

Case Study: Supporting Cluster Development in Dumfries & Galloway

What's been happening?

There are 33 GP practices across Dumfries and Galloway and these are divided into 4 localities. Each locality is overseen by a dedicated Clinical Lead and these individuals have also assumed the Cluster Quality Lead role for their respective regions. Practice Quality Leads have been selected and recruited by each individual Practice. Dr Greycy Bell is the Associate Medical Director for Primary Care in NHS Dumfries and Galloway as well as a working GP in Annan. Early on in the development of GP Clusters, it was recognised by the Board that additional support and facilitation would be beneficial to help create the conditions for effective Cluster working. Meetings between the newly appointed Cluster Quality Leads and Locality Managers were promptly organised in order to open up conversations, develop relationships and build trust and these continue to take place every 2 months. Ongoing administrative support has also been provided to each Cluster for activities such as setting up meetings, document preparation, minute taking and follow-up actions such as data collection. Cluster Quality Leads have also benefited from some locally delivered training including a ½ day Leadership session provided by the Board and supplementary learning sessions added on to regional Cluster meetings organised by NHS Dumfries and Galloway. Alongside this practical support, Dr Bell has been keen to create the right balance between Board-led support and Cluster autonomy by providing clarity around the underpinning principles of the new Quality Framework while also allowing Clusters the time and space to consider their own quality priorities.

What's gone well?

- CQLs have been directly involved in the development of Dumfries and Galloway's Primary Care Improvement Plan (PCIP).
- CQLs have been working with the regional Pharmacy services and influencing the local introduction of Community Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians into Practices.
- CQLs with clusters have undertaken significant event analyses, benchmarking activities and routinely share data for improvement.
- Clusters are beginning to share locum resources to support collective service delivery.

What could improve?

- Workforce capacity and retention is an urgent issue and a specific programme is in place to support the local development of Pharmacy Technicians.
- The volume of GP home visiting has also been reviewed and a pilot of Paramedics in Practice has been established to support service delivery in this area.
- Continued training of Advanced Nurse Practitioners is required to ensure appropriate allocation of this valuable role.
- Development of the role of GP as Expert Medical Generalist which will be a positive shift in practice but requires time and resources to achieve.

What have we learned?

- Clusters thrive with the right balance of support and autonomy.
- Clusters are at different stages of development and need to be supported at the right level.
- "Together we are stronger".

Where can I find out more?

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