



April 2017



LPCs in the spotlight– Suffolk LPC

Suffolk LPC covers a diverse area with the North Sea to the east, a large rural area with towns that include Lowestoft, Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket and Felixstowe, one of the largest container ports in Europe. The area also has 147 pharmacy contractors, a number that will soon be reduced by several pharmacy mergers.

The CEO is Tania Farrow who works part time (24hrs a week), with a Services Support Officer (30 hours) and Communications Officer (15 hours).

LPC meetings

The LPC meets 6 times a year - daytime meetings with as much business as possible on the main agenda to avoid the need for subcommittees. Whilst there are few CCG commissioned services, there are a range of public health services to monitor which include sexual health, health checks, smoking cessation, methadone supervision and needle exchange services.

The LPC is keen to get involved with the STP and is already represented on the STP Joint Medicines Optimisation Board, the Integrated Care Network and the Prevention Strategy Implementation Group. Tania feels the STP board is dealing with high level strategy so is not necessarily the best point of influence. In Suffolk, the most effective way appears to be through the work streams feeding into the STP and that is where the LPC's priorities lie. This has resulted in community pharmacy being considered as part of the pathway for community blood pressure monitoring services and support for referrals from hospitals on discharge.

Contractor engagement

Contractors are struggling to engage with local services with all the other pressures in pharmacy and this is a challenge for the LPC. The LPC's communications recognise these pressures and make sure that messages are prioritised, succinct and to the point. The LPC website is regularly and carefully managed to make sure it is just the immediate information and action needed that greets visitors. Historic material is quickly archived.

A weekly email, always on a Monday morning, highlights the priorities and action needed in the week ahead, with links to relevant forms and websites." Contractor feedback has been fantastic" says Tania. There is also a quarterly contractor's newsletter, again prioritising one specific 'must know' subject that is immediately relevant such as pharmacy funding.

The LPC also produces stakeholder newsletters each with information specifically relevant to the recipient such as CCGs or Healthwatch.

The LPC has all contractors' email addresses and the recipients know if it's an email from the LPC it's a "must read" message. Visits to pharmacies by Officers are a priority and the LPC has held a series of recent contractor events to support pharmacies through the funding cuts. The LPC also liaises with CPPE and local providers to ensure support and training are available to contractors, especially around Quality Payments and Commissioned Services.

Achievements

The LPC is a Royal Society for Public Health training centre offering Level 2 Understanding Health Improvement to support Health Champion Training. This has allowed the LPC to fully support contractors with the HLP process with almost all the 147 contractors signed up for support. This has allowed the LPC to take advantage of the increased focus on HLP that the Quality Payments Framework has created. With locally secured funding, the LPC has also provided face to face CPPE Leadership training and bespoke Evidence Folders, available to all pharmacies.

The LPC works closely with the neighbouring Norfolk LPC and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough LPC; collaborating and sharing resources whenever possible. This has recently resulted in a successful funding bid to support community pharmacy pre-registration tutors across the three LPC areas, focusing on the current reforms and building local support networks.

The LPC has recently had a full review of its governance to iron out some weak areas to make sure it is in good shape. This has given the LPC a firm foundation to build on its relationships with commissioners and other organisations.

The feature that stands out from Suffolk LPC is that it recognises that a huge amount of information is available to contractors and the LPC feel the best way to help their busy contractors is to distil it down to what they should know or must do. This is presented in succinct bite size packages. From the feedback received that is something their contractors appreciate and this has in turn improved all round engagement.

To find out more about Suffolk LPC visit the LPC website at <http://psnc.org.uk/suffolk-lpc/>

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