



LOCSU

Student Resources

September 2024

Version 1

Student Resources

Welcome to this short resource for students about local optical committees (LOCs), which outlines what they are and how you, as a student, could benefit from getting involved with your LOC.

Joining your LOC provides you with valuable networking opportunities and real-world experience. [For more information, complete this short student resources course here.](#)

If you have any questions please email info@locsu.co.uk.

Thank you to Mona Thacker and Dr Amy Hughes from Avon LOC for their collaboration and input on this toolkit.



What is an LOC?



LOCSU

Established by the NHS (Amendment) Act 1949, over 70 Local Optical Committees (LOCs) were formed to be representative of all GOS contractors and performers within their defined geographical areas.

LOCs work with their local commissioners and providers on service design and improvement to develop enhanced eye care services for the best interests of patients. A well-run LOC is a major asset to the local eye care community, NHS and local authorities and the public alike.

LOCSU (Local Optical Committee Support Unit) is the national support unit to LOCs, providing support and services, and facilitating multi-way communications and engagement as the conduit between national, regional and local to assist LOCs influence and protect local eye care provision.

[Find out more about LOCs and what they do here.](#)

Functions of the LOC

The function of an LOC is to represent contractors and performers within its area. Every LOC must have a constitution.

The LOC must act in accordance with the powers provided in its constitution and must properly discharge the duties and responsibilities required in statute.

LOCs fulfill a number of important functions:

- ◆ Engaging with and representing the views of local contractors and performers
- ◆ Protecting and expanding services in primary eye care
- ◆ Liaising with Integrated Care Systems/Boards (ICS/ICBs)
- ◆ Maximising opportunities utilising the whole workforce
- ◆ Informing local contractors and performers
- ◆ Responding to local consultations and representing local contractors and performers
- ◆ Providing support, advice and training



Why should you join your LOC?

- ◆ Play a full role in your local primary eye care sector as part of a formal and important representative committee
- ◆ Help protect and develop your profession and your local eye care community
- ◆ Help design and negotiate services that utilise professional skills and improve outcomes
- ◆ Network with professional colleagues
- ◆ Work with other primary care specialisms, NHS and other health organisations, and wider stakeholders
- ◆ Career development through enhanced work profiles and new contacts
- ◆ Develop personal knowledge and skills as a member and potentially specialise as an officer
- ◆ Grow your leadership potential



Why do you want to engage with your LOC?

- ◆ Networking opportunities – meet like-minded colleagues
- ◆ Contribute to shaping the future of optometry
- ◆ Support local services and gain local knowledge and resources, for example, local referral protocols and pathways
- ◆ Gain valuable leadership skills

How do you join your LOC?

Have a look at the [LOCSU website](#) and look for your local LOCs website.

On your LOC website - reach out on the contact details provided to make enquiries about future meetings you could attend and observe or for any future CPD events.



Tips for students in LOC meetings



1. Be prepared

Read all the papers carefully, making notes of anything you do not understand.

2. Ask for help

Ask your chairperson if there is someone from the committee that could brief you about the meeting on a one to one basis, perhaps immediately prior to the meeting or by phone call at a convenient time.

Ideally you need a buddy or mentor to guide you through the first few months. Discuss anything you do not understand with your LOC buddy/mentor.

3. Understand your importance

Recognise that your new perspective is important to the LOC. Asking questions when you don't understand something not only increases your knowledge but helps build the knowledge within the whole group.

4. Read the Jargon Buster

There is a lot of jargon and acronyms within the NHS and LOCs. [This jargon buster](#), produced by LOCSU, is designed to be a useful tool for terms and organisations that you may come across.

5. Share with others

Help to raise the profile of the LOC by sharing information with others and consider becoming the LOC's student representative.



LOCSU Support



LOCSU Team

The LOCSU team consists of Advancement Leads and the central team, who are all there to provide support to LOCs.

The team are skilled subject matter experts available to support LOCs locally and nationally.

[You can find out more about members of the LOCSU team here.](#)

LOCSU supports LOCs in England across a range of activities relating to primary eye care. While not exhaustive, the below list outlines some of the work LOCSU does:



- Data and evidence to influence
- Commissioning support
- Governance and compliance
- Develop clinical pathways
- Develop local case studies
- LOC payroll service
- Support LOCs with training and development
- Produce webinars, podcasts and other accessible learning and information opportunities
- National Optical Conference (NOC)
- Communication network, treasurer forum and role-specific training
- Support LOCs to collaborate and work together across the ICB footprint to provide the shared goal of improved patient centred care delivered by optical practices
- And more.

For any questions, or discuss further, please contact LOCSU at info@locsu.co.uk.

LOCSU Support



LOCSU produces a range of materials, including:

Podcasts

The LOCSU podcast covers a range of topics, including:

- [New Board Members](#)
- [Low Vision](#)
- [LOC Succession Planning](#)

[Click here for our full list of podcasts.](#)

Toolkits

LOCSU creates a number of toolkits for LOCs, including:

- [Succession planning](#)
- [Low Vision Toolkit](#)
- [Press releases](#)

[Click here for the full list of toolkits.](#)

Newsletter

The LOCSU newsletter is sent at the end of every month and is for LOCs and external stakeholders.

[Click here to view all of our previous newsletters.](#)

Case Studies

LOCSU is creating a bank of case studies featuring various aspects of the clinical pathways.

These include:

- [Cataract](#)
- [Glaucoma Filtering and Monitoring](#)
- [Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Improving Patient Experience](#)
- [and more](#)

[Click here for the full list of case studies.](#)

Bulletin

This fortnightly bulletin is the 'inside track' for LOCs.

This is only sent to LOC officers and is for the committee members information only.

Information includes:

- Key updates
- LOCSU events and training opportunities
- PCSE updates
- and much more...

Focus On

These Focus On documents condense longer reports into easily digestible and LOC-relevant documents.

- NHS England 2024/25 priorities and operational planning guidance
- Amendments to The National Health Service (Performers Lists) (England) Regulations 2013
- and more

**For further advice or feedback on
contents of this toolkit please contact
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