

Frequently asked questions for Branches and LPFs

Q. What is happening to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society Branch network?

A. We would like to have all Local Practice Forums (LPFs) in place by the end of 2010 so that all Society members have access to either an active or virtual LPF by this time. The TransCom Prospectus included input from across a wide representation of the profession and it provided a blueprint for the future of local networks which would be built around the concept of LPFs. The Prospectus also clearly stated that LPFs would work in collaboration with 'existing local arrangements (branches where valued by members, for example)'. The infrastructure for 48 LPFs has now been developed.

Q. How will LPFs and Branches work and function together?

A. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society is not able to offer support for two separate local structures. This means that in any one locality, one of two things will happen:

1. The local Branch or Branches should now be evolving into an LPF with Society members receiving all of their local services via the LPF structure and network. As an interim measure 'en route' to a fully functional LPF, it may be appropriate and in the interest of the members for the current Branch activity to be adopted by the LPF. From January 2010, where a functional LPF exists, the LPF will be the sole recipient of any central funding from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society.
2. Many of the old Branches are holding locality meetings under the umbrella of the newly formed LPF.

Q. Does this mean that local Branches will at some stage cease to exist?

A. Most Branches have now fully transitioned into an evolving LPF and the process and timing of this will vary according to the pace of development within each new LPF, most of this work is now done and many of the Branches have formally notified the Society that they are now closed. At some stage in the future, local Branches will cease to function and there may well be situations where the local LPF leadership team reaches a pragmatic agreement with local stakeholders for the Branch to continue for an interim period, again where this is in the interest of the members other "old" Branches are forming the foundations for a locality within the LPF. In this situation, the LPF would be accountable for the local funding and where appropriate would agree any interim Branch funding. Branches will cease to receive any form of direct RPSGB funding from January 2011.

Q. Is there an expectation that the current Branch committee members will migrate to the new LPF leadership roles?

A. Current Branch committee members are invaluable in the ongoing development of the LPFs alongside new and emerging leaders from within the LPF locality. Local members will decide who forms the LPF leadership team and in the short term we will encourage and engage with those members who are willing to act locally to initiate and support the development of the LPF. We are hopeful that many of these local leaders will come from the existing Branch network. The LPF toolkit (page 34 - 37) outlines a suggested approach to the identification of LPF leadership roles to support the selection of the Transitional Steering Group. Board members can support and advise as appropriate if necessary.

Q. What will happen to any funding held in inactive Branches?

A. Such funds have been allocated in the past for the benefit of local members so any funds that currently exist in inactive Branch locations should be directed towards the new LPF account for that locality. LPFs are there to support members locally and this valuable source of funding will be used to support early and ongoing LPF activity. Branch committees have willingly been transitioning funds to the new LPF accounts to support the network.

Q. Will there come a time when Branches stop receiving funds from the Society?

A. The dual funding of both the Branch and LPF functions is not sustainable in the future. All funding to local Branches will cease from January 2011.

Q. Our branch used to claim expenses for speakers centrally, will this continue with the LPFs?

A. Expenses for LPF speakers will be paid from LPF funds as previously happened with the old branch set up. This will of course, need to be agreed by the steering groups and paid within existing budgets.

Q. In the past our Regional Committee used to claim expenses for committee members attendance centrally, will this continue with the LPFs?

A. Regional Committees have previously received funding for their committees expenses which will cease as regions hold their final meetings to formally close their accounts for redistribution to LPFs in their area.

Q. What will happen if a Branch in my locality with whom we will be jointly forming an LPF has a very healthy bank account and my Branch only has a small amount in the bank?

A. Prior to the issue of LPF set up funding, consideration should be given to the accumulative value of Branch funding in the proposed LPF locality. This will ensure that valuable Royal Pharmaceutical Society resource is targeted to those localities where there is a low level of funding in the combined Branch accounts. We would hope that neighbouring Branches with either low or high levels of existing funding would work together for the benefit of the new and wider LPF membership. This has worked out well in practice as all Branch funds have been brought together to support the LPF.

Q. What will happen to the Branch assets e.g. the Chairman's badge of office or the computer and fax machine?

A. Those current assets that can be used for future LPF administrative support e.g. Laptops, faxes etc. should be passed to the newly formed LPF leadership team by mutual local agreement. In terms of the Chairman's badges or trophies, the Branches can decide for themselves on how best to transfer or donate these assets to existing members. In the past when Branches have no longer needed these items they have been donated to the Society's museum for posterity other have given them for display at Schools of Pharmacy. Further guidance will be offered in due course should there be no local solution.

Q. On what basis will LPF funding be allocated in the future?

A. The LPFs will receive yearly core funding which will be based mainly on Society headcount in that LPF locality as per the previous Branch model. A 'bid' for extra funding can also be applied for. Other sources of funding are also available, further details are available in the LPF Toolkit on page 82 - 84. Further details of how LPFs will

be funded going forward will depend on a number of factors and will be shared with LPFs as soon as the picture becomes clearer in 2011.

Q. What about my attendance at the BRM and the BRSM?

A. These meetings were not held in 2010. RPS will continue to provide meeting opportunities and events to both share new ideas and general progress as well as listening to member feedback. To this effect, the LPFs may be invited to nominate and send representatives to centrally held meetings, the dates and frequency of which are yet to be determined.

