

Practical solutions for ensuring the long-term future of local affiliated groups



Fran Robinson reports on a recent annual networking event of PCRS affiliated group leaders held on 27 September 2018 led by PCRS Vice Chair Carol Stonham

PCRS local affiliated groups are continuing to thrive and develop, the annual meeting of group leaders heard. A number of groups are increasingly attracting members of the wider primary care multidisciplinary team and others welcome colleagues from secondary care, creating opportunities to network.

One group in North-East Essex set up a year ago reported they have excellent attendance from pharmacists, GPs, nurses, doctors and mental health nurses. In total they have 80 members and over 100 on Facebook.

Another group in Southampton, which started as a nurse group, has recently doubled and then tripled their numbers and is now attracting research nurses, GPs, pharmacists and occasionally colleagues from the ambulance services.

Keeping the momentum of a group going, however, can be a challenge with established leaders retiring, other leaders struggling to keep groups going single-handed and keeping numbers up when busy healthcare professionals lack time to attend meetings. Some leaders said many of their older regular members were coming up to retirement and they recognised that they needed to attract new younger members.

The meeting discussed some solutions for maintaining numbers. These included:

- Think carefully about the agenda to ensure it is attractive to members. Ask members what they want to see on the agenda. One leader said one of their most successful meetings included a talk by a paediatrician about the care of children with respiratory disease in the emergency department. Another recommended offering bite-size 10 minute training soundbites. The PCRS affiliated groups newsletter offers tips and suggestions for topics to discuss at meetings.

Carol Stonham, PCRS Vice Chair, suggested that a useful project for local groups could be to do an audit of the knowledge, skills and training of their members using the PCRS 'Fit to Care' document (https://www.pcrs-uk.org/sites/pcrs-uk.org/files/FitTo-Care_FINAL.pdf) and to send the results to PCRS to compile into a report. The national picture of what's happening will make interesting reading. *"This is a valuable exercise to do and could highlight areas where people might need additional training. The document is quick and easy to read but is concise, detailed and well written,"* she said.

- Ask pharmaceutical companies to help with funding and relieving some of the workload. Ruth Thomas from Milton Keynes, who runs a well attended group, said: "We are funded and helped by six or seven pharmaceutical companies. They book the venue for me while I draw up the agenda and send out the email invitations and the certificates after the meeting. I don't touch the money they provide. If you have several companies helping you, no one can say there is any bias from any one company. In return, the companies have a display stand at the meeting. The educational content remains independent."
- Use the PCRS members' directory to find colleagues with whom to discuss problems and find solutions
- Use your colleagues to bounce ideas off each other and give you valuable support
- Don't do everything on your own. Set up an education committee that can provide you with help and back-up. Start by asking for help with small tasks like photocopying or managing the members' list so the responsibility is not overwhelming. Over time, people will become more confident and are likely to take on more of the work that needs doing. Jackie Dale said: "Sometimes people don't step up to help because they think the job will be too big and they won't be able to cope. It is important to manage their expectations."
- Encourage new people to come to meetings. Ask your CCG or practice manager if they have email distribution lists that will provide you with the addresses of all the practice nurses and other primary healthcare professionals in your area who may be interested in coming to meetings. Some of them may not know your group exists.

Thinking of setting up a local group? Benefits of PCRS Affiliated Groups

Working in primary care can, at times, feel quite lonely and isolating. With the ever-present pressures of today's NHS, there just aren't enough hours in the day to keep up to date or just take time to enjoy our jobs.

That's where PCRS affiliated local groups come in. They offer a lifeline for nurses and other healthcare professionals enabling them to stay in touch, network with colleagues, learn about clinical issues, share best practice and, moreover, offer a welcome chance for some fun and camaraderie. See <https://pcrs-uk.org/affiliated-groups> to see if there is an affiliated group near you.

PCRS can offer support to get you started. We can introduce you to members who are already running successful groups so that they can help mentor you through the initial stages and we also provide a resource pack (see <https://www.pcrs-uk.org/resource-pack-help-you-get-started>). See <https://pcrs-uk.org/local-groups-getting-inspired> for more information on how to get started.

Affiliating your group to PCRS confers free PCRS membership for the group leader and the opportunity to attend group leader workshops.

We can:

- Promote your events/meetings by sending emails to members in your area and adding your meetings to our events listing on our website
- List your group on our website and promote it to our members
- Point you in the direction of tools and resources that you can use as a basis for discussion and local update
- Send you a regular newsletter especially for group leaders offering tips and advice for managing your group and sharing information

To affiliate your group visit

<https://www.pcrs-uk.org/affiliation-pcrs-uk>



Affiliated Groups

Working together to make a real difference in respiratory care

Our network of around 50 affiliated groups across the UK help you to connect with healthcare professional involved in respiratory care in your area. If there isn't a group in your area appropriate to your needs, why not set one up?



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.

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

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PCRS Respiratory Conference

19-21 September 2019, Telford International Centre



The must attend multidisciplinary conference for professionals involved in respiratory care across primary, community and specialist settings anywhere in the UK

- A diverse programme focusing on a holistic approach to caring for people with respiratory disease through thought-provoking keynote plenary presentations, clinical and service development sessions, scientific research abstracts and practical workshops
- Central nationally acclaimed conference venue located in the heart of the UK within easy reach via road, rail and air
- Great value for money with registration fees starting at under £200 inclusive of the conference dinner

Find out more information by visiting
<https://pcrs-uk.org/annual-conference>