

## LPC Communications Guide

PSNC's Communications Team often receives requests from LPCs for support with their communications. This guide is intended to help LPCs in better managing their external communications, focusing on planning, including information on who your target audiences are and how to target your communications to them.

### Section A: Objectives

#### Identify target audiences

1. Contractors and pharmacy teams
2. Commissioners and local councillors
3. Patients/ the general public

LPCs may also wish to consult PSNC's [template LPC stakeholder map](#) document.

#### Know your goals

You need to first determine what you are hoping to achieve from your communications. Goals are likely to include:

- keeping contractors updated and inspired;
- showcasing what pharmacy teams and the LPC are doing locally;
- highlighting what pharmacy can already do and what else it could be doing;
- persuading local healthcare providers to work with pharmacy where possible; and
- persuading local commissioners to consider pharmacy services.

### Section B: Audiences

#### 1. Contractors and pharmacy teams

##### Who they are

This group includes contractors and local pharmacy staff, comprising all who manage and work in pharmacies.

##### How to engage them

- Your LPC website – a simple and effective way to get messages out to everyone.
- Newsletters (email and/or print) – the best way to summarise all your recent messages.
- Letters – a more official touch which is harder to ignore than an email.
- Social media – a quick way to get important headlines out to everyone.

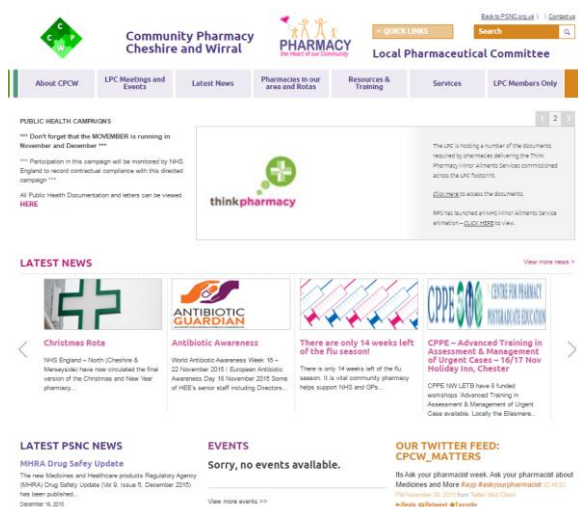
#### Risks and how to reduce them

Possible risk	How to manage it
Can't reach them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use different means of communication and promote your communications in different places and at events.</li> <li>• Check that you have up-to-date contact details.</li> <li>• Consider using LPC members to help ensure key messages are getting out and everyone knows about LPC communications.</li> </ul>
Messages missed/ ignored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make your communications clear and simple.</li> <li>• Attention-grabbing – make sure headlines and social media links encourage people to read on.</li> <li>• Focus on the important issues so your communications are considered worth reading.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use website analytics and email tracking to inform future content by scrutinising what generates the most interest. PSNC has created <a href="#">a guide for LPCs on using Google Analytics</a>.</li> <li>Plan when messages are being sent – this is particularly important if something is being printed and mailed out: will it reach your audience in time?</li> </ul>
Complaints	Respond directly (rather than publicly) and in a professional manner.

