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## June 2009

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1 June 2009

### AOP hosts joint AGM with FODO

For the first time in AOP history, the Association's AGM was held jointly with FODO in London on 12 May.



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### AOP hosts joint AGM with FODO



For the first time in AOP history, the Association's AGM was held jointly with FODO in the Old Liberal Club at One Whitehall Place (12 June). With over 150 members of both bodies - and guests from the other optical organisations – present, attendees heard from the chairmen of the two bodies Michael Charlton (AOP) and Paul Carroll (FODO). Both chairmen emphasised the benefits and achievements

won by all the optical bodies working more closely together and opportunities for developing this further.

They also commented that as two sister organisations with very similar aims, it seemed daft to have separate FODO and AOP AGM events a couple of days apart, often in the same city and sometimes with the same guest speakers and concluded: "We have been able to put on a superb event for all our

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members by combining resources.”

The assembly was also addressed by Department of Health Director of Primary Care, Ben Dyson CBE, who outlined how world class commissioning might apply to optics.

Don Grocott, President of both the AOP and FODO, said: “Combining forces wherever appropriate is clearly the way to get optics on the map and noticed by those who matter. I am delighted to see all the optical bodies turning away from the paths of isolation which have so bedevilled us in the past.”

During the AGM, Robin Banks, former AOP Chairman of Finance, was awarded Honorary Membership of the AOP on his retirement from the AOP Council; while Ian Lucas was awarded the Certificate of Merit by the AOP.

A full report of the AGM [can be found here](#).

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## England GOS Contract: Contract Compliance Framework



The optical negotiating bodies have been negotiating with NHS Primary Care Contracting (PCC) about its model GOS Contract Compliance Framework document. The document has now been published on the PCC website (for those PCTs which subscribed to NHS PCC).

The published version is a significant improvement on earlier drafts – for example, it now focuses only on contractual requirements; there are no pre-visit questionnaires to be filled in by practices/businesses; and it recommends visits should normally only be once every three years.

However, it is still rather detailed and the optical negotiating bodies still have concerns about two issues – details and the optical bodies' comments can be found in the full version of this article [on our website](#).

As the PCC's Framework document is only a guide for PCTs and in no way mandatory, it is open to LOCs to agree variants of the framework in these and other areas. However, the national bodies advise strongly against this - and certainly against agreeing more onerous variants - without first seeking advice from LOCSU or the national representative bodies.

In the meantime, the national representative bodies believe the Contract Compliance Framework is now in line with contractual obligations (albeit in a rather bureaucratic and overly detailed way) and advise that it should now be agreed for implementation by LOCs locally.

For further information and advice please contact [Richard Carswell](#) at the AOP. Similarly, if you would like a copy of the framework, please email Richard.

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## NICE glaucoma guidelines: new update



The effects of the NICE Guidelines on community optometry continue to develop across the country, with some primary care trusts (PCTs) struggling to cope with the resultant extra referrals and appearing unwilling or unable to look at strategies to resolve the situation.

The reaction to the publication of the guidelines from PCTs and Health Boards has been mixed. As large numbers of patients with IOPs of 22 mm Hg or over are referred in to the HES for formal diagnosis, some PCTs are implementing schemes to deal with the problem. South Gloucester, for example, is amending its Glaucoma Referral Refinement Scheme protocol to require referral at pressures of 22 or over.

Other PCTs – e.g. Bristol and Norwich – have written to local optometrists, asking them not to alter their existing referral criteria. In these areas the AOP, ABDO and FODO have emailed members, strongly advising optometrists to take note of the NICE Guidelines when considering the referral of patients with signs of OHT.

To identify a sign of OHT and then not to act on it could be considered to be unprofessional, especially when the correct course of action has been well researched, by a panel of experts in the field, using evidence-based methods, and has been officially published by NICE. It seems that a PCT, in asking optometrists not to refer, is seeking to avoid its responsibility for treating these patients.

