



#YourLOC

Case Study

Why Your LOC Needs You! (and what you can do about it)

Local Optical Committees play an important role in eye health provision across England and they rely on involvement from a wide range of practitioners to continue serving the sector. Encouraging new members to join LOCs is important so the LOCs can gain fresh perspectives and ideas. Max Halford, Chair of Devon LOC explains why LOCs always need new people and why it is now easier than ever to get involved...

“A healthy LOC is one that is always thinking about the future and has a framework of succession so they know where they’re heading and who will be leading them and taking on the different committee roles. To achieve that measured process it is essential that there are new members joining the LOC so they can gain experience and shadow officers before they step up into those roles.”

The Route to Innovation

“The great thing about new LOC members is that they ask questions about the way things are done and that prompts us to ask why something is being done a particular way, and whether in fact it could be done a different, better way. There is less opportunity for innovation without those new members and their fresh points of view.”



A Climate for Change

The current environment is prompting LOCs to think about the practicalities of being a member and how meetings are run. This is creating opportunities for more people to join, as Max explains in relation to Devon LOC: “Moving to virtual meetings due to COVID-19 has opened our eyes to the fact that often committee members had to travel long distances to take part in face-to-face meetings, which made it difficult for those tied to work schedules, or with family commitments. But the success of virtual meetings means they are set to continue which means we can welcome those who have less time available, but who have valuable perspectives and experience to share.”

Introducing New Skills

New LOC committee members bring with them new skills and right now communication skills are in strong demand. “We’re increasingly becoming a hub for a range of enquiries,” says Max, “and we need to share the duty to respond between more people, so we are always keen to find good communicators.” Familiarity with social media channels and web-based communications is also a bonus: “There are so many new ways of sharing information and the channels people prefer definitely varies depending on age, so it is useful to have a good inter-generational LOC composition so we cover all the options!”

Having diversity in all senses is a bonus for an LOC. “We want to get perspectives from all specialisms, backgrounds, gender and ages,” says Max, “it makes us more effective at representing the sector when we have first-hand knowledge of the different issues being faced.”

Try Out Your LOC

Anyone who is interested in finding out more about their LOC and what they do can attend an LOC meeting and just observe what happens, with no commitment. Then, if they are interested in getting involved, Max suggests taking on a secondment with the LOC and getting stuck into some of the issues. This means that, by the time the AGM comes around, you have a good idea about the commitment involved and the areas covered. “It’s a very relaxed way to start working with your LOC.”

[Find out more about LOCs and how you can get involved](#)