

CENTRAL  
OPTICAL  
FUND

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020

# About The Central (LOC) Fund

The Central (Local Optical Committee) Fund is managed by LOCs and supports projects that benefit optometry.

Founded in 1972, The Fund was established by LOCs to finance work undertaken centrally on behalf of the profession.

Issues and projects funded since then have been political, GOS related, research based, legal, educational, strategic and data based.

Projects supported by the Fund have been delivered by the major optical organisations, universities, charities and individuals.

In July 2014 the Central (LOC) Fund became a Company Limited by Guarantee with LOCs as its members, and Directors elected by LOCs.

In 2015, the Fund was renamed The Central Optical Fund, with an updated brand identity and website.

Its objects are to promote and protect the interests and activities of LOCs



# LOC funded and controlled

The Central Optical Fund is a not for profit organisation investing in optometry.

## How is the Fund accumulated?

- By voluntary donations from Contractors, individuals and LOCs

## Who Decides how the Fund is used

- The Fund directors, who must be proposed and elected by LOCs at an Annual Meeting

## How is the Fund distributed?

- It invites and considers applications for funding optometry related projects in England and Wales

## What qualities does a successful funding application demonstrate?

- It should increase the profile of optometry
- Expand the role of optometry by developing its scope and expertise.
- Support the profession by developing resources, technologies and strategies that aid optometry.



# Your LOC Elected Directors

The directors of the Central Optical Fund are its custodians and administrators.

They are elected by LOCs, and represent the LOCs across five broad geographical areas of England and Wales.

All decisions on funding are voted on by the Directors at board meetings.

Further information about your directors and their contact details can be found on the Fund Website

<http://www.centralfund.org.uk/>



Ian White  
North West



Andrew McGregor  
North East



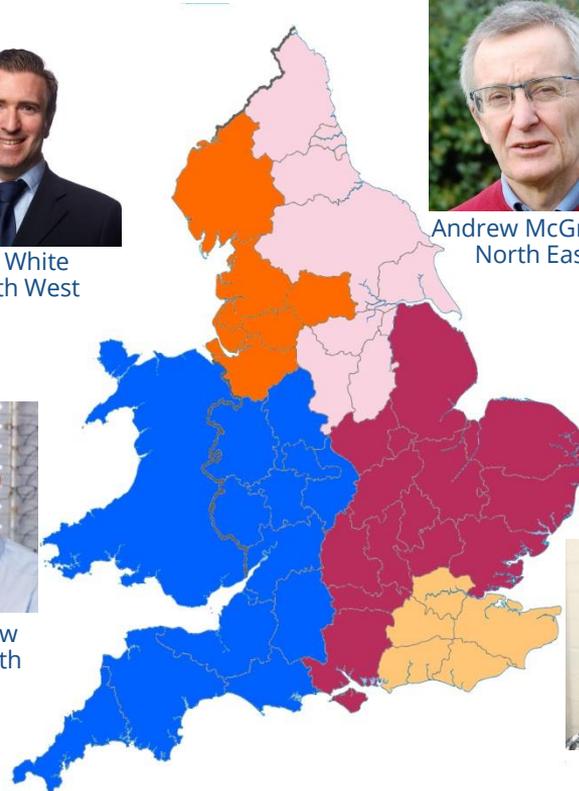
Charles Barlow  
Central & South  
West



Linda Vernon-Wood  
East



Sue Leighter  
London & South



# Chairman's Report

## Andrew McGregor



The year started on a low with only three out of five directors in position, one retiring and an administrator who was leaving. It ended on a high with a full complement of enthusiastic directors and improved administration.

At the AGM a near record attendance saw well fought elections with Directors now representing all regions.

We said farewell to Mike Shinn who served the Fund, originally as an Administrator and subsequently as an initial director, for more than 30 years and I was delighted to present him with a thank you gift at the NOC Gala dinner.



A very busy year included considering nine funding applications, requesting a total of £251,870.88. Four applications were approved for full or partial funding. £36,925 was paid out as project support, with a further £53,500 held in reserve for projects approved but not yet able to proceed.

Our meetings saw attendance by various observers and invited speakers, including representatives from The College of Optometrists, The AOP, The OFNC & The Eyecare Trust.

The new directors have provided valuable insights and energy into the fund.

The departing Company Secretary and Administrator has been replaced and new policies and governance have been introduced, together with significant administrative cost saving.

The Fund website has been updated ([www.centralfund.org.uk](http://www.centralfund.org.uk)) and we have moved to virtual meetings. New Mailing lists to LOCs have been set up to improve communications with LOCs.

The year finished with a very healthy Fund, actively looking to support the future of the profession and LOCs.

