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# Suffolk LPC

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## Communication and Information Policy

Ratified by Suffolk Local Pharmaceutical Committee on May 17<sup>th</sup> 2017

Version Number	Date Ratified	Review Date
1	17/05/2017	March 2018
2	16/04/2018	May 2019
3	19/05/2021	May 2022
4	18/05/2022	May 2023

## **Suffolk Local Pharmaceutical Committee** **Policy for Communication and Information Management**

The local organisation for community pharmacy in Suffolk is the Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC). The LPC is the focus for all community pharmacists and community pharmacy owners and is an independent and representative group. The LPC works locally with NHS England Sub Regions, ICSs, Local Authorities and other healthcare professionals to help plan healthcare services. The LPC negotiates and discusses pharmacy services with commissioners and is available to give advice to community pharmacy contractors and others wanting to know more about local pharmacy.

The LPC works mainly with other healthcare providers and commissioners and provides a public facing function in terms of promoting pharmacy services and signposting to other service providers. Communications are focussed on supporting community pharmacy contractors with contractual issues and service provision.

The main communication tools for the LPC are its website and weekly electronic newsletters. The website is hosted by the Pharmacy Services Negotiating Committee, which is the national negotiating body for Community Pharmacy contractors and provides a live news feed from their website. Information provided on the website is generated by the organisations, both national and local, that contract with or provide commissioned services through community pharmacy and these include the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England, Suffolk County Council and a range of other statutory and recognised voluntary organisations. This ensures that data presented to contractors is always from a verified source and links to other websites are used as appropriate to ensure information is up to date.

### **Accessible Information**

The LPC provides information predominantly to community pharmacists and their teams. As it is a requirement of such roles that employees have good general communication skills and have a suitable level of fluency in the English language, issues rarely arise with the accessibility of the information we provide. However, should the need arise; we would look at all options for supporting people to access the information we provide. Support for people who required help in accessing information will be provided by PSNC or another reputable pharmacy organisation as appropriate.

When updating the website, Officers always try to ensure that information is written in plain English and easily understood language. It is non-discriminatory, relevant and appropriate to pharmacy teams and the roles they perform.

### **Storage of Personal Information**

The LPC only stores personal information for its employees and the other information it deals with is largely in the public domain. Emails used for weekly communications are provided by the recipient and there is an option to unsubscribe from our communications on the website. Contact information is only used for the purpose for which it was provided and is not passed on to other organisations without consent.

The LPC does not have an office and all employees work from home. This way of working is governed by a comprehensive policy which details how information should be stored and accessed within this environment.

The LPC adheres to all the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) as applied to our role and is registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO)

### **Equality and Diversity**

Our policy is to provide equal opportunities in recruitment, training, promotion and other decisions relating to our business whatever the race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability. Discrimination or failure to observe proper standards of behaviour will be treated seriously.

Our employees, members, clients, suppliers and pharmacy contractors have many different backgrounds and beliefs. We require that employees behave towards all others with good manners, tolerance and respect. It is not acceptable to address an individual or refer to them in racist or sexist terms, by reference to their physical or personal characteristics, or in any abusive way at all. We would not seek to influence religious, philosophical or political beliefs while at work or in a situation related to work.

Our communications seek to reflect all of the above points.

### **Confidentiality**

All information about or relating to us and our business and the business and affairs of pharmacy contractors that is not explicitly authorised for disclosure should be treated as confidential. "Confidential information" includes:

- financial information.
- information about security arrangements.
- future organisational or promotional plans.
- salaries and personal information about past and present colleagues.
- information about any pharmacy contractor (past and/or present), including contractor details and lists.
- any supplier (past or present), including supplier details and lists, terms of business, discounts.
- work processes, techniques, technical know-how, research and development projects and results.
- our business methods.
- computer access codes or procedures
- computer programs, program flow charts, file layouts, source code listings.
- our policies and procedures; and
- any other information not generally known to the public at large.

Information about pharmacy contractors and other companies which may be acquired in the course of our work is also confidential information. Information entrusted to us by any pharmacy contractor, or any supplier is also confidential information. Information about any living individual that we acquire in the course of work is personal data and is part of confidential information.

**Social media and blogs:** It should be noted that we will not disclose or discuss any confidential information as described above on any social networking websites or in any blog without prior permission on each occasion. The LPC has a Social Media Policy that deals with our usage of this media type in more detail.

**Use of a Committee WhatsApp Group:** All committee members were given the option of providing a mobile number to join a WhatsApp group which is limited to committee members and employed officers only. The following points apply to all users:

- Remember to be considerate and respectful to others
- Please be polite and observe the same level of courtesy as you would do if you were speaking to someone face to face.
- Please refrain from commenting or sharing content (including videos or pictures) that could be interpreted as inappropriate, demeaning or inflammatory
- Please only discuss work related or business matters on the group
- Please do not share confidential information
- Understand that the discussions will be moderated by the group admin and any inappropriate activity may lead to further investigation.

### **Data Protection**

We are registered under the Data Protection Act. This authorises the type of personal data (i.e., data about identifiable living individuals) which we are allowed to collect, store and use. A copy of our registration is available on the internet.

Use of any material that contains information about individuals, is strictly limited to purposes for which we are registered, and any such data is only used in connection with our business. Otherwise, information about individuals discovered at or through work is confidential information, and this information is only used in accordance with the Confidentiality clause above.

### **Staff Training**

The LPC has an induction process for new employees, and they will be supported and mentored to develop in the role. External training is provided by PSNC and other specialist healthcare organisations as appropriate. This includes training on updating the LPC website, the safe use of social media and media training.

### **Comments, Compliments and Complaints**

The LPC website footer has a website feedback form to allow comments from users. This allows us to respond to any comments and to use these to improve the website for contractors. All complaints will be dealt with by the Chief Officer and notified to the committee.

We also have a dedicated email address, [info@suffolkipc.org.uk](mailto:info@suffolkipc.org.uk) which is included in all written communications to encourage feedback.

### **Federated Activity across Norfolk and Suffolk LPCs**

In order to minimise duplication and to deliver better outcomes for contractors, LPC employed officers work across both LPC footprints on joint communications that support the stated priorities of both committees. All activities undertaken by Suffolk officers will adhere to the principles as stated in this policy.