

# My personal experience of PBSGL

## Ina Donat (Pharmacist)



My name is Ina Donat, I'm a community pharmacist and I am member of PBSGL group that was traditionally a GP only group. I joined this group after participating in a pilot in which pharmacists were offered the opportunity to join established PBSGL groups.

When the opportunity came to join a GP PBSGL group, I jumped at the chance. At that time, I had worked for many years in community pharmacy as a prescriber, and I had been involved in medical student teaching and was keen to have medical students, registrars and nurses in the pharmacy to enhance inter-professional working and learning. My interest in inter-professional learning stemmed from my (not always positive) experiences as an undergraduate student and as a young pharmacist where I often wondered if there was a better way to communicate with each other to benefit the patient.

Times changed and I was allocated a group and was looking forward to my first evening of PBSGL. I was not quite sure what to expect but I had been sent the materials and the location of the meeting along with a few friendly words to welcome me. The group met at the home of a GP and I arrive on time, fully prepared, and excited and ready to start. And then? Nothing happened at first. I was the second person to arrive and the remaining six GPs gradually arrived over the next half hour. The host had prepared tea and some food for everyone. The conversation was flowing freely and left me wondering when we would get down to the business of learning. Eventually, we sat down and tackled the module. I was fully included in the discussion and I felt that I got something out of it even if the learning had been aimed primarily at GPs. The subsequent monthly meetings followed the same pattern: we would meet after work in each other's homes and we would talk, eat and drink, and then study the module. Initially, I found this challenging. From my previous experience of CPD, preparation for me meant to have studied the materials in advance and to arrive fed and watered. The meeting would be purely about the subject. However, I realised very quickly that the group had so much more to offer.

So, what did I learn? As most of us attended straight after work, we were hungry, thirsty and tired. What better place to relax, eat and drink than in someone's home? The group provided a safe space to let off steam about the vagaries of life as a health care professional. Information was shared willingly, and the NHS was deconstructed and then reconstructed on more than one occasion to find solutions to the problems we encountered in real life. The group regularly discussed significant events offering support to one another. Of course, we always used the module, but for me the biggest benefit of the group was what I would call the "hidden curriculum" and not necessarily the content of the module. As a prescriber, I found the GPs to be deeply understanding and supportive of the issues that I faced in my practice. Likewise, they called on me as the expert in medicines and supply chain management.

The group has changed little over the years. We still meet monthly in the same format and it is a place where we exchange ideas and knowledge, provide support to one another, and have spirited debates about life, health and everything in between. The meetings mean a lot to me and I would not want to miss them. For want of a better word, let me call them therapeutic.