Please support the Fund with donations from your LOCs and encourage colleagues with valuable projects to approach us for funding support.



# Central Fund – Investing in Optometry

## To Promote and develop our Profession

EYEHEALTHUK

Dear Andy,

### National Eye Health Week 2019

We'd like to say a big thank you to Central Optical Fund for its support of this year's National Eye Health Week (NEHW) campaign. Your invaluable contribution helped make NEHW19 the most successful to date.

Our media campaign created more 'opportunities to see' eye care advice than ever before, whilst the social conversation around eye health had a reach of 66 million. The NEHW x Central Optical Fund poster campaign made sure that messages touched those most at need and hard to reach audiences.

One in four UK adults say they remember seeing, hearing or reading something about eye health during the Week and three quarters (74%) of these were encouraged to take better care of their eyes, doing things like booking an eye examination (37%) or quit smoking (7%).\*

Vista magazine continued to be an effective vehicle for eye health promotion and was hugely popular with the profession and the public alike.

One hundred per cent of respondents to the NEHW supporter evaluation survey rated Vista as 'excellent' (62%) or 'good' (38%) – 'This is a great read with many interesting features'.

Professional comments included: 'I thought it was FANTASTIC' and 'This is a great read with many interesting features'.

Enclosed is a handout which summarises our joint activity which we hope you will find useful.

Don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or would like any further information about future National Eye Health Week campaigns.

With thanks again for all your support.

Eye Health UK trustees and the NEHW team

\* Population Omnibus Survey of 1,094 UK Adults between 02 Oct 19 and 03 Oct 19

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Vicky White

Eye Health UK is a not-for-profit  
charity limited by guarantee.  
Charity Number: 1059164  
Central Optical Fund is a not-for-profit  
Registered in England No: 1011262  
Registered Office  
10, Beckett Street, Brighton, BN1 1AB

The Fund has been a long term supporter of National Eye Health Week.

In 2019 The Fund provided Finance for their National Poster Campaign and also for Vista Magazine.

## NEHW PARTNER

Central Optical Fund (COF) used its support for National Eye Health Week 2019 (NEHW) to raise the profile of optics, highlighting the role optical practices play in keeping Britain healthy and encouraging uptake of eye tests amongst those at greatest risk of avoidable sight loss.

NEHW website which provided more information about the link between poor vision and falls as well advice on caring for ageing eyes.

The posters and supporting social media activity reached 7.5 million people.

### National Poster Campaign

During NEHW poster ads were placed in 100 towns and cities where there is inequality in eye health and residents are at increased risk of sight loss.\*

The posters linked to Falls Awareness Week\*\* and targeted the over 60s with a call to action to get their sight tested.

The advertisements included a QR code connected to a hub on the



\* Expertise data used to identify locations  
\*\* Falls Awareness Week fell at the same time as NEHW

The poster campaign messaging was further amplified through the provision of a NEHW / COF toolkit giving advice on how to prevent falls – including promoting the importance of good eye health and the need for regular eye tests – to NHS North East and Yorkshire.

### Read All About It!

COF also partnered Vista – a unique consumer lifestyle magazine designed to raise the profile of optometry in an engaging and accessible way.

Editorial throughout the magazine – which is distributed via GPs, pharmacy, opticians, charities, businesses, local authorities, hospitals and more – highlights why regular eye tests are important, eligibility for NHS eye care and steps we should all be taking to keep our eyes healthy.

For more info about NEHW visit:  
[WWW.VISIONMATTERS.ORG.UK](http://WWW.VISIONMATTERS.ORG.UK)

# Central Fund – Investing in Optometry

## To Promote and develop our Profession



3D Virtual Eye Clinic: a proof of concept project

"The future of virtual worlds is real."  
"The future of virtual worlds is significant."  
"The future of virtual worlds is specific."  
Tom Boellstorff (2015)

The Fund has a long history of supporting projects that shape our future.

The 3D Virtual Eye Clinic project from Cardiff University is a great example of this.

This will potentially revolutionise Optometry training and be able to exploit emerging trends in digital education.

### Summary

3D virtual worlds (2D VVs) are innovative environments with the potential to support immersive and interactive learning.

The aim of this project was to develop a 3D virtual optometry clinic and evaluate the use for clinical decision making and patient management. Secondly, to determine the potential for future development and use of 3D optometry clinics in the sector.

We built an interactive 3D virtual world with Avatars, patients, and optometric equipment.

We developed 3 cases and held 4 case discussion sessions with students. Interaction levels were measured by the word count from the transcribed audio recordings of the discussions. The knowledge levels and learning outcomes were assessed using pre- and post-quizzes. We also conducted short focus groups to hear what students thought of the experience.

