

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee
Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) Subcommittee Agenda
Monday 27th July 2020 at 11am
Meeting to be held remotely via Zoom

Members: David Broome, Tricia Kennerley (Chair), Clare Kerr, Sunil Kochhar, Fin McCaul, Jay Patel, Prakash Patel, Stephen Thomas.

1. Welcome from Chair
2. Apologies for absence
3. Conflicts or declarations of interest
4. Minutes of the last meeting

Action

5. Communications and Public Affairs Plan **Appendix 02/07/2020**
6. PSNC Website Upgrade **Appendix 03/07/2020**
7. PSNC Annual Report 2019/20 **Appendix 04/07/2020**
8. PSNC Policy Asks **Appendix 05/07/2020**

Report

9. Pharmacy Communications **Appendix 06/07/2020**
10. Parliamentary Engagement and Public Affairs **Appendix 07/07/2020**
11. Any other business

Subject	Communications and Public Affairs Plan
Date of meeting	July 2020
Committee/Subcommittee	Communications and Public Affairs
Status	Not Confidential
Overview	Reviewing the updated plan for PSNC's communications and public affairs work.
Proposed action(s)	Discuss plan and priorities.
Author(s) of the paper	Zoe Long and Melinda Mabbutt

Communications and Public Affairs Plan

Revised Communications and Public Affairs Plan for 2020

In May, the subcommittee discussed the priorities for PSNC's communications and public affairs work in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. An updated plan was shared with the subcommittee and has been included separately with these papers.

An update on recent communications and media lines is included below, along with a brief assessment of key risks and priorities for the remaining half of the year, for discussion.

Recent pharmacy COVID-19 and related messaging

The office continues to review and update its messaging on COVID-19 and other topics. Pharmacy press queries in recent weeks have covered an increase in CPCS referrals, plans for the upcoming flu season, the future of the Pandemic Delivery Service, and local lockdowns.

Key Topic: COVID-19 funding negotiations

Negotiations on community pharmacy costs and funding for the COVID-19 pandemic response began this month when PSNC received a response to its bid from HM Government. We have highlighted this development to contractors and issued the following statement from Simon Dukes.

“Contractors have already been waiting many months for news on COVID-19 funding and it is frustrating that today’s news only begins the formal negotiations process, rather than giving them the answers they need. It may be some time before we can give those answers: PSNC now needs to understand and carefully analyse the HM Treasury views on pharmacy funding and to negotiate for the best outcome for contractors.

As contractors will know, the sector has already received some £370 million in advance funding from HM Government, and the question at the heart of our negotiations will be how those loans might need to be repaid, and when. We also need to agree processes so that any agreed funding plan can be adjusted in the future to reflect emerging data and costs from the ever-changing pandemic situation. This means that as a sector we will need to continue collecting that data.

I know that contractors will be keen to know more about our discussions – unfortunately, as this is a live negotiation we remain bound by HM Government confidentiality rules. Once any position has been agreed in principle it will be for the full PSNC Committee to decide whether it is acceptable to the sector, and we will update contractors as soon as we can.”

Key Topic: The Ending of the Pandemic Delivery Service

As the service draws to a close, the office has prepared a set of media lines for pharmacy teams and LPCs to use with the public and press. Some of the key messages are set out below. A complementary template patient leaflet was also produced for contractors to use, see: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/pandemic-delivery-service-ending-patient-communications/>

The Pandemic Delivery Service

- During the national lockdown for coronavirus, HM Government funded all community pharmacies to provide a medicines delivery service.
- The service allowed shielding patients to have their prescribed medicines delivered directly to their home, at no cost to them.

- Throughout the pandemic community pharmacy teams have worked hard to arrange these medicines deliveries safely and effectively to support patients through this difficult time and to give them easy access to the prescription medicines they need.

Shielding Support from August

- As the COVID-19 lockdown eases and people can now go outside more, HM Government's shielding support package will end on Friday 31st July 2020. This will also bring the national pharmacy medicines delivery service to a close.
- This means that from 1st August 2020 community pharmacies will no longer receive any financial support from HM Government to help them to continue delivering medicines to patients' homes, and many will no longer be able to do so.