Q. Can members have a right to meet and debate topics?

A. The Society will hold its AGM sometime in June 2011.

In 2009, we announced that there would be no plans for a branch and regional secretaries' meeting or a Branch representatives' meeting in 2010 as we concentrated our efforts on setting up and developing transitional committees for the emerging local practice forums. This work has progressed well and there are now over 40 LPF steering committees set up out of a total of 48. The RPS will continue to provide meeting opportunities and events to share new ideas and general progress, as well as listen to members' feedback. To this effect, the LPFs may be invited to nominate and send representatives to centrally held meetings, the dates and frequency of which are yet to be determined. Members are encouraged, via their LPFs, to raise issues of concern or submit policy ideas forward for their appropriate board for consideration. The Boards are there to listen to members views and LPFs are becoming increasingly important because they represent members locally. We are currently finalising LPF Governance arrangements and the expectation is that we will have a national meeting for representatives from LPFs in 2011. We are also working on a mechanism that will be ready by 2011, whereby issues the LPFs consider to be important will be able to be raised through the appropriate boards.

Q. How do I find out more about the development of LPFs?

A. Further information can be found on the LPF Virtual Networks which can be accessed via the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's website www.rpharms.com, or by contacting your Local Practice Forum Facilitator.

Q. I currently keep a database of emails of members on my PC. I want to continue to email members and do not wish to communicate with members through the Society.

A. It is important that Branches and LPFs adhere to DPA legislation. This data is not owned by the Branch or LPFs but by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, which takes its data protection responsibilities very seriously. You can contact your local Practice Forum Facilitator for details of how to communicate with members of your LPF.

Q. I have friends who are currently pharmacists but who do not plan to join the new PLB but want to still attend the local LPF? How will this be dealt with?

A. If a pharmacist is eligible to join the PLB but chooses not to subscribe to the new membership, then that pharmacist will not receive the services and benefits afforded to paying members. This means that if you are not a member of the Society then you will not be able to attend LPF meetings or have access to other LPF or wider Royal Pharmaceutical Society services.

Q. Can students and pre-regs attend LPF meetings?

A. It is likely that students and pre-regs will at some stage be invited to join the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and as such it would be permissible for students and pre-regs to attend LPF meetings on the invitation of the LPF members. We are currently asking members to approve two new categories of membership (students and associate). Once the result of this “special resolution” is known later in the year we will make a formal announcement.

Q. Once an LPF is established, does this mean that my Branch will be dissolved and if so, what is the process for this?

A. Clusters of local Branches have formed the foundation of the new LPFs and through mutual agreement between LPF and Branch leaders there will be a point in time when Branches will become dissolved but embraced in many respects by the new LPF. Many Branches have now formally dissolved.

Contact your LPF Facilitator for details of the process of the dissolution of Branches. We would like to thank all members that helped to run the committees of the Branches for their hard work and efforts.

Q. What do I need an LPF for if I have CPPE/WCPPE or NES?

A. These are excellent providers of CE, and we would never plan to compete with them. However they are not the only source of CE/CPD and traditionally local Branches and the PJ etc have provided additional content. LPFs will be a local focus for the organised collective delivery of CE/CPD to meet the demands of local members. It will also provide assistance with the recording of CPD. We have an agreement with CPPE in England to work together to ensure the resources of both organisations are used to best effect and to harness the expertise of CPPE.

Q. What is the role of the LPF Facilitators?

A. The LPF Facilitators job description is available on page 9 of the LPF toolkit.

Q. If you are talking about such a large area – we may need more help... can we get paid secretarial help?

A. The LPF will be allocated funding and if there are sufficient funds LPFs may choose external support if this is for the benefit of the LPF members, this may be for a one off event. However, the new ways of working electronically should make the administration of the network much easier. The LPF Facilitators will be working with the Transitional Steering Group leads locally to ensure efficient ways of working.

Q. What’s wrong with how it was – why did the Society want to change things?

A. You the members requested this change and your valued contributions to TransCom resulted in the Prospectus. The LPF concept was born out of this and designed by the membership, for the membership. Previously the best Branches were delivering great things but on average across all Branches there was a maximum of 10% of the current membership, and 0% in some locations, that attended Branch activities over the year. Attendance had been falling for several years and we needed to find new ways to attract the 90% of members who do not find value in the old current network. The TransCom Prospectus gave us a blueprint for the new body and it has described how LPFs will deliver more services than currently offered by Branches. Already more members have logged on to access the virtual networks than previously engaged with the Branch network.

Q. How much are we going to get – we would need to know that to plan for next year?

A. This is dependent upon the location and size of LPFs. The funding set aside for 2010 was broadly the same as that for Branch support in 2009. Further details on LPF funding can be found on page 82 - 84 of the LPF toolkit or contact your LPF Facilitator. Boards are planning funding for the future and as soon as we have more information on this it will be shared with LPFs.

Q. Can pharmaceutical scientists and pharmacy technicians also become involved in LPFs?

A. If there is a specific topic or programme of work that is relevant to the LPF agenda and in turn benefits the local membership or improves local health outcomes, then the LPF is empowered to invite scientists or technicians to support this work only. They will not however have wider access to LPF or PLB driven events or services.

We are investigating mechanisms to allow for the payment of attendance fees for non-members to attend in such circumstances.

Q. Can I change my primary LPF?

A. Members will be assigned to a specific LPF dependent on the address they have registered with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society; your primary LPF can be changed. You can do this by logging into the LPF Virtual Network www.rpharms.com and accessing 'Your Profile'. Members have access to all LPFs and may choose to belong to more than one (either by request or by invitation). Members will also be able to physically attend other LPFs, where the topics on offer interest them.

Q. In the past we used to put Branch core funding received from the Society away for a rainy day. We have been prudent with our funds and don't really want to put them towards the local LPF.

A. Many Branches are already discussing how best to support the LPF in their location. Some Branches chose to stay as a "locality" of an LPF and any money from the centre has been given to the LPF to allocate as it sees fit to meet members' local needs. Some localities are continuing to put on a number of face-to-face meetings where they meet the needs of members.

