

## **Buying Groups: Q&A Factsheet for practices**

### ***What is the purpose of the LMC Buying Group and how does it work?***

The sole purpose of the Buying Group is to save its member practices money by negotiating discounts on goods and services which practices regularly purchase. We negotiate with suppliers, after which we identify 'approved' suppliers, who guarantee to give you significant discounts over what you would otherwise pay for their services, in return for our endorsement and help in making you aware of what they offer.

### ***Does it cost us anything to be part of the group?***

No. All practices paying the LMC statutory/administrative levy are automatically entitled to membership. We regard this as an *added value* service your LMC is able to offer you. Should any practice cease to pay their LMC levies, they will no longer be able to access the benefits this initiative will bring.

### ***Is there any obligation to take up the deals offered?***

No. Each practice is free to take up or decline any of the deals we have negotiated. If you wish to take advantage of any of the offers in question, you will be given contact details and all communications take place between you and the individual supplier\*.

### ***What does the portfolio of discounted goods and services you can offer comprise?***

The goods and services we have negotiated discounts for, about which you will be receiving information over the next couple of months include:

- Flu and travel vaccines
- Medical consumables, including a special deal on single-use instruments
- Office stationery and furniture
- Medical equipment calibration and testing, and electrical PAT testing
- Insurance products, including Locum insurance
- Gas, electricity and telephone discount negotiation
- Practice website design packages
- New and used car purchase

We expect to expand the range of goods and services over time. If there are other things you think we could add to this list, please let us know and we will look into it.

### ***Can you give me some examples of the level of savings I can expect to enjoy if I switch to using Buying Group approved suppliers?***

Examples from Federation practices during the last 12 months include:

Essex practice - TAG Medical - equipment calibration - was £560, now £335 = £225 saving

Derbyshire practice - MidMeds - medical consumables - was £5077, now £3661 = £1416 saving

Lincolnshire practice - Whittakers – office consumables - was £9866, now £6597 = £3269 saving

Somerset practice - Untied Utilities - gas - £1,052 saving

Nottinghamshire practice - Untied Utilities - electricity - £2886 saving

Surrey practice - MIAB - insurance - £2,010 saving

***Can I expect to receive information direct from the suppliers and will there be any 'cold calling'?***

You may receive information direct from the suppliers, but sparingly, and only with the Buying Group's full knowledge and permission. We will also permit suppliers to telephone surgeries occasionally and in specified circumstances. You will not, however, be 'pestered' with cold calls.

***What if I find there is something I want to buy that is not included in the suppliers list of discounted items?***

If you tell the supplier they may be prepared to offer you a special price. If not, let us know and we may be able to negotiate its inclusion as an additional item.

***What if I am not happy with the quality of goods and services supplied?***

Always let us know if you encounter any problems getting what you want and we will endeavour to sort it out. As stated above, you are not obligated to use our recommended suppliers, although the more business they obtain the keener will be their desire to keep the business, and the cheaper will be the prices they offer us in future!

***Is there anywhere I can access details of Buying Group deals if I mislay the information you will be sending me?***

The LMC Buying Groups' Federation has a website ([www.lmcbuyinggroups.co.uk](http://www.lmcbuyinggroups.co.uk)) on which you will access details of current deals on-line at any time. We will be sending you a user name and password for you to access the 'members only' details available on this site.

***What is the LMC Buying Groups' Federation?***

The Federation is the brainchild of colleagues in the Trent LMCs' Buying Group. Membership comprises all levy paying practices in over 20 LMCs across the country. With that collective buying power, we are confident of being able to secure many more deals to reduce your regular practice expenditure. (Watch this space!)

**\*The Buying Group accepts no liability for any contract willingly entered into by a practice with an approved supplier. Practices are advised to check that the terms of any contract with suppliers are not inconsistent with those we have negotiated and are advised to inform us of any discrepancy. We do not, however, accept any responsibility for any member practices' failure to check the terms of the relevant contract and the principle of *caveat emptor* (buyer beware) applies in all cases. Your rights as a consumer under the Consumer Protection Act are unaffected. With respect to any services to which the provisions of the Financial Services Act 2000 might apply practices, are advised to seek independent financial advice as may be appropriate.**