

Central Mersey Local Optical Committee

Warrington CCG update

I attended a meeting with Warrington CCG on the 11th January, hoping to be able to discuss the case for enhanced services esp. a MECS scheme. The meeting was attended by David Knowles, Myself, Marie Ann Hunter (introduced as from 'Primary Care Commissioning') and Thom Stokes (Senior Commissioning Manager at Warrington CCG and lead for WRAG - Warrington Referrals Assistance Gateway)

It quickly became clear that Thom was the main driver for the meeting, principally because he wants optometry involved in the 'WRAG'. WRAG sounds effectively like a 'choice referral centre' under a different name. His points were mainly that the CCG has no way of knowing anything about referrals e.g., which providers people are being sent to, whether they are being efficiently referred into secondary care etc.

He wants to move to a scenario where all referrals are made via the WRAG hub where patients are then booked in for their secondary care appointments at the provider of their choice after discussion with someone at the hub. The secondary benefit is that it gives the CCG a way of gathering evidence about referrals.

I made the point that our proposed enhanced services schemes can drastically reduce inappropriate referrals in the first place and that there is a wealth of good quality audit data available to support these services. I also made the point that any service we put into place would be fully audited and would provide robust data about the referrals made/or avoided.

Thom only had ears for his WRAG project and said that referring via WRAG would allow them to gather data that may support future enhanced services. Thom believes that Manchester have a similar scheme, however it is my understanding that referrals into the Manchester model are made after a patient has gone through their enhanced service schemes.

It was left that Thom would investigate further the Manchester model and we would discuss this as an LOC and meet again in February. Hopefully Dharmesh Patel may also be able to attend the next CCG meeting, bringing his experience of both the Manchester model and their enhanced service schemes.

Personally I strongly feel we should not agree to the proposal as it stands. The CCG need us to create a local protocol and I feel we should be looking to get something in return.

Gordon Elliott

The GOS contract is with NHS England, so the CCG has no jurisdiction over GOS referrals. It also has no influence into private referrals either. Commissioning the enhanced community eye services would allow the CCG to have influence via negotiation and achieve the audit they require.

Bob Wilkes