

## Wolverhampton LOC Chair's Report 2019-2020

In my sixth year as Wolverhampton LOC Chair, I'm fortunate to feel connected with our members, more today than ever before, particularly since the COVID-19 outbreak.

On Tuesday 12th May, we heard the devastating news that our much loved and respected officer, Jill Cheney, had passed away. Jill had served as Treasurer since 2012, and we all appreciated her quiet and diligent approach that was instrumental in the successful running of our LOC. Jill's memories will remain with us all forever. Our thoughts and prayers are with her husband, Noel Cheney, and her family.

The coronavirus pandemic has taught us all many new ways of living. It has given us time to think, reflect, and evaluate our work and personal life balance. I believe the remote way of engaging with our members has been positively welcomed, and it seems it may form a shape of things to come.

This has been an incredibly busy time for the officers, who have tried to engage with all members, helping to provide advice and guidance during these unsure and turbulent times. The officers have also been regularly communicating members' concerns to the higher bodies (The College, AOP, LOCSU, NHSE, CCG and the WEI), and delivering the latest news, as promptly as possible.

We were one of the first to source supply for the central procurement of PPE for our members and encouraged LOCSU to create a supply chain for those offering enhanced services such as MECS/CUES.

As per our commitment, the LOC delivered the launch of two enhanced pathways, GERS (Glaucoma Enhanced Referral Service) and the Nuffield Cataract Post-Op Service. It is very promising to see so many of our members willing to upskill themselves to deliver excellent primary eyecare services. This has been instrumental in strengthening our relationship with the Wolverhampton CCG and the Eye Infirmary and will reap benefits in the way of more enhanced schemes and better communication between primary and secondary eyecare.

This year started with a new set of local referral guidelines from the Eye Infirmary, to produce a more streamlined and accurate approach to timely referrals.

We've continued with our endeavours to refine referrals sent to the hospital and to receive feedback on their outcome.

Wolverhampton has also seen the addition of another cataract provider, SpaMedica, with its own post-op accreditation system.

The latest addition in the way of EOS (Enhanced Optical Services) is CUES (COVID-19 Urgent Eyecare Service), a service which has been fast tracked to enable patients to gain remote access to their optical practitioner for advice and guidance on their eye concerns and help keep them away from the hospital eye service and the GPs.

This national campaign aims to utilise a very skilled primary care optical workforce and build great relationships between the ophthalmology and optometry sectors.

The crucial and long-standing issue of securing NHS emails for everyone has finally been resolved - all those without one have now been invited to apply.

Despite some LOC members battling poor health this year, their ongoing contributions have still been valued, helping the LOC to deliver many successful training events - notably the barbeque at the AGM and the Seminar in January. This year's seminar was a great success, with almost 100 delegates and a dozen sponsors hosted at the wonderful Molineux Football Stadium. The variety of speakers was greatly appreciated by all.

Looking to the future, we have very busy and challenging times ahead of us.

We need to prepare everyone for the return to the new norms of practice life, to include video consultations and tele-ophthalmology.

We are planning more training sessions for glaucoma with our Eye Infirmary consultants.

We have a plan to roll out the VR project (The Tobacco Dust Live Project) in collaboration with our Stafford and Walsall colleagues as soon as the lockdown/ social distancing measures allow.

We anticipate the introduction of additional enhanced schemes with an opportunity for our members to upskill themselves further with higher qualifications.

Our collaboration with neighbouring LOCs in the Black Country region has enabled us to work together as a larger regional team, bringing about positive changes for the profession as a whole.

Wolverhampton LOC is your LOC, and we ask that all optometrists, dispensing opticians, and contact lens opticians stay connected by attending the training events, following us on social media, replying to emails and reaching out with any concerns you may have. We are here to help.

May I end with showing my immense gratitude to all the committee members, in particular the officers: the forever hard-working secretary Peter, vice-chair Gurraj and our past treasurer, Jill, who is sadly no longer with us.

I thank you all for your commitment and support throughout the years and look forward to another successful year.

Yours sincerely

Prab Boparai  
Chair | Wolverhampton LOC

