

Coastal West Sussex Federation Practice Managers' Survey

October 2011

Introduction

Coastal West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group (CWSCCG) has demonstrated a strong ethos for involving Practice Managers in the development and management of the clinical commissioning agenda. A Practice Manager Board Member was appointed in 2010 and there are several Practice Managers involved in Board sub-groups and task and finish groups.

As CWSCCG continues to engage with key stakeholders it was agreed that all Practice Managers should be contacted and asked to take part in a short survey.

There were two key objectives behind this survey:

1 - to provide Practice Managers with an opportunity to give honest feedback to the Federation regarding their understanding of the clinical commissioning agenda, their current/future levels of engagement with CWSCCG and their priority issues/pressures within primary care.

2 – to increase awareness and understanding within the CWSF Executive and Support Team of how Practice Managers feel about commissioning responsibilities and where the Federation can provide additional support, and what needs to be done to secure Practice Manager engagement and representation within the CWSCCG, and to use the responses as the basis for developing a Practice Manager engagement action plan.

Methodology

The survey was designed and produced by Jodie Olliver, CWSCCG Practice Manager Board Member and Chris Goodwin, Education and Training Officer.¹ An on-line survey tool was used to create the survey.

¹ A copy of the survey is included at Appendix A

The format and content of the survey was discussed at a West Sussex Practice Managers' Association (WSPMA) Committee meeting and amended further to those discussions.

At the beginning of October 2011 Jodie Olliver emailed WSPMA locality leads, with a link to the on-line survey, asking them to circulate it to their colleagues. The email stressed the importance of grasping the opportunity to give feedback on current CWSCCG activities and future development.



A further email was sent two weeks later asking WSPMA locality leads to remind colleagues who had not yet completed the survey to do so.

The survey ended on 31st October 2011.

Findings

49 Practice Managers responded to the survey. Figure 1 shows the responses broken down by locality. Not all 49 respondents answered every question. Arun's response rate was the highest with 100% of Practice/Business Managers completing the survey.

Figure 1

1. Which locality is your practice in?			Response Percent	Response Count
Adur			12.2%	6
Arun			16.3%	8
Cissbury			22.4%	11
Chanctonbury			10.2%	5
ARCH			38.8%	19

Various key themes emerged from the responses.

- A surprising number of respondents did not know who their locality lead was. The locality with the highest number of correct answers was Adur where 6/6 respondents knew their locality lead was Dr Sabry Sadek.

- Only 21/43 respondents knew that Jodie Olliver was the CWSCCG Practice Manager Board Member.
- There was a variety of answers regarding what was seen as CWSCCG's main priorities. Common answers included referral management, reducing emergency admissions, enhanced services and medicines management.
- There was an overwhelming feeling that Practice Managers are not sure what they are actually required to do/what their role is within clinical commissioning and regarding the CWSCCG priorities. Comments included:

‘...not enough support for us generally in knowing what is expected of us...’

‘...more information more often...’

‘...I am not sure as a PM what is particularly required...’

And many respondents specifically asked for a clearer indication of what was expected from them:

‘...have a really clear list of actions and deadlines...’

‘...need information in a simpler format with clear actions for PMs...’

‘...stated expectations of Practice Managers within the process...’

- The survey responses indicated that there was some confusion further to the ‘pause’ and what this meant for clinical commissioning. Many respondents said that additional support/information regarding the new responsibilities, provided face to face in easily accessible locations, would be preferable to written/email correspondence.
- There was a tremendously positive attitude to being involved in various projects/areas of work and it is clear that a significant number of Practice Managers are involved with clinical commissioning, mainly at a locality level. However there were a considerable number of respondents who indicated their enthusiasm for getting involved but added that the pressures of the ‘day job’ and practice priorities meant that it was not always possible/easy to provide more input.

‘...need more hours in the day but happy to help...’
‘...I am willing to assist if feasible...’
‘...maybe in the future I will be able to input more...’
‘...I would if I were less busy...but am just too busy and exhausted to do anything...’

- When responding to what frustrations they have regarding commissioning issues, the vast majority of respondents commented on their increased workload. Most Practice Managers expressed concern that they are unable to fully engage with clinical commissioning due to other priorities e.g. practices coming under increasing financial pressure and growing patient demand. Several Practice Managers also noted that they have struggled to engage their clinicians in the process and have limited influence to change this.
- Practice Managers were asked what their biggest frustrations aside from commissioning issues were. 14/28 Practice Managers who responded to this question emphasised premises management as a problem, highlighting an absence of a premises strategy, no clear contact for premises issues and a lack of clarity regarding a premises budget. There was a strong indication that Practice Managers are looking to CWS Management Support Team to provide more support on this issue.


Other areas of frustration include ‘...antiquated IT...’ and ‘...just not knowing who does what at the PCT’.

Summary and conclusion

49 Practice Managers took the time to complete the survey which gives a good indication that this stakeholder group is willing and able to give feedback and contribute to the work CWSF.

There is an obvious willingness to be involved with the clinical commissioning agenda which is a really positive finding for CWS. However, this is tempered by the lack of time available to Practice Managers to contribute their valuable skills and experience.

The survey responses outline the pressures currently facing Practice Managers and the areas where they feel additional support would be valuable. This gives the Federation an opportunity to respond positively and implement strategies to support and enable Practice Managers across a wide range of issues.



The 2011 CWSCCG Practice Managers Survey provides a baseline for the development of an action plan to ensure that Practice Managers feel supported in their new commissioning responsibilities and their traditional role within Practices.

Next Steps

- Draft Action Plan
- Survey report to CWSF Board
- Action Plan to CWSF Board