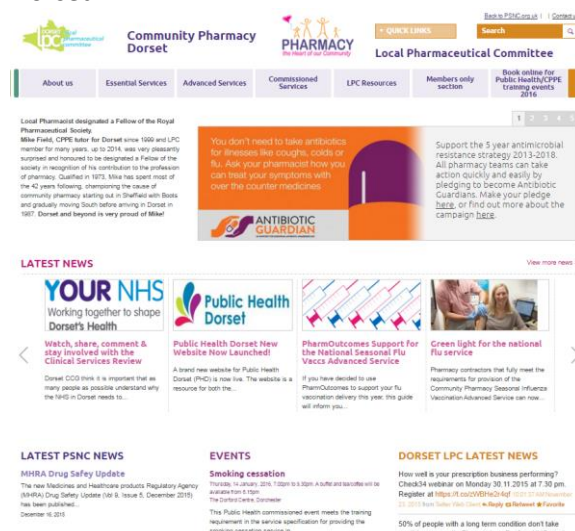
## Best practice example – LPC sites

### Cheshire & Wirral



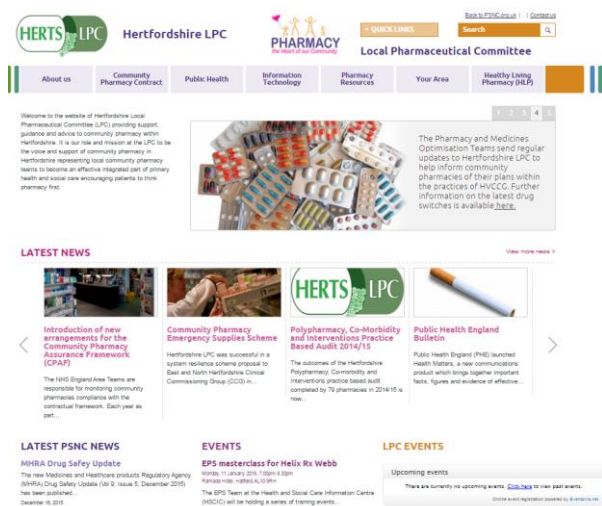
The screenshot shows the homepage of the Cheshire & Wirral Community Pharmacy Local Pharmaceutical Committee. It features a navigation bar with links like 'About CPW', 'LPC Meetings and Events', 'Latest News', 'Pharmacies in our area and Rota', 'Resources & Training', 'Services', and 'LPC Members Only'. The main content area includes a 'PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGNS' section with a 'thinkpharmacy' logo, a 'LATEST NEWS' section with articles on 'Christmas Rota', 'Antibiotic Awareness', and 'CPPE - Advanced Training', and a 'LATEST PSNC NEWS' section with an 'MHRA Drug Safety Update'.

### Dorset



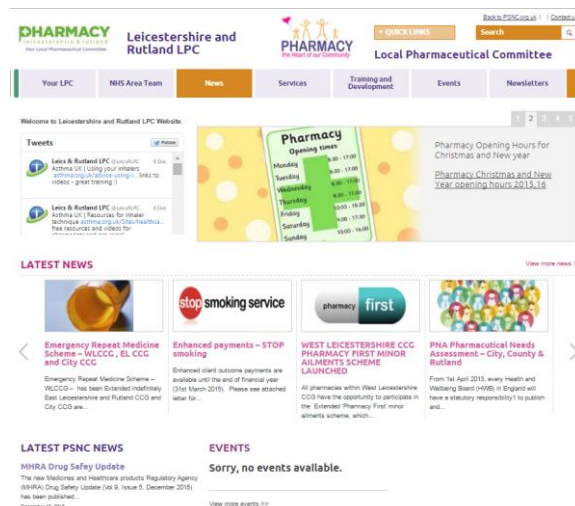
The screenshot shows the homepage of the Dorset Community Pharmacy Local Pharmaceutical Committee. It features a navigation bar with links like 'About us', 'Essential Services', 'Advanced Services', 'Commissioned Services', 'LPC Resources', 'Members only section', and 'Book online for Public Health/CPPE Training events 2016'. The main content area includes a 'Local Pharmacist designated a Fellow of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society' announcement, a 'Public Health Dorset' banner, and a 'LATEST NEWS' section with articles on 'YOUR NHS', 'Public Health Dorset New Website Now Launched', and 'PharmOutcomes Support for the National Seasonal Flu Vaccines Advanced Service'.

### Hertfordshire



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Hertfordshire Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC). It features a navigation bar with links like 'About us', 'Community Pharmacy Contract', 'Public Health', 'Information Technology', 'Pharmacy Resources', 'Your Area', and 'Healthy Living Pharmacy (HLP)'. The main content area includes a 'Welcome to the website of Hertfordshire Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC)' message, a 'LATEST NEWS' section with articles on 'Introduction of new arrangements for the Community Pharmacy Assurance Framework (CPAF)', 'Community Pharmacy Emergency Supplies Scheme', and 'Polypharmacy, Co-Morbidity and Interventions Practice Based Audit 2014/15', and a 'LATEST PSNC NEWS' section with an 'MHRA Drug Safety Update'.

### Leicestershire & Rutland



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC). It features a navigation bar with links like 'Your LPC', 'NHS Area Team', 'News', 'Services', 'Training and Development', 'Events', and 'Newsletters'. The main content area includes a 'Welcome to Leicestershire and Rutland LPC Website' message, a 'Tweets' section, a 'Pharmacy Opening Hours' calendar, and a 'LATEST NEWS' section with articles on 'Emergency Repeat Medicine Scheme - WLCCG, EL CCG and City CCG', 'Enhanced payments - STOP smoking', and 'WEST LEICESTERSHIRE CCG PHARMACY FIRST MINOR ALIENANTS SCHEME'.

