

## Ten Minute Guide to Health Promotion Events

### 1. Introduction

This Ten Minute Guide provides some ideas on how Patient Participation Groups can organise health promotion events. We are grateful to Cookham Medical Centre PPG for providing most of the information that is presented here. Health promotion events can make an important difference to those who attend, as well as raising the profile of the PPG itself.

### 2. Three months before

The process starts at least three months before the event date with the PPG and practice agreeing on the topic. This should be shared with the wider practice and agreed formally by the PPG who may then wish to establish a sub-committee to organise the event.

The sub-committee will be responsible for the many logistical elements, such as:

- ✓ Agreeing the purpose of event
- ✓ Agreeing the target audience and how they will be recruited
- ✓ Agreeing the format
- ✓ Identifying contributors (with the practice) and any information stands
- ✓ Identifying and booking the venue
- ✓ Identifying and approaching potential sponsors
- ✓ Identifying and securing any equipment that is needed
- ✓ Formalising a budget
- ✓ Producing flyers and handouts

Note that the practice may be able to send targeted invitations using registers that they hold on their database for conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure etc. The PPG should be consulted on the wording of the letter from the practice (though they should not see the recipients) to ensure that it is clear and will not cause any alarm.

### 3. One month before the event

By this time, invitations should have been sent out to both attendees and guests and publicity using local media, community groups, email, posters, notice boards etc should have been arranged. The events team should have thought through all of the technical aspects of the session, including lighting, furniture moving, welcoming arrangements, audio-visual equipment, roving mikes if needed, evaluation forms, refreshments, cleaning, public liability insurance requirement (if any) and the vote of thanks.

#### **4. A few days before the event**

Final check of the venue, including time at which it can be accessed and all health and safety requirements. Run through the entire session in your minds to ensure that nothing has been forgotten eg signage, access, layout of chairs, catering etc.

#### **5. At the event**

Identify people who will welcome guests and speakers, ensure that any written materials are distributed to allcomers, have a good team of helpers to deal with any problems and to help tidy up afterwards, ensure that the chairman is fully briefed and that the feedback forms are completed and returned. You may wish to have a donations box.

#### **6. After the event**

Write to speakers to thank them (with an expense claim form where appropriate), analyse feedback, record ideas for the future, report for local paper and for the PPG newsletter or notice board.

#### **7. Additional thoughts**

Many health promotion events are designed to change behaviours of those who attend. This is a complex area and it is unlikely that a single event on its own will generate longlasting change. It is important for the PPG to consider what follow-up support can be provided for those who want to modify their behaviour or whether the single event can be part of a wider, longer campaign that will have maximum effect. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has researched this area and their findings can be found at <http://www.nice.org.uk/PH006>.

Some events will be more successful if organised in partnership with existing local groups. For example, the Princess Royal Trust might be a great help at an evening for carers or the Stroke Association may want to work with you on avoiding or managing strokes. Equally, the Primary Care Trust or a local hospital should be able to offer expertise and possibly financial support for the event.

Health promotion events are also an opportunity to consult with those who attend. The PPG should consider whether it would be valuable to use some part of the session to consider how services are viewed by those who are present and how they could be improved.

And finally, there is much to be gained by using existing opportunities to convey health messages. This could be at flu clinic sessions within the practice or by just speaking to patients as they wait to be seen at the surgery.