in Computer Science in 1989, which led to a number of Technical, Managerial and then Executive Director positions in the Utilities Software business sector within 3 global companies. Her latest role was Director Europe Middle East and Africa for GE Smallworld, a subsidiary of General Electric.

Joan is now founder and Managing Director of Mystar Consultants Ltd, a Business Growth Consultancy based in East Anglia, providing services to a number of SME clients in the region. She also provides locum cover in the community and is the Administrator & Liaison contact in Cambridgeshire LOC.

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