

**NHS South East Coast**

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**Clinical Senate**  
**Strategic Clinical Networks**

**Executive Summary**

**Making a Difference – Patient and Public  
Engagement**

**South East Coast Strategic Clinical Networks and  
Clinical Senate**

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## **Executive Summary**

# **Making a Difference – Patient and Public Engagement**

## **Learning from an Action Learning set for third sector Organisations and NHS Patient and Public Engagement (PPE) specialists**

***‘I know why I’ve been involved and I know how I’ve made a difference’***

- for patients, carers and the public

*and*

***‘I know why I want to involve people and I can tell people how they have made a difference’***

- for professionals

This work was funded by Macmillan Cancer Support and the South East Coast Strategic Clinical Networks and Clinical Senate. A full report is available from Maxine Bullen, Independent PPE Facilitator – email: [maxine.bullen@nhs.net](mailto:maxine.bullen@nhs.net)



## What we did

The South East Coast Strategic Clinical Networks (SEC SCN) and Clinical Senate and third sector representatives and PPE specialists have been part of an action learning-based programme to develop new collaborative ways of doing Patient & Public Engagement (PPE) across Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

The action learning set met from Sept 13 – July 14, as the new NHS organisations were forming. It was influential in making working together on PPE part of the new culture for PPE in the NHS.

As part of its work the action learning set members developed a coaching/consultancy role with SEC SCN and Clinical Senate Quality Improvement Leads to offer support, share expertise and contacts as they were developing PPE in their programmes and projects. This is now leading to the creation of a collaborative PPE Academy.

## Our Outcomes

- **A new Patient and Public Engagement Strategy** which promotes active involvement with third sector and other NHS organisations through a ‘people bank’ approach.
- **Developing relationships with key strategic third sector partners** – such as RAISE (the Regional Voices organisation for the South East) which worked in partnership with Councils for Voluntary Service to access their expertise on the PPE, their knowledge of local organisations and their networks of community and patient groups. And by return increasing their sphere of influence.
- **Building collaborations with other organisations** to share expertise and extend reach – for example working with South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust because of their inclusion expertise, and RAISE because of their involvement and partnership working expertise.
- **A PPE Academy for the SEC SCN and Clinical Senate Quality Improvement Leads** – working with Third Sector PPE specialists – supporting them to develop skills and extend their networks and contacts to create effective PPE.
- **Greater understanding between the SEC SCN and Clinical Senate and some third sector organisations** of each other priorities, ways of working and how collaborating brings benefits to the service users of both and the wider public.
- **Development of Regional Voices for Cancer** in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support (which could act as a template for other health conditions where appropriate).

## Our Insights

The working relationships developed as part of the action learning set work generated some useful insights – including:

- **Working together on PPE is a win-win!** Building strategic collaborations with third sector organisations who have access to large populations of patients and the public works for both the NHS (who need access to patient voice and third sector



organisations (who want their patient voice heard and acted on).

- Effective PPE starts with **building relationships and establishing trust** locally – there is no short cut to getting out and meeting real people! SEC SCN and Clinical Senate staff benefit from having regular opportunities to get away from the office and out into their communities to talk with their relevant third sector organisations and patient groups.
- Facilitating PPE is **skilful and complex work**. Non-PPE specialists in the SCN and Clinical Senate (and other NHS Strategic organisations) benefit from learning from and with PPE specialists. PPE skills need to be part of the person specification for SCN & Clinical Senate project managers.
- **It's like painting the Forth Bridge!** Relationships have to be worked at constantly. As evidenced by the changing action learning set membership – staff and patient representatives in both NHS and third sector organisations change frequently meaning that new relationships need to be rebuilt regularly – and that means time needs to be made available for this.
- **Effective PPE happens both formally and informally** and both are valuable. NHS organisations have typically valued formal PPE arrangements through consultations and specific events - bringing patients and the public to them. By working more with community based organisations such as Active Mob (a social enterprise organisation working directly within communities on issues such as attitudes to smoking in pregnancy, depression amongst men), and taking opportunities to go out to existing events and groups organised by community and Third Sector organisations – the SCN and Clinical Senate can generate valuable intelligence from “seldom heard from” communities more effectively.
- **Know why you are doing it!** And be able to describe that simply and succinctly! It is vital that PPE starts with clarity about “for what purpose?” This is important both for professionals and for patients and members of the public.
- **Build on what exists and what already works.** By knowing what already exists in the community and collaborating with people and organisations who have specific expertise all organisations can reduce duplication, and get better value for money.
- **PPE needs strong champions and leaders** inside NHS and third sector organisations, as well as strong patient leaders. Changing the culture of the SEC SCN and Clinical Senate to be more able to collaborate with the third Sector on PPE and other service developments meant making time and creating opportunities to meet, understanding each other and building working relationships. In this action learning set the active involvement and leadership from senior staff reinforced the importance of the new ways of working.