Q. Who will hold the budgets for LPFs going forward?

A. The National Pharmacy Boards will be responsible for the overall distribution of the budget for LPFs in each country.

Q. The Branch and Regional Secretaries' Handbook and the Branch Treasurers Handbooks are feeling very out of date as we move towards the development of LPFs, will a similar Handbook be written for LPFs?

A. There is an LPF Toolkit available on our website which is a guide to help members with the development of their LPF.

Q. Our local Branch used to receive adhesive address labels for those members who have not given the Society their email address. How will we contact members of the LPF going forward?

A. Members have told us they prefer to receive information by email and this is a much more cost effective way of communicating with members. Earlier this year we wrote to

members without an email address encouraging them to provide us with one – this led to nearly 4,000 new email addresses. We will continue this activity in the New Year. It is also now much easier for members to update their details through our website, so we will be monitoring the number of active emails and would expect this to increase, ensuring we can contact even more of our members

Q. Will my branch continue to receive central admin support?

A. As LPFs become the main focus of local delivery of services and support by the new leadership body, administrative support to branches is no longer offered centrally as we are focusing our support on the development of LPFs. The five LPF facilitators are in place and can help you to identify resources and other tools.

Q. How will the LPF lead or moderator be able to stay in touch with the members of their LPF?

A. LPF leads and moderators should utilise members' emails through the Virtual Networks which can be accessed via www.rpharms.com, giving them the opportunity to be able to communicate with members locally. To do this, please log on to your Virtual Network and when you post a News item, select the option near the bottom of the box and click to 'Notify everyone in the group by email'. This will email everyone in your LPF, with the exception of members who have opted out of receiving member emails through their own My Profile in the My Groups setting areas.

Our suggestion is to advise all users in your LPF by a news item posting. If they wish to receive email traffic from the LPF, it will be necessary for members to turn their preference to receive email traffic to 'Yes' in the My Groups and My Settings area of My Profile.

Q. My Branch is continuing to function as a locality and will want to have access to headquarters' specialist speakers for the foreseeable future – how will this be supported?

A. For the future, the dedicated LPF Facilitators will be offering support to LPFs and Branches where they continue to function as localities will need to become more reliant on local support to put together a programme of events, as agreed with their LPF. Branches will continue as localities of LPFs so in the first instance all support from the Society will be directed to LPFs. Branches and LPFs will work together collaboratively to offer support and services from the Society. The new devolved structure of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society means that there is an expectation that Board members will attend LPF activities to listen to members and to share information.

Q. The LPF has no local school of Pharmacy. How does such an LPF identify 'local' students and liaise with them?

A. You could contact the BPSA for your local BPSA rep to see if they can bring students into your LPF. See BPSA.com In the future it is hoped that students will become a membership category this will make access easier. Go to the BPSA website bpsa.com

Q. What is the expectation from Schools of pharmacy?

A. Most Schools of pharmacy expect to work closely with LPFs, and this can be mutually beneficial, helping to find placements for students, getting discounted rooms for meetings and events, access to research and academic thinking, access to students. Great Progress has been made by those schools of pharmacy with a vibrant student group as part of the LPF If the student workstream primarily focuses on what the

LPF can do to engage pharmacy students. Conducting a survey of students is helpful to find out what steps the LPF could take in order to capture the interest of students. Through the survey it is possible to highlight the key factors that students feel are important and the barriers to achieving this. Overall it has been found that students are positive about engaging with their LPF however it depends on what kind of activities are offered for example student interactive sessions. The WYLPF has been successful in this way by concentrating on two activities aimed at students. The first was an interactive session called the 'patients journey through hospital' which demonstrated the key areas of pharmacist involvement in the journey. The second was a debate on an ethical scenario surrounding the supply of EHC to an underage girl. Both activities were conducted at a full WYLPF meeting and the participants were a mix of pharmacists and students. The activities were positively received with good contributions for the students from the pharmacists present. In the future the WYLPF student workstream hopes to conduct a similar session at a BPSA conference.'

Q. Can we have a group for SOP? Supporting each other?

A. If Schools of Pharmacy would like a virtual group they just need to request one and give us the details of those who want to be involved.

Q. Why can't pre-regs currently be automatically in the LPF?

A. When the current tranche of pre-regs embarked on their preregistration year they registered with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. On 27 September 2010 the Society's regulatory duties, including their registration, passed to the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC). The Society has now re-launched as the new professional body for pharmacists and pharmacy.

Early next year we hope to introduce a membership category that will give pre-regs and students access to our range of member benefits and services including practice guidance and support tools, a dedicated support team to answer your legal, ethical and practice queries, networking opportunities and help to meet your CPD requirements, as well as keeping you up to date on pharmacy issues via *The Pharmaceutical Journal*. In the meantime, we want to ensure that some level of support is still available to pre-registration trainees. Pre-regs continue to have access to the printed *Pharmaceutical Journal* and PJ Online keeping you up to date with all the important developments in pharmacy, giving you a wide range of learning and development resources and providing you with top tips and advice on your future as a pharmacist.

To access exclusive PJ Online content pre-regs will need to register their details on the [PJ Online](#) site, as part of this process you will be asked to provide your Society number (bottom of the registration form) to validate your preregistration status and to give you free access to PJ Online.

If you have any problems logging in please contact [PJ Online Support](#), contact@pjonline.com or telephone 020 7572 2747.

As a preregistration trainee you can also get involved with the Society's Local Practice Forums (LPFs). A LPF is a group of members who come together, at a local level, both virtually and in person to develop activities, share information and debate issues. Trainees who engage with their LPF will have access to mentoring, networking, information gathering and career development opportunities. With over 50 LPFs being established throughout the whole of Great Britain there is a readymade nationwide

network for you to engage with. To find out more visit the LPF page on the new Society website at <http://www.rpharms.com/networking/about-local-practice-forums.asp>.