Background and Reactive Lines

- Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak most community pharmacies were already offering some form of prescription delivery service, but it is important to note that many of these were not free of charge to patients.
- Delivering medicines can create significant cost for pharmacies as it often means hiring delivery drivers and investing in equipment such as suitable vans.
- However, there is no NHS-funded prescription medicines delivery service, so pharmacies have to cover these costs themselves.*
- HM Government funding cuts to pharmacies in recent years had meant that some pharmacies simply could not afford to keep providing delivery services for free: some needed to start charging patients for the services or cutting back on the number of patients who were offered free deliveries to prioritise those in most need of help.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has increased pressure, including financially, on many NHS pharmacies and we do not expect that many, if any, will be able to continue to provide free deliveries of medicines to patients' homes.
- Pharmacies can and will support patients to access their medicines in other ways – for example by giving medicines to patients' friends or relatives, or helping patients to source volunteers to collect medicines for them.

*However, pharmacies are funded by the NHS to deliver a small number of specified appliances to patients' homes (e.g. catheters).

COVID-19: Risks and Priorities

Some of the key communications/reputation risks for the sector are likely to be as follows:

- Pharmacies closing due to COVID-19
- Worsening of medicines supply issues whether through the pandemic or Brexit-related
- Flu vaccination: supply issues and changes to allow for safe vaccination
- Changes to pharmacy open hours and/or reductions in services offered due to COVID-19
- Removal of services for shielded patients
- Changes to the way prescriptions are dispensed due to COVID-19
- Sector seen as complaining about money after receiving £370m

In all of these cases, it is possible that patients (and MPs or the media) could blame community pharmacies for issues that are out of contractors' control. To mitigate these risks we will draft reactive communications lines for all identified risks so that we and LPCs are ready should any of the issues arise. We will also prepare briefings for MPs which pre-empt some of these topics and ensure they

have information about the pressures that pharmacies are facing at the moment and a clear expectation of what people can expect from pharmacies throughout the winter – this may be tied in with some of the APPG work. And we will continue to work with the other pharmacy organisations to seek positive media coverage for the sector wherever we can – helping to enhance the public’s view of the sector generally and to ensure people understand what to expect from their pharmacies.

Other immediate COVID-19 communications work priorities are:

- Continuing to provide regular (daily) updates on COVID-19 matters to contractors.
- Integrating COVID-19 information with the rest of the PSNC website content as we enter a ‘new normal’.
- Keeping in close contact with LPCs where local advice differs from the national situation – supporting them with local lockdown comms.
- Continuing to highlight the hard work that pharmacies are doing for their local communities.

Other Communications and Public Affairs Priorities for 2020

In addition to COVID-19 work, and in line with the revised communications and public affairs plan written in May, key priorities for the next few months need to be:

- Supporting the CPCF annual review process: we have always said that we could use this to ask for more money and need to be influencing the right people to get that.
- Influencing Treasury: we need to review how can we do this, including learning from other sectors eg ABPI and others. This may include influencing business Ministers.
- Contractor communications: with a huge amount of information to get across to contractors re flu, PQS, etc, we will need to review our communications and produce checklists and timelines to help them through the changes ahead.
- Independent review next steps communications (dependent on next steps which are still to be agreed, but this may well include contractor and press communications from PSNC).
- PSNC Pharmacy Advice Audit: while the results will be used in negotiations, we also need to consider how we can use them publicly and with MPs to get most leverage from them.

Subcommittee Action

The subcommittee is asked to consider:

- The updated plans and priorities: is there any further feedback on these and/or ideas for how we can meet the key objectives identified?
- COVID-19: are there risks we have missed, and what else can we do to mitigate the risks?
- COVID-19: is there other proactive communications/public affairs work we need to do?

