

Affiliated Groups



How technology can take the stress out of running your local group

When **Emma Thompson** stepped into the role of chair of the South Yorkshire Respiratory Interest Group, a PCRS affiliated local group, she felt overwhelmed by the task ahead of her.

A Primary Care Development Nurse at NHS Sheffield CCG, Emma had served on the committee of the group since it was launched in 2016.

The group's creator was Jackie Dale Jackie, a university lecturer, whose job involved supporting practice nurses. Through her contacts she had built up a thriving and popular group with a database of 190 healthcare professionals.

Emma took over as chair at the end of 2018. Being time poor like most healthcare professionals she decided she needed to streamline the organisation of the group.

She decided her first port of call was to make better use of technology. However she was not an IT expert, so she enlisted the help of her husband who set up two free online platforms for her – mailchimp and eventbrite. These have now made it much faster and easier to organise meetings and keep in contact with members.

The spreadsheet of the group's contacts, which previously had to be updated manually, has been imported into mailchimp, an online marketing platform. This now automatically updates the database when new members are added or others removed and is used to email all contacts to notify them of meetings. Importantly, it ensures that the group is compliant with data protection rules.

The platform Eventbrite now organises the bookings for the quarterly meetings. Emma explains: "It's really easy to do – you add in the date and time of your event, how many people you expect to attend and then it creates a link which is emailed to all members of the group. The recipients can then book online via the email link and I can print off the list of delegates who are coming to the meeting. The list can then be used as the sign-in sheet. If for any reason you have to cancel the event at the last minute you just click on one button to email everybody."

There are 15 sponsors who support the group. To keep things simple, the venue and time is always the same and the sponsors organise and divide up payment for the hire of the room between themselves. They pay the venue directly on the night. This saves Emma having to take on the responsibility of a bank account.

Emma has also set up a Facebook page to improve communication with members. Every month she spends a small

amount of time pre-scheduling in posts about respiratory news and other topics of interest to the respiratory community, which are published a couple of times a week.

"These few changes have made all the difference to what was a previously labour intensive operation. It has really paid dividends and the group is now really lightweight to run. We have a database of about 300 people who we can now quickly and easily email regularly. Running the group feels very low maintenance and do-able now," says Emma.

In addition Emma ensures that she delegates tasks to a small committee which supports the group and has between them a range of different skills and contacts. This will help to future proof the group as it will ensure that there are others who know how the group operates and will be able to step up when Emma decides that it is time for her to move on.

Emma's top tips for running a streamlined group:

- If you are thinking of setting up a group from scratch, adopt the technology from the very beginning.
- If you aren't a techie then ask someone who is to help you
- Use a platform like mailchimp to manage your marketing emails: <https://mailchimp.com>
- Use a platform like eventbrite to manage your events: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk>
- Talk to your local sponsors to find out how they can support your group
- Recruit an enthusiastic committee who are prepared to shoulder some of the work and who will be prepared to run the group after you have left
- Keep in regular touch with members on your database through social media – Twitter, Facebook etc to ensure the group stays on everybody's radar and potentially recruit new members.



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Affiliated Groups

Working together to make a real difference
in respiratory care

PCRS Affiliated Groups connect colleagues who are passionate about developing respiratory care together in your local area. If there isn't a group near you, why not create your own?



PCRS is here to help you with

- **Support and resources** to help you get started and develop a new group.
- **An affiliation scheme** offering enhanced credibility and support for your group from a national network.
- **A regular newsletter**, packed with ideas to help support your group.
- **An annual meeting** for Group Leaders to support personal and collective respiratory development in your area.
- **Free PCRS membership** for leaders of an affiliated local group.

Be part of a thriving respiratory care network

We're here to help you with improving respiratory care for patients. We know it can be daunting and frustrating – especially when facing budget cuts, juggling workloads and trying to keep up with the latest developments.

PCRS has around 50 affiliated local groups in the UK, including nursing groups, primary care groups sharing knowledge about clinical developments and multi-disciplinary communities of practice driving service improvement in a local area.

Find out about our affiliated groups by visiting
<https://pcrs-uk.org/affiliated-groups>

