



August 2015



LPCs in the spotlight– Essex LPC

Essex LPC is one of the larger LPCs with 335 contractors. Within its area there are currently seven CCGs, three Health and Wellbeing Boards, Essex County Council together with two unitary authorities, Thurrock and Southend Councils.

The LPC has its office in Chelmsford where the staff includes a full time office manager, a part time administrator, a contractor development manager and the LPC is about to recruit a part time business development officer. Heading up the office team is Chief Officer Ash Pandya who joined the LPC in 2007 as Business Development Manager and was appointed Chief Executive in April 2009. Prior to working for the LPC Ash was a contractor for 14 years and worked for 10 years as the National Commissioning Manager at NHS Direct.

Although being a large LPC in terms of contractor numbers the size of the committee has reduced from 15 to 11 members (5 CCA and 6 independent). This says Ash, has not only released funding for more contractor support it has invigorated the LPC making it more interactive and working better as a team. To support this LPC members' recently conducted peer-to-peer appraisals examining their effectiveness, strengths and areas for improvement (Ash has an annual appraisal conducted by the LPC Chair and a Governance and Scrutiny committee member).

Local training days for Essex LPC members help their development and ensure they have the skills to carry out their role, in addition to the PSNC training days they also attend. For certain upcoming local training events some non LPC committee members will be invited to attend to develop local leadership, as in addition to the LPC CCGs often want to have local grassroots contractors attend meetings

Essex LPC meetings

The Committee meets formally bi-monthly. Each member is encouraged to submit action papers to contribute to the agenda in order to ensure the agenda is driven by elected members on key issues. However, getting regular input is still challenging.

Having explored electronic only agendas the LPC returned to a hard copy professionally bound agenda for its members. Agendas and minutes are on the [LPC website](#) too.

Before their meetings Essex contractors are asked if they have any items for the agenda, either by committee members or directly at forum meetings. Every other meeting there is a working session typically with commissioners and stakeholders including Directors,

Senior Managers, Support Staff, Prescribing Advisers and Chief Pharmacists. – in July for example health and social care colleagues joined the LPC meeting to discuss the Five Year Forward View: this is typically done as workshop style discussions around various table each led by an LPC member. This says Ash is more constructive and achieves better outcomes – pledges are encouraged and followed up to ensure they are not broken!

Subcommittee working was common in the past but the LPC has stripped out most of those for more efficient ways of working with leads for specific areas such as education, media and clinical. However the Governance overview and scrutiny subcommittee remains.

Forums

Essex is a large area. To keep in touch across the patch there are sponsored quarterly meetings in each of the five old PCT areas. These are for contractors and their staff – setting out the dates a year in advance gives plenty of notice and boosts attendance. All the meetings are sponsored with sponsorship agreed a year in advance, so by September they will have a schedule of meetings and sponsors for the following year. The content is mainly clinical but includes an LPC update and discussions on contractor issues too. The Forums, says Ash, are a great success, really getting contractor engagement with services and a better understanding of the role and work of the LPC.

Other activity

Essex LPC organises an annual conference which includes the AGM. This year the LPC also ran a speed dating style event for contractors, covering the main contractual issues. Tables on topics such as IG, Audit, GPHC inspections, clinical governance etc. were spread around the room hosted by specialists in each area including NHS England leads. Contractors spent 30 minutes at each group before moving to another with a different topic. This was really well received by contractors, Ash said, as it was held in late January just before the end of the financial year. The LPC will organise other training events as required. In total it is not uncommon to hold 30 plus contractor events in a year.

In addition to services commissioned through local stakeholders, the LPC has also supported contractors in delivering a range of services commissioned through industry such as migraine management, lung checks for COPD and early detection of cancer. The office is very proactive in supporting contractors to deliver the required outcomes.

Essex LPC has facilitated the setting up of a provider company: a unique approach that avoids the difficulties for some contractors not wanting to be or not able to be on the board of the company. The Company has limited share ownership but it is held through a nominee structure for the benefit of all the members of the Association, and others if desired, that want to be involved and join in the ownership body.

The LPC has also recently acquired the lease of its premises, so cutting annual rental costs.

Essex LPC has a lively and attractively presented [Newsletter](#) . They thought about going electronic only but hard copy is what contractors really wanted so it is available in the

pharmacy for all the staff to read. The newsletter is circulated to all stakeholders and industry, so often initiates discussions and specific topics.

Essex LPC shows what can be achieved by a larger LPC with the resources to provide a wide range of services and support to its contractors. Ash says that contractors pay a levy to fund the LPC and they expect and deserve a quality product. This can only be achieved by having sufficient resources to have an effective staffing structure to deliver the end product for contractors.

To find out more about Essex LPC <http://www.essexlpc.org.uk/>

For information about the LPCs in the Spotlight series contact mike.king@psnc.org.uk