

Review of the Fed's strategy

Suffolk GP Federation was formed in 2013 after a twelve month consultation with members regarding our strategy, which included workshops and visits to over 40 practices.

The Fed has grown significantly over the last four years and your board now believes it an opportune time to review the strategy with our members.

Our Members Agreement states 'the business of the Federation is that of strengthening, supporting and developing primary care services, primarily in Suffolk'.

Our business plan sets out four objectives:

- 1 Support & strengthen primary care in Suffolk.
- 2 Support practices to maintain existing or generate new income streams and reduce costs.
- 3 To support our CCGs to meet their objectives. We are proposing that this is updated to 'support our local health and social care system'.
- 4 To build a sustainable organisation.

Around March each year the Board sets objectives for the following year. These are on our website and are reviewed regularly.

We will be holding two open meetings in the new year and anyone from any member practice is welcome to attend. The meetings will address the Fed's strategy, objectives and values and question if they are still relevant or need to be changed.

Meeting dates are:

- Thursday 18 January 2018 – Butterfly Hotel Bury St Edmunds.
- Thursday 25 January 2018 – Holiday Inn Ransomes Europark

If you would like to attend, please email david.pannell@suffolkfed.org.uk.



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Suffolk
LOCUM SERVICE
WITH SUFFOLK GP FEDERATION

Update on the Suffolk Locum Service

This was launched on 16 November at the East educational event. All practice managers have details of the service.

So far, 14 practices have registered – 4 in the West and 10 East. 17 GPs have registered of whom 5 have completed their registration checks and are live on the system.

Mendlesham was the first practice to book a locum through the service. Six sessions have been booked in total so far.

We will be contacting practices encouraging them to register. If you want to sign up please go to the Fed website www.suffolkfed.org.uk and click on Suffolk Locum Service (top right).



Long-term plans for Fed owned GP Practices

Suffolk GP Federation currently has a portfolio of three GP Practices, which is expected to grow. Generally, practices coming to the Fed will have significant challenges and will require 'turnaround' support.

A standard model is being developed to help overcome some of these challenges and provide efficient support. The standard model will include; clinical leads, a practice board, skills mix, central management support and standardised governance.

The board have recently discussed the longer term plans for each of the practices, and have concluded:

- We believe it would be unfair and divisive to invest resources into the turnaround of a practice to be handed over to another practice to manage.
- It is our responsibility to deliver the very best possible service to patients in our directly managed practices.
- We will work with other at scale primary care providers where this provides a benefit for the patients in Fed practices.
- We will be continuing to directly manage our practices but will review this regularly in the light of how the primary care landscape changes in Suffolk.



ECP/practice paramedic networking group

As more practices recruit ECPs we thought it would be useful to try and get a networking group going. This would use a similar model to the GP First5 group with meetings involving a combination of education and a forum to exchange ideas.

If you wish to join the group please email David Pannell at david.pannell@suffolkfed.org.uk. The next meeting will take place in the New Year.

Depending on responses we could run a first session at the East educational afternoon on 13 December.

Lymphoedema service update

We are now running our lymphoedema service in partnership with our colleagues at West Suffolk Hospital. The transition has not been without challenges, but the service is performing well and it is a great example of closer working under the community alliance.

We have been running a joint alliance lymphoedema service in Bury St Edmunds since April, with the West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust.

Since then we have recruited new clinicians, which include a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist and another member of the team who has a therapy based background.

The lymphoedema service runs five days a week from Drivers House in Bury St Edmunds. Patients can be referred to the service by any clinician. On average they see around 25 patients a month which is in line with their service agreement.

The service offers a range of treatments according to the severity of the condition. Lymphoedema is a long-term condition and support and education is often necessary to help patients manage their chronic condition.

The Fed is currently meeting the demands for patients, our clinical goals and commissioner' targets.

We are keen to spread the message amongst GPs and are also in the process of launching a campaign for both primary and secondary healthcare professionals to promote the service and raise awareness of the long term chronic condition.

There is also a patient led support group which runs every six weeks at Moreton Hall Community Centre, Bury St Edmunds, between 7pm – 9pm.

Dates below:

- 4th December 2017
- 29th January 2018
- 19th March 2018 (awareness event 2pm-5pm)

You can find out more about the service and a referral form at <https://suffolkfed.org.uk/patient-services/lymphoedema-service/>

Fed's Prescribing Support Service

We are three months into developing our 52 weeks of the year practice prescribing support service. Lucy Beer our lead is in place alongside a pharmacy technician. We have two more pharmacist recruits in the pipeline.

Whilst it is early days we have some good learning already. It is clear pharmacists can remove a significant portion of work currently undertaken by GPs. This includes on the day meds queries, letters, discharge note reconciliation and face to face work such as medication reviews and long-term condition clinics.

Medicines reconciliation and many medication queries can be done by a technician supervised by a prescribing pharmacist which improves efficiency.

Each practice needs regular daily support and this requires a team of pharmacists. This can be partly provided remotely providing the practice uses EPS (electronic prescribing service).