Q. Is the Mentoring database operational? Will there be Mentoring training?

A. We were given the UKCPA/GHP mentoring database it was primarily for the NHS, it has lots of good guidance and supporting information for those seeking to be a mentor or for mentees wanting advice about the process.

We are currently in the process of adapting it to be behind the www.rpharms log-in and on our website.

This will now be available early in 2011 and information can be found at www.pharmentor.nhs.uk Go there and click on “more information” to find all supporting guidance.

Q. How can we enhance our LPFs profile (and thereby attract membership) by engaging in public debate on topics of general concern which impinge on pharmacy experience?

A. Your LPF could run LPF local consultations – and have debates on issues of common concern. Poll your members to see what topical issues are affecting your members. Also consider issues on which we want to develop national policy. Send these ideas to Charles Willis, Head of Public Affairs charles.willis@rpharms.com or call 020 7572 2670 and he will convert into web pages and possibly consider running a campaign. The Boards will engage with LPFs to discuss matters of concern that may have a local angle. LPFs will be able influence RPS policy and public affairs activity. If you have something you would like to raise with your Board please contact your local LPF Facilitator.

For the future some members may wish to get involved in parliamentary affairs, influencing their local MP or getting involved in national campaigns. We will provide further details and facilitators will be able to co-ordinate this work. This will enable LPFs to engage and influence public policy at a local level.

The Local Practice Forums may be invited to nominate and send representatives to centrally held meetings, the dates and frequency of which are yet to be determined. Members are encouraged via their LPF to raise issues of concern or submit policy ideas forward to their appropriate board for consideration. The Boards are there to listen to members views and LPFs are becoming increasingly important as they represent members locally. We are currently firming up LPF governance arrangements and the expectation is that we will have a national meeting for LPFs in 2011. We are also working up a mechanism that will be ready by 2011, whereby issues that LPFs consider to be important will be able to be raised through the appropriate national boards.

Q. How can we encourage members to interact with the Pharmacy network?

A. The Society is taking every opportunity to promote the new virtual networks and at a local level LPF members should tell their colleagues about the benefits of using it and be sure to remind members about it at meetings and events. The LPF facilitators have been demonstrating how to log on at LPF events and this has been found to be helpful.

Q. How many LPFs have a “Pharmacist Support” (benevolence) head on the steering group?

A. We do not have this information at present but work actively with “Pharmacist support” to promote collaboration between this service for members and the LPFs. For the future LPFs might like to promote a role on their group to specifically act in this capacity, in the past many of the old Branches raised money locally for the benevolent fund either by holding collections or through social events. Or members of the LPF might like to become a “Listening Friends”. The plan is centrally to work closely with “Pharmacist support” to look for opportunities for joint working.

Q. Is RPS intending to produce an LPF speakers brochure = society/branch booklet?

A. The Society will always endeavour to find speakers from the Board or HQ to attend LPF events. In terms of specialist speakers we will not be producing a guide as LPFs are about local members and it is envisaged that speakers will be found locally to meet the needs of the LPF programme. The Events team at the Society are happy to help to support local events and they have a wide range of expertise in the field contact phillip.mcshane@rpharms.com

Q. Can we develop training for LPF sectional leads to assist service delivery? Similar training for LPF spokes persons addressing media on eminent topics.

A. This is a great idea for the LPF facilitators to take a lead on, and we will take this suggestion and work on it. Indeed it will be much more effective for LPF leaders to be confident in the delivery of services to their own LPFs.

Q. How do LPFs develop WIN-WIN partnerships with CPPE/WCPPE/NES?

A. The Society is working with the CPPE and has come up with a programme for joint working, we have agreed to promote each other’s events, work together on educational events and work to ensure simple things like that there is no clash of meetings and sharing of resources.

Q. How do you survey LPF members’ needs?

A. The Society has a survey monkey account which is available for LPFs to use if they wish to capture members’ views on any subject. We have a template for a questionnaire that many LPFs have used to gauge what their members would like to see from their LPF. The results also get collated.

The survey monkey service can be accessed through your LPF facilitator or Tricia Cruz at tricia.cruz@rpsqb.org. Please contact your facilitator for help.

Q. How to access other LPFs to share particular successes?

A. The facilitators talk/meet regularly and discuss successes across the patches; we are working on a more formal mechanism for doing this. LPF leads and other roles have their own closed network/discussion group for sharing ideas. We are working on how to share these successes on the website.

Q. What help from RPS will we get regarding events

A. The events team is in the process of developing the commercial conference programme for the Society. While we cannot support LPF events at present in terms of organisation or delivery we are able to offer advice where we have resources available.

Q. Can the attitude tracker be made available to LPFs?

A. Results are available from the February attitude tracker at <http://www.rpharms.com/your-opinion/attitude-tracker-findings.asp>

Q. Is there a fast track LPF in each SHA?

A. No, the fast track LPFs came from a variety of sources, and it was about their developmental needs. The geographical aspect is covered in that we have one in each Country, to ensure any country specific areas are covered. Once the first phase of the fast track programme is complete, other LPFs will be invited to share in the experience

Virtual Networking and LPFs

Q. What if a physical LPF is not set up in my area yet?

A. As each local area has different requirements, it is recognised that LPFs will evolve at different rates. All LPFs will have a home page whether they are active or not (active being defined as having a full Transitional Steering Group in place, and non active as not having a Transitional Steering Group set up yet). The home pages will contain member driven information about activity currently being undertaken by that LPF and will have links to other pharmacy organisations, PCTs and CPPE/WCPPE/NES, for example. There will also be information about CPD and mentoring. If you would like to get involved in an LPF in your area then please contact your Local Practice Forum Facilitator:

Alice Dartnell looks after the LPFs in London

Tel: 0207 572 2632. Mobile: 0784 333 9211. Email: alice.dartnell@rpharms.com

Fareena Siddiqi looks after the LPFs in Northern England.