But they will not be indemnifying optometrists for their lack of action. They are hoping that the practitioner will take the responsibility that is rightfully theirs. The PCT do not have the power to insist that optometrists should follow their request and practitioners should not be reluctant to resist the pressure not to refer.

The LOC Support Unit has designed a number of optometry-based pathways around glaucoma and OHT; these could be used by LOCs, ROCs and AOCs to aid in the development of local enhanced services schemes. Contact **Georgina Gordon** at LOCSU for further details ([georginagordon@locsu.co.uk](mailto:georginagordon@locsu.co.uk)).

Further information is on [the AOP website](#).

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## Centre for Public Scrutiny launches new eye health guide



The Centre for Public Scrutiny has worked with the optical professional and representative bodies to produce a new online guide designed to help Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs).

The '**10 Questions**' guide allows OSCs to assess whether the level of eye health service provided by Primary Care Trusts and the NHS meets local needs. Key areas covered by the guide include glaucoma services, diabetic retinopathy, cataracts and low vision services.

Avril Davies, Health Scrutiny Adviser, The Centre for Public Scrutiny: "This 10 questions guide is an important tool for Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees in assessing local eye health provision, helping them assure the right services are being provided locally, and where

improvements can be made. "

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## Volunteers needed for AMD event



The team behind 'Be AMD aware', a national AMD awareness campaign, are looking for optometrists in the Birmingham and Cheshire areas to help on their exhibition stand at the BBC Gardener's World Show in the NEC, Birmingham and at the Tatton Park Flower Show. Volunteer optometrists would need to answer any questions from show visitors around the subject of AMD.

Both shows last for 5 days each: the BBC Gardeners' World /Good Food Show is from 10th-14th June 2009, 9.30am - 6.00pm; the Royal Horticultural Society's Tatton Park Flower Show is from 22nd - 26th July 2009, 9.30am - 6.00pm.

An honorarium will be paid in respect to your role at these events and you don't have to commit to all days; one day would be sufficient and the team are looking for as many optometrists as possible.

If you are interested in taking part, please contact Rita Martins on 0207 067 0210 or email Rita at [rmartins@webershandwick.com](mailto:rmartins@webershandwick.com).

The 'be AMD aware' campaign is sponsored by Novartis Pharmaceuticals and supported by the RNIB. It aims to encourage people aged 55 or over to familiarise themselves with the symptoms of AMD and have regular eye health checks.

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## Do you need a practice valuation?



Although values of optical practices are generally less affected by the economic downturn than other high street businesses, fluctuations have become more regionalised and unpredictable. An up-to-date valuation report provided by an independent expert is now indispensable.

RA Valuation Services Ltd is the sole AOP-endorsed practice valuation specialist and is currently offering generous discounts for valuation updates to previous clients in addition to the significant reduction in fees AOP members receive as a member benefit.

Reasons for a valuation include:

- Sale / Purchase
- Management / internal buyout
- Partnership / shareholder change
- Incorporation
- Litigation
- Tax agreements
- Borrowing / funding
- Business development
- Benchmark / Performance indicators

RA Valuation Services Ltd will be pleased to provide any advice and a quotation. Contact them on 01425 402402 or [visit their website](#) for further information.

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## Glaucoma Diagnosis Day



A Glaucoma Diagnosis Day designed to enhance practitioners' knowledge, practical ability and interpretation skills will be held in London on June 20.

Speakers include Professor Andrew McNaught (Cheltenham General Hospital), Michael Birch (Newcastle Royal Infirmary), Professor Peter Shah (Birmingham & Midland Eye Centre), David Garway-Heath (Moorfields Eye Hospital) and Robert Harper (Manchester Royal Eye

Hospital).

The day will also include interactive tutorials with small groups of 6–8 people, followed by a group learning session to end the day.

For further information and to book your place please visit [www.eyecampus.org.uk](http://www.eyecampus.org.uk)

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