

## **Local RPSGB Branches – Frequently asked questions**

### **Q. When the new professional leadership body (PLB) comes into existence, what will happen to the RPSGB branch network?**

**A.** We would like to have as many Local Practice Forums (LPFs) in place by April 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 so that all PLB 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'.

### **Q. How will LPFs and branches work and function together?**

**A.** In the future, the RPSGB will not be able to afford to support two separate local structures. This means that in any one locality, one of two things will happen:

1. The local branch or branches will evolve into an LPF and PLB members will receive 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, then the LPF will be the sole recipient of any central funding from the RPSGB.
2. It is recognised that in some localities the setting up of an LPF may develop at a slower rate and in this situation where there is an active branch then this branch will continue to receive direct RPSGB funding (subject to existing individual branch funds already available) until such time that an LPF is formed.

### **Q. Does this mean that local branches will at some stage cease to exist?**

**A.** It is envisaged that branches will fully transition into an evolving LPF and the process and timing of this will vary according to the pace of development within each new LPF. 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. 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 2012.

**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 early and ongoing development of the LPFs alongside new and emerging leaders from within the LPF locality. Local members will decide who forms the new 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 18 and 19) outlines a suggested approach to the identification of LPF leadership roles to support the early selection of the transitional steering group. Board members can support and advise as appropriate if necessary.

**Q. How will we know if we have made the right decision relating to the future of local branches?**

**A.** We already have some valuable insights and learnings from the LPF pilot locations in West Yorkshire and Sunderland for example. We will ensure that all evolving best practices and new ways of collaborative working are shared with the wider membership via the LPF toolkit which will soon be available and through the PLB website. In the longer term, the LPF activity and more importantly its outputs and results will be overseen by the National Pharmacy Boards. The PLB will also ensure that the views of the members are sought and captured directly through research and other feedback processes.

**Q. What will happen if an LPF is not up and running in my area and will branches be able to continue to receive funding for local activities?**

**A.** By January 2010, there will be a number of locations where the LPF leadership is not yet fully established. In this case, the targeted LPF funding for 2010 will be held in reserve by the appropriate Pharmacy Board and appropriate interim funds released to branch members according to the branch needs until an LPF is established. The trigger point for the formal recognition of an active LPF will be subject to the appointment of the LPF steering group.

**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.

**Q. What if the Branch does not want to donate its money to the LPF?**

**A.** All existing branch funds (c.£380K – at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009) will continue to be held at branch level. A position of collaboration, trust and integrity is required at both branch and LPF levels to ensure that existing branch funds are targeted towards LPF development.

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

**A.** It is envisaged that most branches will have evolved to LPFs in the near future. 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 2012.

**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 RPSGB resource is targeted to those localities where there is a low level of funding in the combined branch accounts. We will further advise members once the LPF locations have been agreed. 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.

**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 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. Further guidance will be offered in due course should there be no local solution.

**Q. Will I get paid to be the LPF Lead?**

**A.** LPF leads will be reimbursed only for appropriate expenses associated with LPF activities. This funding will be obtained from the money allocated to the LPF by the relevant Board.

**Q. I am currently a local branch treasurer. On what basis will LPF funding be allocated in the future?**

**A.** Year 1 - Core funding (2010) for LPFs will be based mainly on RPSGB headcount in that LPF locality as per current branch model. Further details on other sources of funding are contained in the LPF Toolkit on page 30.

Year 2 - The National Pharmacy Boards will announce the funding mechanisms for 2011 at a later date.

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

**A.** There are currently no plans for BRSM and BRM meetings for 2010. The RPSGB 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. How do I find out more about the development of LPFs?**

**A.** LPFs are developing with pace now, and more information can be found from the LPF toolkit which is available on the PLB website [www.pharmacyplb.com](http://www.pharmacyplb.com), or by contacting your local appropriate Pharmacy Board member through Amanda King, [amanda.king@rpsgb.org](mailto:amanda.king@rpsgb.org)

**Q. I currently keep a database of emails of members on my PC? I do not wish to use the emails for members through myRPSGB?**

**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 Society, which takes its data protection responsibilities very seriously. The system set up by the Society is to assist with member communication and is quick and easy to use.

**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 PLB then you will not be able to attend LPF meetings or have access to other LPF or wider RPSGB services. There may be rare occasions where a non member in recognition of their role and expertise, could add real value to the work of the LPF. In these situations and solely where there is a single and focused topic or piece of work, then the LPF steering group can authorise the attendance of non members to support such work which will ultimately should benefit the LPF members and/or improve the standards of healthcare delivery in that locality.

**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 PLB and as such it would be permissible for students and pre-regs to attend LPF meetings on the invitation of the LPF members.

**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.** It is expected that clusters of local branches will form 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.

The process for the dissolution of branches will be defined by the new PLB Assembly after April 2010.

**Q. What do I need a 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.

**Q. How soon will the LPF facilitators be in place?**

**A.** The five LPF facilitators across GB will be in position from the 7<sup>th</sup> December. The facilitators will undergo an intensive induction programme and will be visible and available to support members from early January.

**Q. What will the LPF facilitators do?**

**A.** We will provide a detailed explanation in early January of what the role will and will not do. In the meantime, the key responsibilities of the LPF facilitator are outlined in the LPF toolkit.

**Q. When will all this happen? – especially when will the Virtual Network will be set up?**

**A.** When a local group will formally commence is up to you, hopefully soon after the November meetings. The virtual networks can be initiated as soon as we have the geography sorted out. We expect a bespoke LPF version of the current trial version of the Virtual Network to be available in January.

**Q. I have just developed a new branch website, does that mean it will be scrapped?**

**A.** Well there are no plans to support branch activity as all such effort should go into the virtual LPFs. We are sure that we can facilitate the transfer of content though, where possible.

**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. 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 is now – why do you 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. Currently the best branches are delivering great things but on average across all branches there is a maximum of 10% of the current membership, and zero % in some locations, that attend branch activities over the year. Attendance has been falling for several years and we need to find new ways to attract the 90% of members who do not find value in the 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.

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

**A.** Again this is dependant upon the location and size of LPFs so until we get this finalised it is impossible to say. In broad terms, the funding set aside for 2010 will be broadly the same as that for branch support in 2009. Further details on LPF funding can be found on page 30 of the LPF toolkit. National Boards will be accountable for allocating the 2010 funding to LPFs and branches and this process will be confirmed to members in early December.

**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

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