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Lianne Denton looks after the LPFs located in the Midlands and South West areas of England.

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Sara Fletcher looks after the five LPFs in Scotland.

Office Tel: 0131 524 2003. Mobile: 0796 949 0817. Email: sara.fletcher@rpharms.com

Christine Horan looks after the seven LPFs in Wales.

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Q. What might appear on the home page of an LPF?

A. Information relating to pharmacy news items in that LPF locality, up and coming events, calendar of events, contact information, document sharing and storage -- where members can take part in, for example, consultations or writing local protocols.

Q. Will a group have similarities to Facebook so that I can stay in touch with my colleagues? If yes, what are the added benefits over other networking sites?

A. The concept is similar but the functionality will be different and you will generally only have access to your professional colleagues. In principle it operates in the same way but the content will revolve around pharmacy related topics. The main benefit is that you

will be able to share information, ideas, documents, advice and guidance on any pharmacy related topic.

Q. If I nominate myself to act as the IT Lead for my Local Practice Forum, will the expectation be that I moderate the virtual group of users or could this be done by another person?

A. It would be great if the IT Lead wanted to moderate the group and please feel free to encourage your colleagues to act as moderators too. If training is required your LPF Facilitator will be able to help you. A Virtual Networks Manager, based at Lambeth is also available to ensure that the services run smoothly and to help with any issues that may arise locally.

Q. If I decide to be a group moderator, how long should it take each week?

A. It should only take a matter of minutes each week, and it will be the exception that a moderator finds items of concern. Moderators will be linked to other moderators so they are not working alone and can share ideas and issues that may arise.

Q. I keep hearing about Webinars, what are they and how can I take part in one?

A. A webinar is a seminar that is carried out on the web. Participants can phone in to join in with the webinar to make a comment or ask a question. Webinars have been proving extremely popular in the pilot phase. As part of our new CPD offerings we have run a series of CPD pilot webinars as a new learning tool giving members added flexibility.

Members have been able to learn how to record their CPD using their own PCs and view slide presentations and listen to the talks in their chosen environment. The pilot covered academic, industrial, community, hospital & PCT pharmacy specific webinars and ran during November 2009 and January 2010. The Head of Professional Development and Education, Dr Carol Evans was able to take members through a PowerPoint presentation explaining, step by step, how the CPD online recording system works. She also showed them screen shots of the recording site, gave them practical help and guidance and some top tips to make a CPD entry which would fulfill the pharmacy regulator's requirements. This was followed by a sector specific expert who presented two case studies in their relevant fields and shared their personal experiences in making CPD entries. The final phase of the CPD pilot webinar involved a Q&A session where participants typed in their questions via the Q&A box on their screens so that the panel members could answer these verbally. The CPD panel consisted of the Head of Professional Development and Education, the pharmacy sector expert and the Society's CPD Support Specialist, Priya Rasanayagam, priya.rasanayagam@rpharms.com.

All the pilot webinars conducted so far are available for anyone to access using the ROYAL PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY webex site. You can view the presentations while listening to the audio recording of the slides by accessing the link:

<https://rpsqb.webex.com/mw03061/mywebex/default.do?siteurl=rpsqb>

At the top right hand side of the web page you will see Event Recordings and if you scroll down and select the CPD webinar of your choice you can see the slide presentation and hear the audio downloads.

Webinars have also been conducted in Pharmacy IT and Veterinary medicines in community pharmacy and we will develop more topical webinars in the future. To-date over 1,500 members have taken part and the feedback has been very positive.

To register for future webinars visit our events webpage at www.rpsqb.org/events and register online as per any other event. The webinar is an online event and all you need to attend (once registered) is a computer with web access to see the slides from presenters and earphones or a phone to listen to it. You will be able to ask questions to the panelists that could help you in your current job, education or career path. The pilot webinars have been attended by anything from 25 to over 300 delegates.

Q. Will there be tools to help me with my CPD recording?

A. Yes, there will be a suite of tools to help with your CPD recording. These range from surgery events (either live at an LPF or virtually using webinar technology), help and advice on our website, including frequently asked questions and example CPD records and case studies. We also have an information and advice service if you wish to speak to someone in person about your CPD query. In addition, there are practice specific CPD webinars that you can download and listen to. Slides are available to accompany these which will take you through the CPD requirements, how to use the online CPD system and give you hints and tips for CPD recording and examples of CPD records related to that sector. We are also currently developing other services to support CPD including events to help you continue to develop professionally.

Q. What's the difference between the LPF front page on the main site and the virtual networks?

A. The front page on the main site can only be edited by RPS staff and the overview page on the virtual networks can be edited and maintained by the LPF IT Lead (or anyone with a vested interest in communicating to the LPF as a whole). Ideally, the website page would not change much and merely provide a definition of that particular LPF as well as signpost for users who haven't logged in to log in from.

Q. Can we have a daily digest of the postings?

A. Daily Digests have been scheduled for development early next year. Communication of updates and new features will be more greatly advertised going in to the New Year.

