

LMC BUYING GROUPS: A QUICK GUIDE

LMC buying groups exist to save member practices time and money by negotiating discounts on goods and services practices regularly purchase. The LMC Buying Groups Federation comprises over 20 LMC Buying Groups representing almost 60 separate LMC areas in England and Wales using a model developed over 10 years ago by the successful Trent LMCs Buying Group based in Nottingham.

Who is eligible to join the buying group?

Once an LMC has agreed to set up a Buying Group using the Trent model, all practices that pay their LMC statutory/administrative levy or equivalent to that LMC are eligible to join. Membership of the buying group is free and there is no compulsion for practices to use the recommended suppliers.

What goods and services are available to buying group members?

Current deals include flu and travel vaccines, medical consumables (including single use instruments), office stationary, equipment and furniture, medical equipment calibration and testing, utility cost brokerage, locum and surgery insurance, new and nearly new car purchase, fire and security equipment, confidential information shredding and recycling, staff uniforms, CRB checks service, practice websites and digital dictation systems (with other deals in the pipeline).

How do we ensure our deals remain competitive?

The prices our approved suppliers offer practices have been carefully researched to ensure they deliver real savings. Price monitoring and research is undertaken for us by a company called Burns Associates. Burns Associates are experts in procurement and can draw upon many years experience across a range of commercial sectors. In addition to their other work, Burns Associates will provide, on request, to any LMC Buying Group member practice, free of charge, a bespoke price comparison analysis to demonstrate the value of savings the Buying Group deals can offer, compared with your existing suppliers.

How does it work?

The Buying Group

- advertises and promotes the deals negotiated to its practices

The Suppliers

- offer large discounts in anticipation of significant extra business, courtesy of the Buying Group's promotions
- the Contracts are between individual practices and suppliers
- through the Federation the Group influences the terms of contracts and negotiates the price of goods to members

The operating philosophy behind this is:

- the more practices switch to Buying Group approved suppliers, the more valuable a client group they become
- the keener the suppliers will then be to keep their business and the Group can negotiate even better deals next time round

The Federation

- negotiates agreements/discounts from suppliers
- supplies mail shot letters, and associated marketing documentation
- monitors and researches prices
- polices the agreement with suppliers, investigates complaints and undertakes consumer satisfaction surveys

How much can we save practices?

Examples from LMC Buying Groups Federation (2009/10):

	Per practice per annum
Office stationery and supplies	£900-£2,000
Medical consumables and single use instruments	£1,100-£2750
Utilities (gas, electric, telephone)	£400-£2,000
Insurance products	£500-£ 5000

For further information please contact

LMC Buying Groups Federation
0115 955 5440 or office@nottslmc.co.uk