

Before the event

In our current climate, securing approval, funding and time off from work to attend training events and conferences can be more challenging than it has been in the past, especially for those working in the NHS. One way of encouraging your employers to agree, is to make a strong business case, outlining how your organisation will benefit from you attending the event. If you have not produced a business case before, here are some simple steps you can follow:

1. Write down three to five of the most important strategies or issues being addressed in your organisation at present
2. Think about how you personally can/do contribute to those strategies and make a list of your personal contributions to it
3. Identify skills and knowledge that you require in order to help your service users and manage your case load
4. Take a look at the PMG Conference 2015 Programme (<http://www.pmguk.co.uk/programme.html>) and identify the sessions which best relate to the list you made for point number 2
5. Make a note of the speakers, committee members and exhibitors at the PMG Conference who you would like to meet. NHS England are involved with this year's event, so it may be worth considering how networking with them could benefit your service
6. Write a short business case, detailing how attending particular sessions and networking will help you contribute to the organisation's strategy*
7. Include the cost of the package/option you have chosen, and add any additional costs if necessary, such as travel expenses

*Example: At present our organisation is highly focused on making savings. My contribution to our strategy is to help reduce service costs without compromising the needs of our service users. The conference programme includes a session entitled 'XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX' presented by XXXXXXXX XXXX, who is an expert in the area. I will use this session to find out how best to maximise cost savings whilst also ensuring service users benefit from our practice.

Other sessions I would like to attend are:

- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX because it will help our organisation to XXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX because it will help our organisation to XXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX because it will help our organisation to XXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX because it will help our organisation to XXXXXXXXX

(Make sure you include sessions that address all of your organisation's most important strategic issues.)

After the event

After the conference, write a summary of what you have learnt and how you will use your new information/contacts to contribute to your organisation's aims. Submitting this to your manager, and ensuring you meet all the points in your business case, should make it even easier and quicker to secure funding for next year as they should see the true benefits of your attendance.

It is also vital that you share the knowledge you gain with colleagues who were not able to attend the conference, or those who attended different sessions from you.

Please note: This document is based on information provided on the COT website, which we thought would be beneficial for PMG members. To see the original, please go to: www.cot.co.uk/annual-conference/funding-conference.