Subject	PSNC Website Upgrade
Date of meeting	July 2020
Committee/Subcommittee	Communications and Public Affairs
Status	Not Confidential
Overview	Potential options for upgrading the PSNC website.
Proposed action(s)	Discuss options and consider next steps.
Author(s) of the paper	Zoe Long and Melinda Mabbutt

PSNC Website Upgrade

Background and introduction

CPA has previously discussed the need to review PSNC's website to ensure that it is resilient; that contractors and other users can easily find the information they need on it; and to ensure that it is fit for the future. This work was paused during the COVID-19 peak and pending the David Wright report, but can now be revisited. There is approved budget for an upgrade within this financial year.

Reflections on the independent review

David Wright identified a number of issues in his report into contractor representation and support, including the disconnect that exists between PSNC and some of the contractors it represents. Despite positive feedback about PSNC's stepped-up communications during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is clearly more work to be done to ensure that contractors feel communication is in two directions.

Other communications challenges highlighted by David Wright included the need for a sector-wide strategy to be developed into which everyone has buy-in, and for the LPCs it was suggested that an improved network for LPC Chief Officers was needed.

There are several reasons for continuing with the PSNC website upgrade project now:

- With the COVID-19 pandemic ongoing, it is likely that we will see further peaks of high levels of traffic and interest in the PSNC website, and the website must be able to cope with these.
- As PSNC's main communications channel to both contractors and LPCs, the website is a sensible place to start in trying to enhance the connection between PSNC and contractors.
- An upgraded website could help to facilitate improved digital networks between LPCs.
- Given the scale of transformation that could be ahead for PSNC there is a benefit in doing some jobs early: having a well-designed and updated communications tool could save any restructured/rebranded organisation significant legwork in its early days.

Clearly the upgraded website will need to be carefully designed so that it can be easily rebranded if and when PSNC's name changes in the future.

Initial ideas on a website upgrade

The first phase in any website upgrade project will be to agree the specifications of what we need. There are some key questions to answer about audiences, security and the LPC websites, and some initial topics for the subcommittee to consider are set out in the questions below.

Melinda Mabbutt has also carried out an initial scoping exercise looking at the key features that the PSNC website currently has and a series of new features which we might want it to have in the future. The subcommittee is asked to consider whether there is anything missing from these and to indicate whether they agree with the prioritisation given to each feature.

Current features

AREA	FEATURE	PRIORITY LEVEL
Key aspects	Meets necessary legal requirements (e.g. cookies notice)	High
	HTTPS security	High
	Ability to make updates, improvements and minor upgrades easily and without technical support	High
	Shortlink redirects (e.g. psnc.org.uk/nms)	High

	Search function	High
	Multiple levels of editing rights	High
	Subscriber logins (for LPCs, and possibly other groups)	High
	Template sister sites (i.e. LPC websites)	High
Website structure	Attractive, regularly changing homepage (promoting key news/guidance)	High
	Clear webpage structure (over 1,500 pages)	High
	New stories and categories with RSS feeds (c. 600 a year)	High
Additional content	Briefings/Guidance database (c. 70 a year)	High
	Event posts (c. 30 a year)	High
	Reporting forms (c. 10 active)	High
	Blog posts	High
	Services database (over 1,200 entries)	High
	CSV upload databases (i.e. is it allowed and special containers)	High
	Banner ads (not currently used)	Low
	Publications posts (no longer used)	Low

New or improved features

AREA	FEATURE	PRIORITY LEVEL
Key aspects	Increase capacity – so larger numbers of visitors don't cause the website to run slowly.	High
	Ability to switch to a new website name, URL and logo easily – so this can be done simply if/when PSNC becomes Community Pharmacy England (note, we already own the relevant domain names).	High
	More mobile-friendly – so visitors on smartphones can navigate the site more easily from phones.	High
	Improved search function – so newer and most relevant information appears first.	High
	Sister sites not to sit under the main PSNC site – so visitors know that LPCs are independent from PSNC.	High
	Separate public and pharmacy team content (possibly through additional login/subscriber levels) – so we can provide information that is more sensitive (e.g. supply notices).	Medium
	Hold the development environment on a separate server – so any improvements can be tested without effecting the live site.	Medium
Website structure	A system to improve content management – to enable us to update all instances of a change in one go.	High
	News archive – to automatically archive and demote older news stories whilst still keeping a record of them.	High
	Alternative website design platforms (such as WebFlow) – to see if systems other than Wordpress would be better for our needs.	Medium
	Broken link checker – to easily find and correct any links that have stopped working.	Medium
Additional content	Link the LPC subscriber details with our internal members database and mailing list (Mailchimp) – so we can more easily keep our records up-to-date and aligned.	Medium

