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PSNC Meeting September 2019: Summary Report for Contractors and LPCs

PSNC met in London on Wednesday 4th and Thursday 5th September 2019. This briefing summarises some of the key topics discussed for pharmacy contractors and LPCs.

PSNC Chair

This was the first meeting for PSNC's new non-executive Chair, Sue Killen. Sue shared with the Committee her positivity about community pharmacy and her belief that the five years of stable funding negotiated by PSNC will give the sector the platform it needs to change how it provides services to patients in line with NHS ambitions. Sue brings with her significant experience of both working in Government and the third sector, and as she steers PSNC through the four years of her tenure she will also be playing an active role in championing the sector and building wider advocates for pharmacy.

Ongoing CPCF Negotiations

The Committee had a detailed discussion about a proposal from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on how to distribute the transition payments for 2019/20. Further details on this payment will be announced as soon as possible once agreement has been reached.

The Service Development Subcommittee also considered the Hepatitis C testing service due to be launched this year, and the ongoing work to provide support and guidance to contractors on both the Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS) and the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS). Anyone wishing to provide the CPCS or to meet PQS criteria should sign up for PSNC's emails and look out for the CPCF Checklist emails, which will detail all the actions that pharmacies need to take, as soon as information and guidance is available. Sign up at: psnc.org.uk/email

For the latest information and guidance on all elements of the CPCF, see psnc.org.uk/5yearcpcf

CPCF for 2020/21

PSNC is keen to conclude negotiations on the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) for 2020/21 as soon as possible to give contractors as much notice of this as we can. This ambition is shared by NHS England & NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) and DHSC, but all parties are having to first prioritise discussions to finalise the CPCF for 2019/20 and to support the early implementation of the CPCS and PQS.

However, in preparation for the continuation of the negotiations for the financial year 2020/21, the Committee had discussions on a range of topics as follows:

- PSNC considered possible future options for the PQS, considering what payment and review point schedules could look like, as well as looking at potential future quality criteria that would be in line with NHS objectives but also manageable for community pharmacies.
- The Committee considered the Pharmacy Access Scheme and some tweaks proposed by DHSC for April 2020 and beyond.
- The Service Development Subcommittee considered the new Terms of Service requirement for pharmacies to achieve Level 1 Healthy Living Pharmacy status from April 2020. Subcommittee members discussed the

implications of this for both pharmacies which do not currently have a consultation room and for Distance Selling Pharmacies.

Further detail on all of these matters will be shared with contractors as soon possible once agreement between PSNC, DHSC and NHSE&I has been reached.

Changes to Reimbursement

As part of the five-year CCPF deal, PSNC has agreed to explore with DHSC possible changes to the way in which pharmacies are reimbursed for medicines, and DHSC has now launched a [consultation](#) on their proposed reforms. PSNC's intention is to ensure that the reforms will deliver smoother cash flow and fairer distribution of margin to contractors. The Funding and Contract Subcommittee considered PSNC's draft consultation response – this will be shared on PSNC's website shortly.

Future regulatory considerations

As part of the five-year CCPF agreement, PSNC has agreed to discuss with DHSC hub and spoke dispensing and how this might be used to free up capacity and increase efficiency in the sector. As previously, PSNC's primary concern will be to ensure a level playing field for all parts of the sector, and to scrutinise how and whether hub and spoke dispensing will in fact create any efficiencies in the sector. As part of initial preparations for discussions with DHSC, the Legislation and Regulatory Affairs Subcommittee considered delivery models for dispensed medicines and the strict requirements of collection and delivery services carried out under regulation 248 of the Human Medicines Regulations. The subcommittee also had discussions on PSNC proposals to help prevent prescription direction.

Brexit and the Falsified Medicines Directive

PSNC remains in close contact with the DHSC about its ongoing work to prepare for a possible no-deal Brexit, and has continued to respond to national media queries on this topic, highlighting the vital role that pharmacies play in ensuring that all patients have access to the medicines they need. The Legislation and Regulatory Affairs Subcommittee considered the PSNC-hosted Brexit Forum which was next scheduled to meet on 10th September to hear the latest on Brexit planning from NHSE&I and DHSC.