Q. How can I set up a supervision webinar at the local level?

A. Just speak to your LPF facilitator, who will assist you with this and other webinars?

Q. Can we have the statistics on how many views to our postings, and events?

A. Simply contact your facilitator who has a package that can break down these stats for you.

Q. How different is the moderator role to the IT role?

A. For a full description of the IT lead role, please see the LPF toolkit. But in general the moderators role is to oversee the content on the LPF page for quality and to ensure nothing bad is going on (swearing, abusive language etc). If there are a few moderators this can take each one a matter of minutes each week. Whereas the IT role is more general, looking at developments in IT generally in pharmacy ETP perhaps and having a broader understanding of how the site works and using the site effectively to post events and other local news on the LPF pages. These roles should work closely together. The IT lead will also encourage use of the site and start discussions and post events questions, stories, local interest items.

Q. Who chooses Moderators for LPFs? And who changes the list of Moderators?

A. The LPF chooses its moderators and the list that appears on the webpage may be amended by your local facilitator, guidance is also available for moderators read the terms and conditions on the bottom of the rpharm site or contact Michael Bonne michael.bonne@rpharms.com or call 0207 572 2695

Q. What are the rules to hide or delete a post – rules of engagement?

A. See the terms and conditions

Q. What types of web streaming will be available going forward?

A. For the future, there will be automatic news feeds on to the website and the development team is looking at ways of improving this now.

Q. Can the LPF steering groups get rpharms email addresses?

A. This is not possible at this stage to offer this as a service, as it is not considered good management practice for non-staff members to have corporate email addresses. It would be very complicated in terms of management of disclosure and rules of engagement to ensure confidentiality. This would be impractical in terms of management as it would be impossible to differentiate between information that should be disseminated to staff only and to members generally. So for the time being this is not being implemented.

The whole point of the LPF is that you members can communicate easily using the virtual network, thereby not needing to reveal one's email if one so chooses.

Q. Can a Communications Lead group be set up? What about other Lead groups?

A. This has been done, we are keen to set up whatever groups members want, and we will monitor and measure usage to see how popular they are. All communications Leads are already a member of this group and simply need to use it as a tool to communicate share their ideas and start discussions. Other groups can be set up as required; we have a Leads group and an IT group.

Q. Can we have a RSS feed on the rpharms site?

A. We are in the process of developing RSS feeds for news and this will be tailored to be country specific, we will also look at doing this for the events section at a later date.

Q. Will you provide regional training sessions on the virtual networks?

A. If there is sufficient need for this of course we will look to provide it, all of the facilitators are offering support to log on at their LPF meetings.

Q. Can we enable non-pharmacists to access the virtual networks?

A. e.g. Lay members on steering groups?
e.g. Pre-reg Graduates?
e.g. Students?
e.g. Technicians?

Yes, non-members can be added to a specific virtual group, you just need to contact the Virtual Networks Manager with appropriate details. Email the networks@rpharms.com

We still have all the information for pre-reg and technicians, so we can send out communications to them if need be. Please treat it the same way as the LPF communications – Just send all the details through to your LPF Facilitator.

Q. Can we have a webinar on how to use the RPS website?

A. This is a great idea and if there is sufficient demand this could be provided, however, the infrastructure of the website and functionality is very similar to most websites, so most people with a basic competency of IT should find it a relatively simple.

Sending LPF communications

Q. Have we lost our members' email addresses?

A. No. All our members' details (including address, email address etc.) have been transferred on to our new database (CRM).

Members can update their details in the 'My Profile' section of www.rpharms.com and this will automatically update our database. We're making it easier for members to tell us how and when they want to be communicated with.

Q. Only a relatively small number of members have logged into the Networks area. How do I communicate with those members that haven't logged in?

A. The marketing team will provide support centrally so that you can communicate with your members locally. Please plan in your communications with your LPF Facilitator, who will facilitate the activity with marketing. The emails we sent out centrally go to all members who have opted in to receive emails (nearly 70% of members). We'll also be able to provide you with statistics so you can tell if your members are interested in the things you're writing to them about. We are also able to monitor bounce backs and incorrect email addresses – from this we can plan in data cleansing activity.

Q. I used to email all the members in my branch using MyRPSGB. I can't access this anymore. What should I do now?

A. The LPF pages in the Networks section of www.rpharms.com should now be used to communicate with members of your LPF. The functionality on these pages allows much greater interaction with your members. You can post a news item or discussion topic which your members can then comment on starting a virtual discussion between members of the LPF. You can also use this site to tell your members about upcoming events that the LPF is running

Q. I want to do more to encourage members to log in to our LPF pages. What should I do?

A. The best thing you can do is to make sure your LPF pages are full of interesting content. If you've had a meeting, make sure you put the slides on in the documents section of your site so that those that couldn't attend can still see what was discussed. Encourage members to discuss things on the discussion pages.

Centrally we will support this through our email marketing. We will include the temporary password in all emails to members who haven't yet logged in to the site, making it easy for them to log in. As more members log in you will then be able to communicate with more people through your virtual LPF.

Q. What about those members who haven't got an email address – I used to be able to send them information in the post. What do I do now?

A. Members have told us they prefer to receive information by email and this is a much more cost effective way of communicating with members. Earlier this year we wrote to members without an email address encouraging them to provide us with one – this lead

to nearly 4,000 new email addresses. We will continue this activity throughout 2011. It is also now much easier for members to update their details through our website, so we will be monitoring the number of active emails and would expect this to increase, ensuring we can contact even more of our members.

Finance

Q. Will LPF Leads receive payment for their role?

A. The Society recognises and values the efforts of those volunteers willing to take on the role of LPF Lead and have decided that honorary payments may be made. Honoraria are donations granted 'for a job well done' and these payments are entirely separate from reimbursement of expenses. LPFs and their Transitional Steering Groups can decide for themselves whether or not (and if so how much) should be given to their LPF Leads as honoraria, bearing in mind the need to keep within their overall allocated budget for their LPF and the need to ensure best value for its members at all times.

Each LPF should set a ceiling of £300 for this payment. It will be normal practice to only allocate honoraria to the LPF Lead.

