



optometryscotland

September 2009

# newsletter

Striving to create a world class eye health and primary eyecare service for the people of Scotland

## Hello and welcome to your Optometry Scotland Newsletter

IT'S HARD to believe that 6 months have passed since the last newsletter there has been so much going on! The main thing keeping OS busy has been intense negotiation and work with the Scottish Government on changes to the GOS Regulations. The changes were due to take place in October but have now been deferred until January 2010 due to the prolonged negotiation undertaken by OS on behalf of the profession.

The reason for negotiations taking place at all was the agreement in Dec 2007 which allowed us to receive the £40/£44 eye exam fee. This amount was based on a change in the regulations surrounding primary versus supplementary fees i.e. that primary eye exams would be carried out at normal recall intervals (usually 1 or 2 years) as appropriate and that EVERYTHING else in between e.g. flashes/floaters, headaches, red eye etc would be a supplementary.



As the regulations were being changed we felt that this would be a good opportunity to sort out all the anomalies within the regs – all the things that confuse us.

Well it's been a bit of a marathon and it hasn't all gone our way. Due to the current financial climate the Government are very concerned about optometry costs and getting value for money from Optometrists.

Frank Munro had spent a lot of time preparing a set of extremely user friendly regulations which we were keen for the Government to adapt. Unfortunately this wasn't to be and we've been given a set of regulations which we feel aren't as easy to understand as we'd like. With this in mind we will organise roadshows with NES to explain the regulations. We'll run these roadshows in Inverness, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. It's hoped that as many Optoms as possible will attend. We'd also like to back up these roadshows with an explanatory DVD.

We definitely have had to give some ground to save the public purse. We hope that this is not at cost of professional freedom. We are assured that this is not the intention.

The highlights are as follows:-

As previously indicated the main change is that primary eye exams will be carried out at the normal recall intervals and EVERYTHING else in between will be a supplementary.

Refraction has been put in as part of the primary exam. The Government were very insistent on this, however we do have a get out clause which will allow us to omit refraction if it isn't clinically appropriate.

Field testing on over 60's is required on first visit or at first exam after 60th birthday (previously the regs had required field testing on everyone over 60).

It is now clearer that a supplementary exam can be claimed for any under 60 dilation.

There are going to be lots of questions with regards to the new regs. Hopefully most will be covered in the roadshows.

OS will keep all our members posted on the developments of the GOS regs. by email. If you are a member of OS and you are not receiving emails from Debbie at the office, please email [debbie.mcgill@optometryscotland.org.uk](mailto:debbie.mcgill@optometryscotland.org.uk) and provide Debbie with your email address to receive any up to date/urgent news from us.



Morna Scott and First Minister Alex Salmond

### MSP Lobbying

OUR MSP lobbying is going well, Debbie, Stuart Crawford and I have nearly managed to see all the MSPs that sit on the Health and Sports Committee.

We're also happy to report that one of our members managed to examine Mr Salmond's eyes when he was visiting Bathgate recently.

Morna Scott from the Specsavers store in Bathgate sent us this picture, a bottle of champagne is on the way to her!

Well done Morna!

### Scottish Eyecare Group

The Scottish Eyecare Group (SEG), the group that is made up of Ophthalmologists from Eyecare Scotland, Optometrists from OS with RNIB representing patients now has £30K funding issued to RNIB from the Scottish Government to be used to promote MCNs.

We are looking to set up "implementation groups". These groups will include – Eyecare Scotland members, Health Board representatives, Optoms and chairs of each AOC.

The groups will meet every 2-3 months and report back to the Exec group (The group that meets at present).

We were thinking of more than one group e.g. glaucoma, and, acute services.

After discussions at the SEG's last meeting in August, it was decided to concentrate on one topic – Glaucoma since this is the hot topic of the moment because of the NICE guidelines.



top: Dr John Olson and Frank Munro, above left to right: Kay Eastwood, Alison Simpson, Malcolm McPherson, Paul Baines, Gill Syme, John Olson and Debbie McGill



left: Mikey and Peter Carson

## National Eye Health Awareness Week 2009

SUMMER 2009 was a busy time for Optometry Scotland with the launch of National Eye Awareness Week which ran from Monday 11th to Friday 15th May.