You can explore these websites in more detail for inspiration using the links below:

[www.cpcw.org.uk](http://www.cpcw.org.uk)  
[psnc.org.uk/dorset-lpc](http://psnc.org.uk/dorset-lpc)  
[www.hertslpc.org.uk](http://www.hertslpc.org.uk)  
[psnc.org.uk/leicestershire-and-rutland-lpc](http://psnc.org.uk/leicestershire-and-rutland-lpc)

### Best practice example – Community Pharmacy Humber

Community Pharmacy Humber held an awards event to recognise the excellent contribution to patient care, public health and community involvement that community pharmacies in the Humber area provide. Full details of the event, including winners, are available at: [communitypharmacyhumber.org/our-news/community-pharmacy-humber-awards-winners-announced](https://communitypharmacyhumber.org/our-news/community-pharmacy-humber-awards-winners-announced)

### Best practice example – South Yorkshire LPCs

Dementia Champion and local pharmacy owner Sally Porter was invited by Nick Hunter, LPC Secretary to Doncaster and Rotherham LPCs, to run a workshop for South Yorkshire pharmacy teams on how they can better support those living with dementia and their families. Find out more at: [psnc.org.uk/our-news/rotherham-pharmacist-leads-the-way-on-dementia-care](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/rotherham-pharmacist-leads-the-way-on-dementia-care)

## 2. Commissioners and local councillors

### Who they are

This group is your local decision-makers, including CCG and NHS England staff as well as councillors and even MPs.

### How to engage them

- Your LPC website – a simple and effective way to get messages out to everyone.
- Emails – the best way to get your recent messages through quickly and conveniently.
- Letters – a more official touch which is harder to ignore than an email.
- Social media – a quick way to get important headlines out to everyone.
- Attendance at public events – good networking opportunities.
- Commissioner/ council meetings – a good way of ensuring commissioners remember pharmacy.
- PSNC's *Pharmacy Commissioning* emails – these could be forwarded on with local updates from your LPC.

### Risks and how to reduce them

Possible risk	How to manage it
Can't reach them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask your existing contacts to sign up to your communication channels.</li> <li>• Encourage those who have signed up to forward the communications to their colleagues.</li> <li>• Actively work to engage with any that show an interest in pharmacy or health.</li> </ul>
Messages missed/ ignored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep your communications short and to the point as they will get bombarded with information from lots of different groups.</li> <li>• Make sure you amend your communications to cater for what they are interested in – focus on helping local people and making savings for the NHS.</li> </ul>
Complaints	Respond directly (rather than publically) and in a professional manner.

### Best practice example – *Think Pharmacy* events

Some LPCs, including Hertfordshire and Swindon & Wiltshire, have held *Think Pharmacy* events to give local healthcare stakeholders a better idea of what community pharmacy teams do. Town and county councillors, parliamentary candidates, social care commissioners, GP practice staff, CCG members and NHS England representatives were all invited. Whilst Hertfordshire LPC took attendees on a tour of three local pharmacies, Swindon & Wiltshire LPC created a video showcasing positive patient experiences of community pharmacy. More ideas and guidance on creating your own *Think Pharmacy* event can be found at: [psnc.org.uk/thinkpharmacy](https://psnc.org.uk/thinkpharmacy)

### Best practice example – Lambeth, Southwark & Lewisham LPC

Lewisham pharmacies were featured in the Local Government Association's (LGA) publication *Checking the health of the nation: Implementing the NHS Health Check Programme* as a case study on using community pharmacies to deliver health checks. Jayesh Patel, CEO of Lambeth, Southwark & Lewisham LPC, said: "Our relationship with Lewisham CCG, the commissioner, has been key to making this service a success." Read the publication at: [tinyurl.com/NHShealthcheckexamples](https://tinyurl.com/NHShealthcheckexamples)

### Best practice example – Avon LPC

Avon LPC holds an annual conference for local healthcare stakeholders to showcase the great work community pharmacy delivers on a daily basis. The conference aims to highlight the role community pharmacy plays as part of the wider integrated health team through celebrating local successes, most recently new Healthy Living Pharmacies and a hospital discharge project.

### Best practice example – MP visits

A number of LPCs have organised MP visits to local pharmacies – you can see pictures from the visits at: [pharmacymanifesto.com](http://pharmacymanifesto.com). PSNC has created a briefing on organising a successful MP or councillor visit to a pharmacy, a Pharmacy Visit Guide – Key Messages, and an MP visit feedback form; these are all available at: [psnc.org.uk/psncs-work/communications-and-lobbying/national-and-local-lobbying](http://psnc.org.uk/psncs-work/communications-and-lobbying/national-and-local-lobbying). You may also wish to refer to part 3 of this guide which discusses handling the press.