Where appropriate, normal 'running' expenses such as train fares may be reimbursed if the Transitional Steering Group deems it to be in the best interest of members locally. These payments will be funded from the allocated budget for each individual LPF.

Q. Will LPF equipment be insured?

A. The Society has group insurance policies to cover LPF equipment. Branches are encouraged to donate any equipment from the old Branch network e.g. laptops to the LPF for its use. The LPF Treasurer should keep a record of all equipment and share this record with their LPF Facilitator. Invoices should be kept of any new equipment purchased and a copy of this invoice should be sent to your LPF Facilitator.

Q. How easy is it going to be for my emerging LPF to get funding from the Society?

A. We aim to make the process of getting funds to your LPF as simple as possible. Please refer to page 82 - 84 of the Toolkit for details of all the sources of funding. We have already made funding available for LPF engagement events and set-up funding. We would now like to make available core funding. In the absence of a steering group, funding for local activity will need to be determined by the country Director. The core funding formula has been set by a per capita head count of your new LPF area. Once the core funding has been used for LPF activity then "extra funding" may be applied for. This may be paid to support additional member services.

Q. What will need to happen locally before I can obtain the funds for my particular LPF?

A. Triggers for release of core funding:

- Full LPF steering committee in place and the names and details shared with your local LPF facilitator
- Fully worked up LPF activity planner for first half of 2011 and details shared with your local LPF facilitator (please use form in the Toolkit)
- Please inform your LPF Facilitator once a single branch bank account has been selected to use as LPF bank account

- Committed plans in place to transfer funds across into LPF bank account and close branch account, by a specified date
- Once all the above criteria is met, and the LPF pot of collective money is less than £3k – the core LPF funding money for your LPF will be transferred.

Q. What will my LPF need to do to be eligible for extra funding to support local activity?

A. Where LPFs are planning a programme that reaches out to even greater numbers of members, is operating successfully and has used their allocation for 2010, additional money is available for extra projects. LPFs will be informed of how to apply for a share of this money and a process will be developed for you to bid for extra money. For further information, please contact your LPF Facilitator.

Q. Is an LPF able to spend its money locally on whatever it likes?

A. The overriding principle regarding funds is to ensure the best use of members' money locally. We realise that members will need to discuss all of this locally, as there may be existing commitments where branch money has been committed for example, planned meetings where a deposit is needed for a meeting. In such cases, the LPF transitional team should be advised when monies are transitioned to ensure that funds move towards the LPF but are "earmarked" for planned activity in a particular locality.

Q. What is the breakdown of funding available for various LPF activities and the localisation of services? Funding needs may increase through developments of LPF and what is the planning for this?

A. LPFs have all been given details of the breakdown of their funding locally to support their local activities. Each LPF receives a lump sum based on a per capita formulae. LPF are currently in a very healthy state financially, LPFs are a strategic imperative and plans will be put forward to ensure their financial sustainability for the longer term future. It is hoped that LPFs will be as successful as many Branches were in attracting other forms of income like sponsorship from Pharmaceutical Companies. Some LPFs are considering new ways of raising money to fund their LPFs. Many local groups have raised money locally to be used for social events and they sell tickets to support this kind of event and the profit goes back into future events. This money can be set aside for the future as it does not need to form the core set of activities. The funding will not be broken down for service provision as it will be for LPFs to decide what services they plan to localise in response to member needs.

myRPSGB

Q. When I was a Branch Secretary I did not feel confident that I always had access to up-to-date email addresses for Branch members, even though I used these through myRPSGB.

A. We've been doing quite a lot of activity recently to encourage more members to give us their email address. Recently the Membership and Marketing team wrote to all members whose email address was invalid or who hadn't given us their email address. We've had a great response and have added an additional 4,000 email addresses to the database. Moderators/ LPF Leads of the new LPF virtual groups will be able to see who their members are, and will be able to communicate with them using this new system.

Q. What happened to myRPSGB?

A. Since the demerger you have not been able to access myRPSGB to email LPF/branch members. To email your LPF members please use your LPF Virtual Network available via www.rpharms.com, this will reach your members who have logged on to your LPF site and have registered their details.

In the interim, if you feel your email needs more publicising please send your communications through to your Local Practice Forum Facilitator. Your Facilitator will manage your communications through our marketing team who will send your email messages out to LPF members and add your event to our [Events](#) diary page on our main website.

Branches

Q. As a committee we want to dissolve our Branch and start an LPF? How do we go about this?

A. Branches wishing to dissolve and start an LPF might want to consider raising this at an annual general meeting or committee meeting as appropriate. Once the decision has been taken by those present a note of this should be made for the record. The Branch or Regional Secretary can obtain a form from their LPF Facilitator (Branch/ Region Closure Form) which will assist them in recording this information. This will also allow us to keep track of Branch Closures.

In addition, Branch/Regional Secretaries may wish to produce a brief annual report on the activities undertaken by the Branch during the previous year as a matter of completeness but there is no obligation on them to do so. If a report is completed it should be sent to your Local Practice Forum Facilitator. Previously Branches/Regions would also have been asked to fill in a B3/ R3 account income and expenditure statement. However, this will not be required for 2010. As stated previously, any money that has not been used for Branch/Region activity should be transitioned into LPFs hence ensuring remaining funds are utilised for the best use of members.

Q. Our Branch has some money that it has held for many years for a local charity for young pharmacists. The Branch has always administered this and fund raised, could the LPF take over this role? Many of these funds were set up in memory of pharmacists and it would be nice to keep this benevolence going.

