

# Setting up a general practice nurse forum

If there is a local general practice nurse (GPN) forum or support group, enquire about their terms of reference and annual calendar of events.

If there is not a local GPN forum/support group, here are a few pointers on how to get started on forming one:

- *make a list of key people you can contact to set up a group. These may include the primary care trust (PCT) professional lead for GPNs, GPNs who are well known in the local area, or lecturers in general practice nursing*
- *contact pharmaceutical companies for sponsorship that may be required for hiring a suitable venue, or refreshments. If you do decide to approach pharmaceutical companies, remember not to allocate the group to one particular company, but rotate sponsorship across various companies for different meetings throughout the year. This will lessen the chance of bias*
- *find out if a local practice will open its doors for the group to meet in the evening*
- *draw up a list of selected topics for 12 months and circulate to other GPNs for comment*
- *ask GPs and other health care professionals for their advice on expert speakers in different areas, so that you can contact them*
- *create a password-protected discussion board for GPNs on the PCT website to encourage the sharing of good practice*
- *arrange a monthly meeting that could be at the same time as other community nurse meetings and include some training updates. This should take place within normal working hours and be seen as part of continuous development*
- *set up an e-mail group to share information.*

Main points to remember in order to make the forum meetings successful:

- *someone with an interest in developing GPNs will need to take charge of coordinating the meetings – this could be the PCT professional lead or any GPN who has good contacts throughout the local area*
- *arrange for discussion topics to be advertised in advance – these need to be interesting, interactive and current*
- *keep a record of what has been discussed and training given (if any); add this information to your personal/professional development portfolio as evidence of professional updating.*