



optometryscotland

March 2010

newsletter

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

Welcome

Chairman's Update



2 years has passed very quickly and it will soon be time to hand over the chairmanship of OS to Peter Carson the present vice-chair.

I am confident that the transition will be seamless. OS is not about specific people or personalities; it's about getting on with things and getting jobs done. The bulk of our work over the past couple of months has been around the new GOS Regulations which will come in to effect in April 2010. It's incredible how many meetings and man hours this has taken up and it's critical that

we get the wording exactly right. We don't want there to be any confusion when these regulations are rolled out. On that subject we intend to have roadshows across the country explaining the changes that are taking place. I would strongly urge everyone to attend these roadshows as they will make the changes very clear.

Other big projects at present are the IT outline business case which Hal Rollason explains later in this newsletter. We've also been asked along to DRS (Diabetic Retinal Screening) meetings to see where optometry could perhaps help out in terms of image capture. NES training is well and truly up and running and we are meeting regularly with Ophthalmology and working with them on joint projects. In addition we are about to evaluate the benefits in the changes to Scottish eye examinations by way of an audit, Ross Henderson will mention this in his update.

As you can see there is still a lot happening

and as I look back on the last 2 years my biggest disappointment is the continued reluctance by optometrists to join OS. If we are limited in cash, we are limited in the amount of work we can do. At present because of this, we can only fire fight instead of really driving projects forward. Make no mistake your contribution does make an enormous difference and if more people paid we could move to really tackle issues head on; it would also be fairer and we could potentially reduce the fee.

We have a world leading eyecare set up in Scotland, let's not sit back and be complacent. We must fight on to improve things further and prevent losing what we have.

OS needs you.

Can I take this opportunity to wish Peter all the very best in his role – He'll be great!

Gill Syme
Chairman

NEWSFLASH

Dispensing Opticians Update



On the 16th February, Debbie and I had an extremely positive visit to Glasgow Caledonian University to discuss the position of the dispensing programme and how we, Optometry Scotland, might be in a position to assist with the production of Dispensing Opticians in Scotland. Clearly, it would become problematical for the profession should the numbers of DO's decline in years to come as this would create a significant gap in knowledge in community practice. Dispensing is changing rapidly with technical expertise becoming more sought after in many fields; certainly one's where DO's can be utilised effectively. With many DO students in recent years progressing into Optometry,

it has become apparent that this route will no longer be as readily available and as such we will see more students remaining in the dispensing programme and becoming FBDO qualified. With this in mind, we hope that OS members will consider strongly the prospect of taking on pre-registration Dispensing Opticians. Our hope is that we can compile a list of willing practices so that the students will be more assured of placement after their time at University. I would be very grateful if careful consideration can be given to this request and please feel free to contact myself or Debbie to discuss further.

Barry Duncan
Chair of OS Dispensing Sub Committee

GOS Regs Roadshows

Free Roadshow – OS will update you on all you need to know with regards to the amendments of the GOS regs that will come in to force on **1st April 2010**.

At the moment we are waiting on the Scottish Government to confirm the changes to the GOS regs before we release any further information. Please save the date for the area that would be most convenient for you to attend. The roadshow will commence at 6pm for registration and a light buffet will be available.

Save the Date:

Aberdeen	31/3/10
Ayr	16/3/10
Edinburgh	25/3/10
Glasgow	29/3/10
Inverness	11/3/10
Perth	22/3/10

Please keep checking the OS website for further details.



In the picture we have Hal Rollason – Optometry Lead on IT Project and Dr Roshini Sanders – Ophthalmology Lead on IT Project

IT Report

The Community Eyecare IT project has been tasked with linking all Optometry practices in Scotland with the NHS.

Representing Optometry Scotland (OS) and as Chairman of this IT project I have been part of a large group of talented individuals representing all aspects of eyecare and information technology over the last one and a half years. We have gone through a very rigorous structured process which has led to the formulation of an Outline Business Case and we are now in the final stages of preparing this OBC for the Scottish Government Health Directorate.

Once this has been agreed we will enter into a Full Business Case scenario involving closer more detailed discussion with more users and providers about the implantation of IT connections in every practice in Scotland.

This will truly bring us into the NHS family and allow direct referrals with feedback from hospitals, validated GOS form submission to Practitioner Services (PSD), access to CHI and many other NHS resources. At the same time we will not lose any of our current business functionality.

Although we are the last contractor group to be connected to the NHS, our use of these connections is considerably more complicated than the others. GPs, Pharmacists and Dentists all have a relatively simple usage model for their IT connections. Optometry on the other hand will have connections to Hospitals and GPs for referrals, Practitioner Services for GOS form submission and payments, practice and head office networks for business use, workshop, spectacle lens and contact lens suppliers, plus dial in access for software suppliers.

In a recent survey by O.S. we found that approximately 75% of practices in Scotland have a broadband connection. These connections have reasonable, but not guaranteed, download speeds and poor upload speeds. We will utilise existing connections where appropriate and install new ones where needed with a guaranteed connection speed that is effective in both directions. This is vital when we start sending larger files such as fundus photographs, visual field and O.C.T. scans and even GOS form submissions. If a connection is only used for NHS purposes then there will be no ongoing monthly charges, but where the connection is used for other business and private purposes then there will be a maximum charge of £20 per month. It is likely to be less than this. This is in place of what your broadband connection charge is at present, and not an additional cost.

This system will be fully compliant with data protection procedures. The NHS will not be able to see your data!

I would be interested to hear the thoughts of any practitioner in Scotland and invite you to email me at info@optometryscotland.org.uk

Hal Rollason
OS Executive Member

Report of the Optometry Scotland Professional Development Committee – February 2010

Audit is a word that does not always conjure up positive emotions. As busy practitioners we often don't have time to measure what we are doing. But Audit is an important tool in assessing patient care. Dr Ross Henderson and Professor Gordon Heron have set up a web based record card audit that will tell us what eye conditions are being managed in Scotland and England by optometrists. You may receive a request to take part in this study and we would hope that you will be able to contribute as it is going to be essential that we have data to show Scottish Government that the contract is working. It may also assist NES in finding the key areas for continuing professional development.

The PDC are also developing a practice manual which will contain relevant local and national protocols. As many practices

use Locums from different health boards this information needs to be at hand to help in complying with local referral pathways. This practice manual will be issued to all practices that pay the OS levy. We hope it will make the day-to-day complying with GOS regulations and referrals much easier.

Finally as the next 80 optometrists start the Independent Prescribing course in March 2010 at Glasgow Caledonian University, OS are working towards getting GP 10 Prescription Pads for all Scottish IP Optometrists. Experience of other Non-Medical prescribers has shown that this can be a slow process to get prescription pads but it will be high on our agenda as almost 10% of Scottish Optometrist move towards IP.

Dr Ross Henderson
Chair of the OS Professional Development Committee



Optometry Scotland Parliamentary Dinner

A nice ending to the lobbying, that OS did during 2009, was to host a parliamentary dinner which we held in the Scottish Parliament in November. The evening was a great success and OS were pleased with the turn out from the MSPs and Government officials. Thank you to all Council members that helped out on the evening. Another thank you goes to Christine Grahame MSP who sponsored the evening.