	Improved reporting forms – so these are more straightforward for visitors to use and can be completed on smartphones (this may tie in with the development of a PSNC app or integration with Google Forms).	Medium
	Improved mailing list (Mailchimp) and social media tie-ins – so news stories can be mapped straight into newsletters or social media posts (this may or may not be automatic).	Medium

Subcommittee Action

The subcommittee is asked to consider:

- What risks could be associated with proceeding with the website upgrade at this stage?
- The key audiences for PSNC’s website – how should we manage contractors, LPCs, and external audiences such as commissioners, MPs and journalists?
- Publicly open vs member only websites – what are the pros and cons of each?
- Feedback on the key website features as set out above – are there any you would add, and do you agree with the prioritisation that we have given to each point?
- Should PSNC continue to provide the LPCs with a website template?

Subject	PSNC Annual Report 2019/20
Date of meeting	July 2020
Committee/Subcommittee	Communications and Public Affairs
Status	Not Confidential
Overview	Plans for compiling PSNC's annual report for 2019/20.
Proposed action(s)	Discuss options and consider next steps.
Author(s) of the paper	Zoe Long and Melinda Mabbutt

PSNC Annual Report 2019/20

Introduction

A key task that has been delayed by the need to focus on COVID-19 communications work through April and beyond is the production of PSNC's annual report. We are now revisiting this with a view to drafting over the summer, designing and finalising through the autumn, and publishing asap and certainly before the end of the calendar year.

Reminder: 2018/19 report

In 2018/19 PSNC published its first annual report in some time: the report gave contractors and LPCs a comprehensive overview of PSNC's work, showcasing the breadth of work that we do and the impact that this has. With input from each of the teams, the Communications and Public Affairs Team summarised the vast amount of support, guidance and resources produced during the year.

The final report included the following sections:

- Comments from the CEO and Chair
- The Year at PSNC
- How PSNC Works
- Supporting LPCs and Local Services
- Help with Dispensing
- PSNC Annual Accounts 2018/19
- Promoting Community Pharmacies
- The Year Ahead: PSNC's vision for 2019/20

As well as printing copies to send to LPCs (and make available at PSNC events), we developed a number of alternative viewing methods: an online flipbook reader, a printable PDF and a micro site. You can find the 2018/19 report on the [About PSNC page](#) of our website.

2019/20: Key questions and content

Brainstorming on the 2019/20 report has led to the below content plan for the annual report this year. The idea is that with this report we will focus on a number of key wins and issues in more depth, rather than trying to summarise absolutely everything that we do. Some key questions for subcommittee consideration are set out below.

- **Comments from the CEO and Chair**
- **The Year at PSNC** (highlighting key milestones eg Cat M changes)
- **The Five-Year CPCF** (covering negotiations, content of the deal, and reflecting back on our goals to get financial security for contractors and a wider range of commissioned services)
- **Engaging with contractors and learning** (highlighting how we have engaged with contractors eg the CPCF Roadshows and full range of guidance/briefings, and the launch of the DW review)
- **Representing through National Crises:** No-deal Brexit and COVID-19 (covering our Brexit Forum work plus our initial response to the pandemic in February and March, including the initial funding injection and temporary CPCF changes)
- **PSNC Annual Accounts 2019/20**
- **The Year Ahead** (covering our ambitions for the year including re COVID-19 funding and support, flu vaccinations and the annual CPCF review process)

Subcommittee Action

The subcommittee is asked to consider:

- The proposed topics for inclusion in the annual report: are there other topics we should include, and will these convey the breadth of PSNC's work across the year?
- Audiences: our key audiences are contractors and LPCs, but should we also have a condensed report or other format for external audiences and stakeholders?
- The format of the report: should the report be available in hard copy this year, or a purely digital publication?
- Any other feedback on the plan or priorities for the 2019/20 annual report.

