

What is networking?

Networking is an activity or process that helps you to build up contacts, which can be of help in your work or social life.

Why network?

Networking can ideally provide benefits to both parties involved. By making a connection with someone, you are also making a connection with their networks. By networking effectively you build both direct and indirect contacts. This allows you to gain access to a wider range of people with different influences and expertise, thereby increasing your area of influence and reach.

Networking can help you to learn and develop, increase your influence, get things done, get that role or job, support others and improve patient care.

How to network

All of us network to some extent but this is often done in an unplanned way and we don't get the most out of those interactions. Networking effectively is an acquired art but by applying some key principles you can improve your networking technique and results.

For further information, have a look at our [guide to networking](#).

What networks are available?

There are a huge number of networks and contacts available to access for professional use, from your work colleagues to special interest groups and virtual networks. We have listed a few formal professional networks and some of the contacts and organisations that may be useful to your professional role, but there are also connections to be made in any number of informal situations.

LinkedIn

[LinkedIn](#) is a social media tool used for professional networking. After setting up your professional profile, you use it to connect to others, build and maintain a network, and access jobs and information that can help you in your role.

Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Telegram Groups

Social media platforms for networking with peers and other professional bodies, as well as used to advertise events and courses.

CPPE learning communities

CPPE has developed [learning communities](#) to provide a flexible means for you to learn in a relaxed atmosphere, at a convenient time and place, with other pharmacy professionals. A CPPE learning community is a group of between 2 and 20 people who meet to study CPPE learning programmes. You can run a learning community with colleagues from your workplace, with friends who also work in your practice, or with peers in your area.

Local practice forums

A local practice forum (LPF) is for members of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) to meet on a local level to network, share information, learn and support each other. Working with their most active groups they've created new 'In Your Area' pages to showcase all the support local groups provide to their members across England, Scotland and Wales. The LPFs are run by members with support from RPS. [RPS local](#).

The RPS also hosts a number of online groups for pharmacists with special interests, such as science, research and technology.

Local professional networks

Local professional networks (LPNs) are established in each area, hosted and supported by the **area teams of NHS England**. There are LPNs for pharmacy, as well as dentistry and eye health, and they will work with a number of other networks, which include strategic clinical networks, academic health science networks and clinical senates. They will also liaise with commissioners, service providers and patients to support clinicians to meet the aims of the NHS and public health outcomes frameworks.

NHS England primary care commissioning

NHS England is responsible for the direct commissioning of services outside the remit of clinical commissioning groups. Primary care professional bodies, representatives of patients and the public and other stakeholders were involved in the production of these documents.

NHS networks

NHS networks are available for anyone working in the NHS or social care. There are a range of groups available and they provide the opportunity to have discussions via forums, share good practice and learn from others, connect with colleagues with similar interests and receive news and information.

Clinical Networks

There are also a number of clinical networks for those specialising in particular clinical areas. You can find more information about [clinical networks](#) on the CPPE website.

Local pharmaceutical committees

Local pharmaceutical committees represent pharmacy contractors.

Clinical commissioning groups

Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) commission local health services and are responsible for managing prescribing and medicines use.

Primary Care Network (PCN)

Primary care networks build on the core of current primary care services and enable greater provision of proactive, personalised, coordinated and more integrated health and social care. Primary care networks will be based on GP registered lists, typically serving natural communities of around 30,000 to 50,000.

Public health commissioners (local authorities)

Local authorities are responsible for commissioning public health services, such as smoking cessation and sexual health services, to improve the health of their population.

Professional organisations

APTUK, RPS, PCPA, Pharmacy London, PSNC to name a few. These provide information at both a local and national level, as well as offering support for pharmacy professionals.

Educational Institutes

Schools of Pharmacy

Pharm. Tech colleges (i.e. Bradford)

Other contacts include **local GPs**, **hospital pharmacy colleagues** and **local patient support groups**

On the next page, we have provided a table to help you to consider your current networks and identify opportunities where working in collaboration with colleagues and organisations can bring added benefits to your practice and improve patient outcomes.

Checklist

In the table below, tick the column that best describes your relationship with each health or social care professional or group in your locality. Then, in the final column, rank the level of your personal relationship between 1 and 5 (where 1 = low and 5 = high).

Professional/group	Know how to contact them	Comfortable contacting them	Met them	Rating (1-5)
Local GPs				
Clinical commissioning group				
Local pharmaceutical committee				
Local practice forum				
Local professional network				
Local authority contact for public health/public health commissioners				
Hospital pharmacy colleagues				
Clinical specialists				
Local patient support groups				
Primary Care Networks				
Professional bodies and organisations				
Educational institutes				