### Community pharmacy campaign resources

On 17th December 2015 the Government announced a number of plans for community pharmacy via an open letter to PSNC. Since then LPCs, contractors and the national pharmacy organisations have been campaigning to ensure that policy makers reconsider the plans and understand the value of community pharmacy. To support LPCs, PSNC has created [a briefing setting out guidance and tips for LPCs on organising MP and stakeholder engagement events](#).

Further support is also available on the [LPC Campaign Resources Hub](#).

## 3. Patients/ the general public

### Who they are

This group is your local community, including patient forums and Healthwatch.

### How to engage them

- Local press (newspapers and/or radio stations) – utilising those who work in communications to help impress the importance of your messages.
- Social media – a quick way to get important headlines out to everyone.
- Your LPC website – a simple and effective way to get messages out to everyone.
- Stakeholder groups (e.g. Healthwatch) – working with others to help you spread your messages to your target audience more effectively.
- Attendance at public events – good networking opportunities.
- Presentations to patient forums – a good way of ensuring the public knows about pharmacy.

### Risks and how to reduce them

Possible risk	How to manage it
Can't reach them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use different means of communication and promote your communications in different places.</li> <li>• Encourage those you do reach to share with others.</li> <li>• Actively work to engage with local charities or organisations that have an interest in pharmacy or health.</li> </ul>
Messages missed/ ignored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid using terms only a pharmacist would understand – remember, the average UK reading age is that of a nine-year-old.</li> <li>• Attention-grabbing – make sure your communications encourage people to read on.</li> </ul>
Complaints	Respond directly (rather than publically) and in a professional manner.

### Best practice example – Devon LPC

David Bearman and Mark Stone of Devon LPC have made a couple of appearances on a web TV channel Hiblio ([www.hiblio.tv/about-us](http://www.hiblio.tv/about-us)) to highlight what community pharmacy teams can do. Their first appearance was to

highlight the services and advice available from local pharmacy teams, whilst their second saw them discussing the importance of getting the flu vaccination and providing winter self-care advice (timed to coincide with the launch of the national pharmacy flu vaccination service). The two episodes can be watched on-demand at:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOGgO2DAfnY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOGgO2DAfnY)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2HPy1hIB\\_Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2HPy1hIB_Y)



### Best practice example – Community Pharmacy West Yorkshire (CPWY)

CPWY worked with a local imam and a film production company to create some really useful videos explaining how community pharmacy teams can advise Muslim patients on their medicines use during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Three videos were produced: information for patients (to be used in local mosques); information for pharmacy teams; and a final video to explain how pharmacy teams are being trained and supported in advising Muslim patients during Ramadan. All three are now freely available at: [tinyurl.com/RamadanPharmacyVideos](http://tinyurl.com/RamadanPharmacyVideos)

### Best practice examples – national pharmacy flu vaccination service campaigns

Three more examples of LPCs who did something a bit different to promote national pharmacy flu vaccination service to the public:

- North of Tyne LPC worked on a campaign jointly funded with Gateshead & South Tyneside LPC, Sunderland LPC, and County Durham & Darlington LPC. The joint campaign was comprised of local newspaper, radio and bus adverts – including a front page ad on local paper *The Chronicle*.
- As one of the few areas of the country which had never had a local pharmacy flu vaccination service, Derbyshire LPC “wanted more than just a press release” and to focus on the public service message so they developed an interactive map of local flu vaccination providers using geo-mapping software. You can view the interactive map of Derbyshire’s pharmacy flu vaccination providers at: <https://batchgeo.com/map/afc0c5c18e0799cfda5ef167ce4c6c4d>
- Some LPCs, including Devon, Somerset and West Yorkshire, made use of a text message service developed by PharmOutcomes. This information service provides contact details and approximate distance for the nearest three participating pharmacies to a person once they have texted ‘pharmacy flu’ and their postcode to 80011. Speak to the PharmOutcomes team to find out if this mechanism can be used for your local pharmacy services.



## Section C: Sending email newsletters

Producing email newsletters is a simple and effective way of sending all your recent messages in a summarised manner.

Setting a specific day of the week to send it will help create consistency for your subscribers – and it should help your workload. Some email newsletter programs, such as Mailchimp, even have scheduling options which will allow you to create your newsletter and set it to send at a specific time or the following day.