A. LPFs and Branches are for the benefits of members locally and it is perfectly reasonable that an LPF would want to continue with this type of activity. The guiding principle for LPFs is that they should be responsive to member needs locally. If your Branch holds funds which were given for a particular purpose, and you are not able to use them or return them, you might want to consider:

- Passing on the activity to the Local Practice Forum
- Donating the money to a similar cause if appropriate
- If the Charity relates to students, for example, you may wish to ask the School of Pharmacy to help administer this.

If none of these options meet members' needs you may also wish to seek advice from the Charity Commission (enquiries on 0845 300 0218) or to talk to the Society's Charities Officer (Catherine Hope on 0207 572 2629).

Q. Our Branch has some money that it has held as social funds. The monies have been raised locally and members of the Branch would like to hold an event to formally mark the end of the Branch and the start of the LPF – is this appropriate?

A. It is a very nice gesture to do something symbolic to signal the end of one era as we move towards the creation of the new. Many Branches have done this in the form of dinners or social events. It is also a nice way of thanking the officers and paying tribute to the hard work of the volunteers. If you take photographs of your event, please do contact the PR team to see if they can get some media coverage from such an event.

Q. We have worked hard to raise funds locally and that is why our bank accounts are so healthy. Is it fair that the money should be transitioned to the LPF, when the LPF did not even exist when we raised the money?

A. LPFs are being developed *by* members *for* members and this is exactly the principle behind why the money would have been given to the Branch in the first place.

Q. Some of the money in our LPF or Branch account has been raised locally over the years as profit from social events?

A. The same applies to money that has been raised as social funds or sponsorship, it is hoped that these can be put to the best use for members locally and perhaps used for a social event for the new LPF. All monies raised by the branch have been raised for the benefit of members and LPFs will carry on this good work. We appreciate that flexible solutions will be needed locally as we all work together to develop the new networks.

Q. I have lots of old paperwork going back many years relating to the local Branch. This includes accounts, agendas, minutes and copies of newsletters. What should I do with them?

A. Branches have been very good at storing this information over the years, and the advice has always been to store them in a local records office as the Society currently does not have the storage capacity for these materials.

Where materials are considered to be of historic value they should be donated to the museum. Records that have been identified as worthy of keeping can be offered on deposit to the appropriate local record office for the area. The repository for the town/city where the Branch/Regional administration is based would be appropriate. Going forward it is hoped that LPFs will develop local solutions to avoid the use of unnecessary paperwork, (many LPFs now no longer take formal minutes and just produce brief action notes). These are only useful for the life of the activities they support and until the tasks are completed.

For your information please see previously issued guidance in the Branch and Regional Handbook.

Q. Is everyone who is normally communicated to about Branch activity e.g. via email etc. automatically going to be contacted by the new Transitional Steering Groups about LPFs or do we need to do an initial poll to find out who wants to be involved and if people don't why not?

A. Centrally we are continuing to communicate to both Branch Secretaries and Local Practice Forum Leads. Please see previous answer above about how Transitional Steering Groups will communicate with the members of their LPF.

Q. Our proposed LPF area has quite a lot of money spread across the three or more Branches - how exactly do we start to use this money?

A. Where a Branch is transforming into an LPF and a meeting is held, technically it would be the Branch who would pay for the refreshments and accommodation from existing Branch funds. We are going through a period of great change and your co-operation is appreciated. Eventually we envisage that Branch accounts will be closed and there will be one bank account per LPF.

National Pharmacy Boards

Q. Will the Pharmacy Boards be producing National strategies? Will these be shared with LPFs?

A. Pharmacy Boards will be producing National strategies and supporting initiatives, and these are the key documents to share with LPFs in the future.

LPF Facilitators

Q. Is our LPF Facilitator also our LPF Administrator?

A. Your LPF Facilitator is there to aid the running of your LPF. Their remit is a wide one ranging from attending LPF meetings, encouraging key contacts to become involved and sharing best practice. They also generate much of the documentation that is required for a working LPF e.g. LPF toolkit. Although the Facilitator is there to help you if you have any queries on administrative issues e.g. when filling in your budget applications they will not take responsibility for undertaking all of this work as this is something that should obviously be determined and led by the LPF, as they would have more detailed knowledge at hand to fill in the application. In addition it would not be practical if Facilitators did all of the administrative work as they look after multiple LPFs, with the intention of utilising members' money in the best possible way.

Q. Will the Facilitator be organising catering for our meetings?

A. As above the Facilitator's role is to aid the LPF Lead and Transitional Steering Group but not to undertake the organisation of every element of the meeting. The Facilitator may help in the initial stages e.g. highlighting options for venues and catering but it will be the responsibility of the LPF Lead and Transitional Steering Group to organise and book catering for each meeting if required.

Q. Will the Facilitator chair our meetings?

A. The LPF Facilitator will not chair LPF meetings. This falls to the LPF Lead or appropriate members of the Transitional Steering Group and members themselves. However, your Facilitator will endeavour to help you with any requirements or queries you may have.

Q. Will the LPF Facilitator attend all our events – i.e. CPD meetings?

A. Your LPF Facilitator will attend many of the LPF events, especially in the early stages, when Transitional Steering Groups are being established and plans are being agreed for forthcoming activity. However, it makes sense for the Facilitators to only attend when necessary for the benefit of the LPF and its members. This ensures that every LPF in the area the Facilitator covers will be able to have representation when required.

Q. Do I need to write formal minutes or meetings?

A. No LPFs are required to write minutes of meetings. You may decide to write a brief bulleted list of actions. This responsibility lies with a relevant person from the LPF e.g. Secretary/ Deputy Lead.

Q. Will the LPF Facilitator manage our LPF homepage?

A. Again the LPF Facilitator is there to help and the best use of their skills would be to train the IT Lead so they can update their page whenever they require.

December 2010