If the UK exits the EU without a deal, it is likely that UK stakeholders will not be able to comply with the requirement to verify and authenticate medicines via the European Falsified Medicines Directive (FMD) database. In the interests of public safety, the Government has already committed to considering options for a UK falsified medicines regulatory requirement in this scenario, so PSNC considered what that system might look like. Committee Members were keen to seek a system that would maintain the integrity of the supply chain but be as straightforward as possible to operationalise and fit into community pharmacies' working practices.

Prevention Green Paper

The Service Development Subcommittee considered the Government's Green Paper on prevention. PSNC will submit a broad response to the consultation on the Paper to highlight the many ways in which pharmacies can support this important agenda and help people to lead healthier lives. PSNC will also be exploring this topic with wider stakeholders in the coming weeks both at a British Medical Association roundtable event and at events at the Labour and Conservative Party Conferences which PSNC is hosting in collaboration with AIM, CCA and the NPA. These events will provide an opportunity to promote community pharmacy and the roles it can play to representatives of patient groups, charities and Think Tanks, as well as Parliamentarians.

Current funding issues

The Committee considered estimates of the current margin run rate for 2019/20 and the need for a balanced approach to ensure that contractors receive the agreed amount of margin this year. Whilst the Committee wants to ensure that the

full £800m of margin is delivered, it also wishes to avoid any need for contractors to pay back excess margin in future years given the severe cashflow problems that margin recoveries have caused over the past 18 months. PSNC will be discussing the current situation with DHSC.

LPC Support and Resources

PSNC provides support for LPCs wishing to form local Provider Companies and will be holding a workshop on a revised provider company model for interested LPCs on 24th September. The LPC and Contractor Support Subcommittee reviewed the plans for this workshop, as well as reviewing progress on an LPC Dashboard which will help LPCs to self-evaluate and to demonstrate value to their contractors. The subcommittee also considered the results of the recent LPC Local Discovery Integration Survey, which surveyed LPCs on current Primary Care Network (PCN) engagement, integration and support needs – PSNC will publish a summary of the results and its proposed actions in due course, as well as considering this with LPCs at the upcoming LPC Conference. The subcommittee also discussed progress on LPC engagement with PCNs with a review of current support provided and identified support to be provided in the future.

Separately, the Committee discussed the pressures currently facing LPCs in helping contractors through the requirements of the new CCPF. The Committee agreed that LPCs were working hard for their members, but that feedback received from LPC Chief Officers and a recent survey on PCN engagement highlighted the strain many were under. Additionally, LPCs were in turn asking more from PSNC to help with their workloads, but there was no more PSNC could give within its current resources. The Committee agreed that it seemed counterintuitive for LPCs and (indirectly) PSNC to ask contractors for additional funds to manage the increased burden without reviewing whether our collective support for contractors was working optimally. The Committee agreed in principle for the CEO to gauge LPC support for a review.

PSNC communications

The Communications and Public Affairs Subcommittee considered PSNC's communications to contractors around the CCPF deal and agreed that work should continue to explain the deal to contractors and to help them to consider what it will mean for their businesses. The PSNC Roadshows will be a part of this work, but PSNC will also consider use of strategies such as animations and infographics to help to explain what the future holds for pharmacies. The subcommittee also considered feedback from LPCs and agreed to a review of PSNC's website to ensure that LPCs and contractors can find all the information they need from PSNC as easily as possible.

Parliamentary work

PSNC and the other national pharmacy organisations (AIM, CCA, NPA and RPS) are continuing to provide support for the Secretariat of the All-Party Pharmacy Group (APPG). Lexington Communications, a public affairs agency, has been appointed to provide the secretariat function, and they will ensure that the MPs and Peers on the APPG have all the support they need to continue championing pharmacy in Parliament and scrutinising pharmacy policy. PSNC's Communications and Public Affairs Subcommittee considered ideas for the MPs on the APPG to consider for their workplan for the next year.

Guest speaker

PSNC Members received a presentation from Mark Lyonette, Chief Executive of the National Pharmacy Association (NPA). Mr Lyonette highlighted the very great challenges ahead for the independent community pharmacy sector, stressing that the NPA would work collaboratively with PSNC and would provide support for independent pharmacies to help them to make a success of the new CPCS. Mr Lyonette also spoke about the challenges for community pharmacy representation, in particular given the limited funding received by the national organisations relative to that of GP representative bodies, and the need for the sector to focus its efforts on building advocates externally, rather than talking to itself.

For any queries about this PSNC Briefing please contact Zoe Long, PSNC Director of Communications and Public Affairs, on zoe.long@psnc.org.uk