On occasion, there may be some important news which cannot wait and therefore you want to send out as a one-article newsletter straight away. This should be kept to a minimum because sending more than one email per week can discourage people from reading your emails; they may feel as if they are being bombarded with too much information.

The same goes for the length of your emails: less is definitely more. A brief synopsis of a news article followed by a link to the relevant page and/or resources on your LPC site will help encourage your subscribers find content quickly and easily. A key reason for sending email newsletters is to encourage your subscribers to keep visiting your website for the latest information and not giving away the full story in the email will help encourage more people to click through to your site. This will in turn help increase the number of visitors to your LPC site by showcasing its content.

Depending on how you set up your mailing list, you could also use your newsletters to target specific groups of people (e.g. pharmacy teams in certain areas or LPC members) with just the information that is relevant to them.

### Getting people signed up

Most email newsletter programs will allow you to upload your pre-existing subscriber lists, but it is important to remember that you must have express permission from those people you want to send email newsletters to. You cannot just add everyone in your contacts list without confirming they are happy to be a subscriber.

The easiest way to add new subscribers to your list is through the use of a simple registration form on your LPC site. Most email newsletter programs will provide assistance on creating and embedding such forms, but you could also create your own using the *Formidable Forms* plugin and periodically export those people onto your subscriber list. Guidance on building and using *Formidable Forms* is available on page 21 of our [LPC Sites User Guide](#).

### The legal requirements

You must include your contact information on every email that you send; including a physical mailing address or PO Box where you can receive post (a website or email address is not sufficient).

Anti-spam laws require that subscribers opt in to, or ask to join, your list and an 'unsubscribe' link so subscribers are able to remove themselves from your list should they wish to. This ensures your subscribers are interested in your emails, and helps keep invalid email addresses off your list.

When a subscriber checks a box or signs up for your email list, it must be very clear the person is signing up to receive emails from you. You should never purchase, rent or harvest email addresses from others to build a list – the people who own these addresses haven't given you permission.

### Monitoring engagement

Most email newsletter programs will provide statistical information on how many of your subscribers are looking at your emails or clicking on links contained within them. LPCs should also take advantage of this email tracking system to inform future content by scrutinising which aspects of your newsletters generate the most interest.

'Open rates' measure the number of email recipients who open (that is, view) an email divided by the total number of emails sent. They are tracked through the rendering of an included image pixel. Since images are almost always downloaded on mobile devices but are often blocked on desktop email programs such as Outlook, it can be a difficult metric to interpret. It's commonly quoted that average open rate performance is typically in the range of 10-15%, with high performers achieving 15-20%.

'Click rates' measure the number of unique clicks on links in emails divided by the total number of emails sent. A click is recorded when a subscriber clicks on one or more links in the email. As it requires a conscious action by the email recipient, click rates generally provide a better measure of engagement.

## Best practice examples

### Avon



### East Sussex



### Gloucestershire



### Swindon & Wiltshire



### Thames Valley



Read these in full or look back through their newsletter archives for inspiration using the links below:

[psnc.org.uk/avon-lpc/news-and-events/archive](http://psnc.org.uk/avon-lpc/news-and-events/archive)  
[www.eastsussexlpc.co.uk/about-us-2/lpc-newsletters-published-monthly](http://www.eastsussexlpc.co.uk/about-us-2/lpc-newsletters-published-monthly)  
[psnc.org.uk/gloucestershire-lpc/newsletter](http://psnc.org.uk/gloucestershire-lpc/newsletter)  
[psnc.org.uk/swindon-and-wiltshire-lpc/about-us/newsletters](http://psnc.org.uk/swindon-and-wiltshire-lpc/about-us/newsletters)  
[www.pharmacythamesvalley.org.uk/about-us/publications](http://www.pharmacythamesvalley.org.uk/about-us/publications)

## Our recommendation

PSNC uses the online tool Mailchimp to send its email newsletters out to LPCs and pharmacy teams. There are other email clients available but plugins for Mailchimp have been made available for LPCs to integrate their email list with their website. We have created [a guide showing LPCs how to use Mailchimp](#).

## Managing the routine workload

If you have limited capacity, consider using your LPC site administrator to also manage your communications as there is considerable overlap of within these roles.

If you have a bit more resource, consider employing a communications manager who can work to tailor your posts to your different audiences and help draw people to the information you want them to read.

If you have willing tech-savvy LPC Members, they could set up their own accounts and give additional support to the main LPC social media account via re-posting or creating extra posts about LPC news and resources. You would need to be confident that any independently posting members will remain 'on-message'.

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If you have queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information please contact [Melinda Mabbutt, Communications Officer](#).