

## **Top Tips from the Bristol GPE CPD Team**

### **Step-by-step guide to planning a course or educational event**

The key to a successful event is planning and preparation. This guidance sets out all the steps you need to take to ensure that your event runs smoothly. A check-list is attached at annex A.

This guidance does not include details of the educational theory of course design, about which the GPE team are also happy to provide advice. Contact details for the team are at the end of this document.

#### **1. Before you start**

Events take a lot of time and effort to plan and run, so you want to maximise your attendance. Do your homework first to make sure that there is a real need for the event, and that it will plug identified educational gaps. There are a lot of events out there already, so make sure that your chosen topic has not recently been – or will not soon be - covered locally. Check CPD forum ([www.cpdforum.org.uk](http://www.cpdforum.org.uk)) to see what else is available.

Know your audience so you can tailor-make the event for them. What type of GPs are you aiming at (new, experienced, Non-Principals, retainers, a multi-professional audience?) What are their educational requirements? How many people are you expecting?

#### **2. Planning the event**

##### *2.1 Objectives*

Define the event's objectives, for example:

'By the end of the session, participants will understand/be able to....'

##### *2.2 Format*

Decide on the format for delivery:

- Course
- Lecture/presentation
- Interactive discussion
- Group work
- Distance learning
- Networking time at breaks and lunch

For a whole or half day event, a combination and variety of styles is best.

### 2.3 *Choosing a venue*

The right venue is key to the success of an event. You will need to consider:

- A location convenient to your audience
- Public transport
- Sufficient parking
- Disabled access
- Sufficient space for the format of your event (registration area, break out rooms, space for drug sponsors)
- Rooms big enough for your intended numbers
- Cost

If you don't know the venue, you may want to consider visiting to check it out before you book.

### 2.4 *Choosing a date*

Sometimes the date will depend upon venue availability. But if possible, try and check that your event does not clash with other important local or national conferences, meeting or events that your target audience may also wish to attend.

Avoid obvious holidays and half term dates, and consider the regular, weekly commitments of your audience to reach a convenient time. If you are planning a lunchtime event, consider allowing time for buffet and registration to enable those that can't leave their practices early to still arrive in time for the educational session itself.

### 2.5 *Selecting your speakers*

Make sure that your speakers understand the objectives of the day, the format for delivery and the content you require from them. You may also want to see their presentation in advance to check it meets your requirements.

Check what equipment speakers require to deliver the session. You will need to make sure that the equipment they bring is compatible with that provided by the venue (for example, is the venue lap top able to take CD Roms?).

Ask speakers to bring handouts or copies of any material that might be helpful for your participants.

Consider what fees or expenses your speakers will be paid. This may depend upon whether presenting at the event is part of – or additional to - their ordinary job.

Make sure you send speakers details of the venue and how to get there.

### 2.6 *Booking venue facilities*

Having established your speakers' requirements and the format for the day, you will need to book the venue and appropriate resources, for example.

- Lecture theatre for plenary sessions
- Seminar and break out rooms

- Lap top (with CD and/or floppy disc drives)
- Data-projector
- Flip chart and pens
- Internet access
- Over Head Projector

It is also be prudent to make sure that the venue has someone on hand throughout the event to help with any technical problems with equipment.

## 2.7 *Catering*

Good catering is also important. There should always be drinking water available at the venue throughout the event. Depending upon the length of your event, you will also need to consider:

- Tea and coffee on arrival/registration
- Morning tea/coffee
- Lunch
- Afternoon tea/coffee

Make sure that the venue can meet specific dietary requirements and let them know in advance what these are. There should always be a selection of vegetarian options, clearly labelled.

Make sure that you have included speakers and drug representatives in your final catering numbers.

## 2.8 *Funding the event*

You will need to make sure that your income covers all your costs (venue, facilities, equipment, speakers). Depending upon your target audience, funding may be through participants' fees and/or drug company sponsorship.

Be clear about how many drug companies you are inviting, how many representatives they are allowed to bring, how long they will be there and the scale of charges. Confirm all of this in writing beforehand and issue reps with their invoices on the day.

## 2.9 *Publicity*

Make sure you give participants plenty of notice. Consider sending out advance warning of the date and general content as soon as you can.

Follow this up with a flyer emailed and/or sent to your target audience. Make it as easy as possible for people to let you know they will be coming (post, email, telephone, fax), as you will need to be sure about your numbers in advance. Keep a reserve list if you are over subscribed, and always remember to inform participants when the event is full.

Participants will also need a map, details of how to get to the venue and a more detailed programme in advance of the event.

Don't forget to submit your course or event for educational approval from the GPE Educationalists and publicise it on CPD Forum

## 2.10 Personnel

Depending upon the event, you may need a chairperson to introduce all the speakers, make sure they keep to time, co-ordinate any panel discussions and summarise the event at the end. A member of the GPE team will be happy to help here.

There should also be someone on hand on the day to support participants, liaise with the venue and iron out any problems.

### 3. The week before

You should by now have a complete list of your participants. If you are planning to deliver any group work, put the participants into their groups in advance if possible, and allocate them rooms. This will save time (and confusion) on the day.

You should also give the venue a call to check that everything is in place, and contact your speakers to make sure they are prepared.

### 4. On the day

Your participants' first impressions on the day will be important if they are to support future events. They will expect to register their attendance. They will also appreciate an Information Pack, which may include:

- Final programme for the day
- Any workshop/group lists
- Name badges
- Evaluation forms (there are evaluation forms available to download from the CPD pages of the GP Solutions website - <http://www.bristolgpsolutions.org.uk/e3.htm>)
- Contact details for speakers
- Any hand-outs obtained from speakers in advance
- Discreet advertising for drug sponsors

You should also remember to bring:

- List of participants and signature sheet for registration (the drug representatives will all want copies of the participant list).
- Invoices for the drug representatives
- Certificates of attendance for the participants (important for their CPD folders)

Remember at the start of the day to go through the domestic arrangements:

- Fire exits and drill
- Toilet facilities
- Refreshments times and locations

At the end of the day, remember to collect all the evaluation forms from the participants. These will be invaluable in informing the development of future events.

## **5. After the event**

Don't forget to send a 'Thank You' to your speakers. If there is any feedback specific from their sessions, you should provide this too.

## **6. Checklist**

Use the attached check-list to make sure that you've covered everything.

Good luck!

## **7. GPE Contact details**

The Bristol GPE Education Team  
The Postgraduate Centre  
Frenchay Hospital  
Frenchay,  
Bristol, BS16 1LE

Telephone: 0117-975-3787

Jo Hennessy - [jhennessy@cix.co.uk](mailto:jhennessy@cix.co.uk)  
Kate Reading- [katereading@another.com](mailto:katereading@another.com)  
Helen Much - [hmgpeducation@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:hmgpeducation@blueyonder.co.uk)

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### **Check list for planning a course or educational event**

Establish educational need

Set objectives

Decide on format

Chose venue

Chose date

Book speakers

Book venue facilities

Book catering

Finalise funding arrangements  
and drug sponsors

Draft programme

Publicise the event

Arrange personnel for the event

Progress check with venue

Progress check with speakers

Final participant count

Finalise programme

Put together participant pack  
and other information for the day

Thank speakers

Assess evaluation forms