

Practice Based Commissioning for LMCs – Newsletter

This newsletter may be of use to GPs and practice managers in your area.

Welcome to the second of our monthly series of newsletters highlighting the current issues around Practice Based Commissioning. This newsletter has again been produced by **Alpha Medical, Bennett Brooks and Scott McKenzie Consultancy** in order to deliver the very latest information on PBC.

This month we take a look at what you need to start putting in place in order to progress with PBC.

1. **Principles:** Know and understand the rules of the game! Each practice, and then in time, consortium, needs to establish, with the PCT, a common set of principles that can be put into a shared agreement.
 - a. This provides the framework within which both the PCT and the practices can work.
 - b. The expectations of both parties will be contained and each will know what is allowed and what is not.
 - c. Once each practice has its own PBC agreement, it is equally important to establish some ground rules between all the practices in any consortium.
 - Whilst these agreements would not be legally or contractually binding, they would lay down some jointly agreed terms of reference or engagement.
 - d. Taking time to establish these terms at the beginning of the scheme will help things to run more smoothly as the project takes off, but don't spend so much time deciding what they should be and forget to move on to the next stage!
2. **Process:** Establish a steering group, within the practice, and then any consortium, and identify key work streams.
 - a. If this kind of infrastructure is not set up with the appropriate feedback and communication links in place, the project will move very slowly indeed.
 - b. **Avoid creating bureaucracy at all times.**
 - c. Decide what it is that needs doing, and then get on and do it.
 - d. Look to utilise people with specialist skills, e.g. IT, business planning or commissioning.
 - e. Use the skill mix of the people around you both from the practices, and the resources on offer from the PCT, to get these work stream groups up and running.
3. **Skill sets:** Capture people who have a track record of success and are motivated to do it again.
 - a. *Resist being landed with people without those characteristics.*
 - b. Put old 'enmities' to one side and work with those who seek to turn PBC into something that avoids fragmentation of good quality general practices, delivers a redesign of local services in a practice-supportive way, and who are prepared to support practices to meet the competition agenda.
4. Initially, be prepared to work with a simple, but not yet perfect scheme or system, in order to understand and effect some changes which may give some quick and immediate financial benefits
5. Aim for local schemes which are low in bureaucracy, even recognising them as evolving 'pilots' for a fixed period of time, with built in flexibility, wherever possible practical assistance.
6. Start to think about the services you would like to put in place either within the practice, or potentially where you could refer to other practices round you for service, instead of hospital.
 - These are the things which would form the basis of your pre-commencement agreement.

Practice Based Commissioning – Latest Guidance

The latest guidance for Practice Based Commissioning was released on Thursday 2nd February by the Department of Health. This builds upon the previous technical guidance and sets PBC at the heart of service delivery within the NHS; “**Achieving Universal Coverage**” is essential reading for any practice; it is available at:

www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/Commissioning/PracticeBasedCommissioning/fs/en

In addition to the aforementioned guidance, again in support of PBC, we now also have “**Early Wins and Top Tips**” giving examples of what has been done by early adopters of the PBC policy; this is also available at:

www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/Commissioning/PracticeBasedCommissioning/fs/en

In addition, we can supply examples of what has been done by Practices working with us to implement service redesigns, and indeed design of completely new services, within Practice Based Commissioning. Please use the contact details below.

Finally, at a time when NHS structures are changing yet again with major upheavals to the roles, responsibilities and configurations of Strategic Health Authorities and PCTs, Primary Care may well suffer from a lack of practical support. However.....

In next month's newsletter.....

- 1. What information should you be requesting from your PCT which they MUST provide...**
- 2. How to use what you get!**

Bennett Brooks: For specialist accountancy and financial services for the medical sector visit our web site www.bennettbrooks.co.uk

Alpha Medical: For specialist management support toolkits including access to an on-line HR package visit our web site www.alphamedical.org.uk

Scott McKenzie Consultancy: Produce PBC agreements between, either individual practices or groups of practices, and the Primary Care Trusts. In short, turning the policy into practice and getting you engaged in PBC. For information contact: scott@scottmckenzieconsultancy.com