

PCRS-UK Affiliated Groups

How to future proof your affiliated group



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When respiratory nurse specialist Melissa Canavan launched the Leeds Respiratory Network with her colleague Sarah Anderson in October 2013 they initially ran it by splitting the work between themselves.

They were concerned about data showing that Leeds was one of the worst places in the country for respiratory outcomes and were inspired to set up the network after attending a PCRS-UK Clinical Leaders work-shop.

Melissa, then a practice nurse, felt isolated in her practice and wanted to connect with colleagues and to organise educational events to help reduce the local variation in general practice respiratory care.

Melissa and Sarah built up a large database of interested healthcare professionals and began sending out regular emails and posting on so-cial media to inform everyone about the latest respiratory news and developments. The network now runs two or three educational evening events a year and holds an annual one-day conference with national speakers.

Both Melissa and Sarah achieved all this on top of being full-time moth-ers, running their homes, working in busy day jobs and studying at university.

Eventually they realised they needed help and decided the best way forward would be to set up an education committee to help them to plan and organise events.

Involving colleagues in running affiliated groups not only provides vital support for the Lead, but is an excellent way of future proofing the

group by ensuring there is always someone to take up the mantle if the Lead retires or moves away to another job.

Melissa says it was easy to set up the committee. "I sent out an email asking people to get in touch if they wanted to come on board with us. A few people replied. We arranged to meet and I explained that I wanted to set up an education committee. They all looked rather nerv-ous but I was honest with them and said – let's just try and see if it works."

The group, now with eight members, has bonded and meets three times a year over a meal to plan events.

The committee members have all grown personally and professionally from being involved with the committee and five have attended the PCRS-UK Clinical Leaders programme. "We support each other and I have seen my colleagues thrive and find their voice. All the committee members have grown in confidence and have made changes in their own practices. Some have negotiated pay rises which is making them feel more valued while others have gained to confidence to move on to new jobs," says Melissa.

She says they now have some terrific debates in their meetings. "It's a lot of work thinking up who you can invite to speak and what subjects should be discussed. If you have a committee, people not only bounce ideas off each other but they also share the load.

"I would say to anyone who is either setting up or running an established group on their own – make sure you get some support from other members of the group – that way your group will thrive."