OS teamed up with Big Brother's runner up Mikey Hughes to urge Scots to take advantage of free eye examinations. The "metro" who have an audience of 100,000 people covered this story. Public Health Minister Shona Robison MSP also backed the campaign. She said "Visual problems can start at anytime in life so it's important to attend regular eye examinations."

Scotland is leading the way in our provision of high quality eye health care services and the free NHS eye examination provides patients, young and old, with a really comprehensive visual assessment. I would urge everyone to take advantage of the excellent free services offered and get their vision checked regularly." On Tue 12th and Wed

13th May, OS had a stand in the Scottish Parliament Lobby where MSPs could receive an eye check/dispensing consultation.

Many MSPs and staff from the Parliament took advantage of this and we have been asked back as part of their wellbeing days! I'd like to thank Ross Henderson, Julia Hunter, Frank Hamilton, Frank Munro, Fiona Anderson, Barry Duncan and Stuart Crawford for making these days a success. STV's Five-Thirty show also took part in Eye Awareness Week with coverage from Nick Hines Optician in Perth. The coverage highlighted yet again the importance of eye checks and that they're free in Scotland. The show has a very wide audience throughout Scotland with around 500,000 viewers.

National Eye Awareness Week has been such a successful campaign, it can only get better next year.

NES. This committee will also be taking the lead in the Audit of the GOS contract. I'm happy to welcome the PDC's new Chair, Dr. Ross Henderson who is the AOC lead for Tayside on the OS Council. If you have any thoughts on training needs, please email Debbie at the OS office with your suggestions.

## Subscribe to OS NOW!

If you are a full time practice, all we ask for is £67 per month. For individual Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians the cost is £5 per month.

If you have a part-time practice and would like to be a member then we can negotiate a discounted rate for you.

Please contact Debbie at the OS office on 0141 202 0610 for details.

## OS Advisory Network March 2009

OPTOMETRY SCOTLAND hosted another worthwhile Advisory Network meeting in the Stirling Management Centre in March of this year. We invited our Wales and Northern Ireland Colleagues to the event as they are very keen to learn from Optometry Scotland.

The event included presentations from Ophthalmology in the morning. Optometry and Ophthalmology were grouped in order of their health board areas to give everyone a chance to talk about what is/isn't working in their area and how this could be changed for the better.

This is always a very interesting morning and I must say that it's great to see Optometry and Ophthalmology working together. In the afternoon, the Optometrists received an update from NES on their progress and PSD presented to the group on the

new GOS form, which you will all be used to using now.

Frank Munro, the Chair of the Advisory Network Group

commented "Close co-operation between the various stakeholders benefit the patients and the service overall in the long-term and I look forward to the next OS Advisory meeting".



I'M HAPPY to report that NES are moving along slowly but surely with training projects, working closely with the Ophthalmologists in Dundee, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow. It was great to meet Janet Pooley at our last Advisory meeting in March this year, both Janet and Donald are doing a great job. I went along to the NHSES training in Kilmarnock in fear and trepidation that I'd look like an idiot! I was glad to find out that everyone I spoke to on the course was in the same boat! We had nothing to fear.

The educators were in no way intimidating and were in fact extremely helpful and encouraging. At the end of our days training we all felt relieved that

it wasn't nearly as bad as we expected. I'm sure we all left feeling much more confident in our skills.

I would encourage anyone who is a little afraid, not to be. Go along and get some training. We all need training. We now have a fantastic free training resource - let's use it and improve optometry in Scotland, big time!



left to right: Janet Pooley, Donald Cameron, Frank Munro and Gill Syme



## New Chair of OS Professional Development Sub-Committee – Gill Syme congratulates Dr Ross Henderson

One of the OS Sub-Committees is the Professional Development Committee (PDC) who feed training needs etc... to

## IT UPDATE • IT UPDATE • IT UPDATE • IT UPDATE

Thank you to everyone that returned the IT Questionnaire. OS collated the information we received and it has helped us gauge what is required to roll out IT connections throughout Scotland.

The IT Project Group completed the Outline Business Case and presented it to the Scottish Government Health Department (SGHD). Due to the current financial position, they have asked us to look at alternatives that will help reduce the costs involved.

The project Group is looking in to this, so fingers crossed. Debbie will post any updates on the OS website.