We have found the recruitment situation to be reasonable. There is a national over-supply of pharmacists, but this is less evident in Suffolk. There are many community pharmacists looking for more interesting roles but they will need support to work in practices and initial earnings in primary care may be lower before training such as independent prescribing is undertaken. Offering roles which include face to face work is important for attracting good candidates.

From a financial perspective we think pharmacists are self-funding when a practice can substitute them for GP time. Obviously this is easiest for those which rely on locums. Larger practices will find it easier to substitute GP for pharmacist time. Nationally a lot of practices are recruiting pharmacists so it will be interesting to see how salaries respond.

Finally, a word of warning about the NHS England scheme that subsidises pharmacists working in a practice. The Fed is a pilot site, but it is a bureaucratic nightmare. It should provide training and support to pharmacists new to primary care which may be useful for practices recruiting directly and will therefore not have access to a senior pharmacist mentor.

GP+ and streaming

GP streaming is going really well at Ipswich Hospital. Most shifts are being filled and the service is getting excellent feedback from our GPs and ED.

Streaming has been less successful in the West. NHS England insisted the service gets started despite building works still underway. The West rota is less full but we have had well attended induction sessions and expect this to change swiftly.

GP+ is going well with a high level of shift fill – reflecting the NHS England winter indemnity scheme. We still have a really good pipeline of GPs for induction.



West Suffolk First5 group

Suffolk First5 is a peer group for GPs who have qualified in the last five years.

The group had its first meeting and Alex Chapman of Clinic Nine Physio, Needham Market facilitated the discussion on MSK presentations. The meeting was found useful and educational by all who attended.

A dedicated WhatsApp group has also been created to help with communications, which currently has 14 GP members.

If you wish to join the group please email David Pannell at david.pannell@suffolkfed.org.uk. The next meeting will take place in December.

Nursing workforce update

Nurse recruitment and retention is a significant issue in primary and community care. It is more challenging than the well-publicised issues with the GP workforce. The Fed are working on a couple of initiatives which we hope will start the process of addressing this issue.

The CCGs also have initiatives and have both held their first practice forum.

The Fed's first three-day Nurse Development Programme completed in November. It included sessions on understanding how the NHS works, decision making and personal tools such as influencing skills. Feedback was generally positive and we are hoping attendees will create a network of senior nurse leaders. Ipswich & East CCG has kindly agreed to fund another programme.

We have also been working with the University of Suffolk to develop placement opportunities in primary care. Currently the majority of student nurses in Suffolk spend most of their time training in a hospital but we find those who get a chance to work in general practice usually like it and pursue it as a career option.

Remote working project

GPs with young children or caring responsibilities are potentially a significant part of the workforce. However, some may be constrained by the way work is offered (e.g. sessions based in a practice)

We have started a project looking at roles that we could offer GPs in this situation. If you have any views on this matter and would like to provide input, please email David Pannell. david.pannell@suffolkfed.org.uk.

New GP role at Christmas Maltings & Clements Surgery

Younger GPs have said they are looking for roles which provide variety and most do not want the risk and responsibility of partnership. We are trying to address this in Haverhill with a new Practice GP role combining clinical work with dedicated time for either practice development or a position in the Federation.

Opportunities include becoming a trainer, getting involved with Fed services such as diabetes or developing the skills needed to become a future practice Clinical Lead. Feedback also suggests younger GPs value mentorship and we will have this in place.

If you have any ideas or want more information please contact Paul Driscoll paul.driscoll@suffolkfed.org.uk.

New software for services

Fed use of Datix

Datix is software which allows organisations to record and manage significant events, risk and complaints. It is used by most hospitals and community services providers. The Federation is purchasing the software as our organisation is now too large to rely on email and spreadsheets. We will be offering use of the software to practices and the CCGs will be using some of the modules.

It will be of use to practices where you are working together and have an integrated approach to governance. If you would like to know more about Datix, please visit www.datix.co.uk.

SystemOne out of hours unit for GP+

The two CCG's have kindly agreed to purchase GP+ a SystemOne out of hours unit. This will improve stock control of medication, allow integration with ICE for blood tests and mean that we can use E-referral.

Kirkley Mill update

Suffolk GP Federation took on management of Kirkley Mill in Lowestoft on 1 November. The practice has 6,500 patients and was rated inadequate by the CQC in July.

For the last few years it has only been staffed by GP locums and clinical leadership has been weak. Many basic systems were not in place such as reviewing patients on high risk medication.

We have found many positives in the practice. The team is excellent and they have already started to address many of the issues raised by the CQC. They have a wide skills mix amongst the team, including a prescribing Mental Health Nurse Practitioner which is a role we think would work well in other practices.

We are spending a lot of time in the practice. We are pleased to have already appointed a full-time GP clinical lead who will start in January. We have also appointed a Practice Facilitator to support the transition. We have joined the locality group and are working with them to develop a joint ECP home visiting service.



Outstanding Educator in Diabetes

One of our nurses from the North East Essex Diabetes Service, recently won a leading industry award for being an "outstanding educator in diabetes".

Sheila Smyth, Head of Community Services at Suffolk GP Federation, was recognised for her work in developing and overseeing various education programmes for people with diabetes and healthcare professionals. This also included developing an education programme for healthcare professionals at the University of Essex.