Following the sessions there was an increase in the knowledge levels overall with the 3D virtual eye clinic (3D VEC). The 3D VEC was found to be equally as good as the 2D face-to-face discussion environment and encouraged both individually directed and group learning.

Further study with more students and cases would be required to fully understand the implications of the observed behaviours within the 3D VV. However, these findings suggest that the VEC has potential within optometry education. When considering the potential for future development and use of 3D VEC in the sector we considered it had several strengths:

- Evidence-based learning platform
- Immersive, interactive & collaborative
- Social networking element adds fun dynamic
- Scalable platform with many applications
- Remote delivery of education
- Closely replicates and emulates a real-world eye clinic
- Pseudo-identity avatars may encourage trainee participation
- Safe environment for optometry trainees to practice
- Particularly well suited to cognitive learning and OSCE style testing

There were also key weaknesses:

- Interactivity currently limited to basic gestures and textual communication
- VR world may be distracting or dissociative (Vs Real world)
- Lack of gamification and extrinsic reward/feedback systems
- Lack of data collection for post-hoc analysis and improvement metrics
- No MacOS, Web or Mobile platforms (May limit future traction)
- Not easy to upload cases in the present format

We concluded that the 3D VEC has the potential to revolutionise optometry training. The scalability of the platform coupled with the wide range of applications make it an exciting prospect. It is well placed to exploit emerging trends in digital education. Further funding will be necessary to develop the platform so that it is futureproof.



# Finance Report

## July 2019 – June 2020

The Financial Objects of The Fund are twofold.

1. To obtain and collect a fund of money by voluntary levies and contributions through Local Optical Committees and otherwise
2. To distribute the monies of the company to such persons, companies, associations or bodies who or which may be approved by the company as undertaking work centrally on behalf of the profession of optometrists in general and/or for Local Optical Committees in particular.

Both of these objects have been affected by the Covid 19 global Pandemic and contributions for the last few months of the financial year have been almost none existent. In this climate the Fund is extremely grateful to those LOCs who have still been able to contribute.

Projects that The Fund had agreed to support, or were in the process of reviewing, have been put on hold or completely abandoned. This is reflected in the accounts by reduced expenditure. The Directors have decided to allocate a reserve in case such projects do eventually proceed, this does not show on the formal accounts as it is a management device.

The move of NHS GOS claims to the online EGOS system may affect the management and income of the Fund. Discussions are ongoing with Primary Care Support England and Capita as to how this may be managed by The Fund.

The departure of Roy Brackley the Company Secretary and finance officer part way through the year precipitated changes to The Fund management and the Directors are pleased to advise that management cost savings have been identified and implemented.

New virtual working practices that have been adopted by the Directors have proved successful and this will also allow for cost savings going forward.

The Directors approved this year that a permanent “Emergency Reserve” is maintained by the Fund for future unforeseen circumstances. The Covid 19 crisis is perhaps one of these circumstances and support for LOCs who become financially unable to carry out their statutory duties has been discussed.

Finally, my thanks must be given to LOCs and contractors for their continuing financial support, to Simon Brook of SJB Accountants and to Roy Brackley who retired this year.

Charles Barlow  
Director,  
Company Secretary and Finance Officer



# Finance Report

## Accounts July 2019 – June 2020

<b><u>Income &amp; Expenditure</u></b>		2020		2019	
		£	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>					
	Voluntary Levies		58,396		54,330
	Bank Interest		2,883		2,346
			<u>61,279</u>		<u>56,676</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
	Project Support	36,925		70,744	
	Expenses & Tax	<u>18,445</u>		<u>19,650</u>	
			55,370		90,394
	Surplus (Deficit) for the year		<u>5,909</u>		<u>(32,718)</u>
<b><u>Balance Sheet</u></b>					
<b>Assets</b>					
	Bank Accounts		465,395		458,937
<b>Liabilities</b>					
	Accruals		440,830		440,281
			<u>24,565</u>		<u>18,656</u>
<b>Financed by</b>					
	Accumulated fund at 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2019		18,656		52,374
	Surplus (Deficit) for the year		5,909		(33,718)
			<u>24,565</u>		<u>18,656</u>



# Donate to The Fund

Please donate to the Central Optical Fund for the future of optometry and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

**The Fund welcomes contributions in the following ways:**

- Regular or occasional donations from LOC funds
- Voluntary Levy from Contractors as a percentage of NHS Sight Test fee
- Regular personal donation by standing order
- Occasional personal donation

for further information Please contact a director at [info@centralfund.org.uk](mailto:info@centralfund.org.uk)  
or go <http://www.centralfund.org.uk/donate/>