Subject	PSNC Policy Asks
Date of meeting	July 2020
Committee/Subcommittee	Communications and Public Affairs
Status	Not confidential
Overview	PSNC's policy asks
Proposed action(s)	None
Author(s) of the paper	Zoe Long

PSNC Policy Asks

Introduction

The subcommittee reviewed the policy asks in February and then these were further updated in May to account for COVID-19. Some additional amends have been made to account for recent funding developments, as well as suggestions from the previous meeting.

Suggested high priority asks for the rest of 2020 have been highlighted in red.

Community pharmacy needs additional funding to cover the costs of COVID-19 and to maintain current service levels through the winter period. In particular, we are asking for:

- Provision of additional monies (over and above the global sum) to protect pharmacies, recognising the additional costs brought about by COVID-19 and their unknown duration.
- Fair and transparent long-term funding to give NHS community pharmacy contractors certainty about the future.
- A commitment from the NHS and HM Government to support and safeguard the network of 11,500 community pharmacies with fair funding as well as effective decision-making allowing for a flexibility for pharmacies through any further COVID-19 peaks.

Pharmacies are playing a critical role in the NHS response to the COVID-19 pandemic, improving local resilience. PSNC would like to see this role supported with developments to include:

- Clarity from HM Government about the role it wants the network of 11,500 pharmacies to play after the pandemic and in any future crises.
- Access to priority COVID-19 testing for pharmacists and their teams and to sufficient supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to protect frontline staff. This is particularly important for the flu vaccination effort which pharmacies must be at the heart of.
- Commissioning of services that allow community pharmacies to act as centres for COVID-19 vaccinations and antibody testing.
- Amendment of service consent models to remove paper forms and amendment of regulations to remove the need for patients to sign prescription forms during the pandemic.
- Removal of the NHS Prescription Charge for the duration of the pandemic, recognising the administrative burden it places on pharmacies to collect.

As the NHS comes under increasing pressure, community pharmacies continue to play a vital role in the provision of primary care. To support this we would like to see:

- National commissioning of a range of healthcare services from community pharmacies.
- Community pharmacies to be included in IT systems that fully integrate local health and care records where appropriate permissions are given, including patient consent.
- Changes to allow community pharmacists to generically substitute clinically appropriate medicines where this could reduce NHS costs, and to allow original pack dispensing for all prescribed items.
- A DHSC-endorsed best practice guide to encourage manufacturers and wholesalers to ensure that ordering processes are consistent and as easy as possible for community pharmacy contractors.
- Changes which are fair to all parts of the sector and which allow contractors to free up capacity in the dispensing process.

Subcommittee Action

The subcommittee is asked to consider:

- Winter – do we need any additional asks to address upcoming winter challenges? If so, what are these?
- Suggested priorities have been highlighted above – are these right?

Subject	Pharmacy Communications
Date of meeting	July 2020
Committee/Subcommittee	Communications and Public Affairs
Status	Not confidential
Overview	An update on PSNC's communications with contractors, pharmacy teams and LPCs, including our digital statistics reports.
Proposed action(s)	None
Author(s) of the paper	Melinda Mabbutt

Pharmacy Communications

Introduction

This paper provides an update on work to communicate with community pharmacy contractors, pharmacy teams and LPCs. It also contains monthly statistics on PSNC's digital communications.

Negotiation updates

The official start of high-level COVID-19 funding negotiations this month saw PSNC re-affirm its position on the need for appropriate funding and support for the sector to help pharmacies survive in the aftermath of the pandemic response. We published a news story to update contractors. Also, in his [June CEO Blog](#), Simon Dukes has described how we are starting to look towards more wide-ranging, but still very important, negotiations for the autumn and winter of 2020/21.

Pharmacy Advice Audit

The Communications and Public Affairs Team provided communications support for the Pharmacy Advice Audit being led by Richard Brown. This included running a sustained communications campaign across the PSNC website, email newsletters and social media. LPCs were given news story templates, social media messaging and an infographic ahead of the launch. During the audit week LPC Chief Officers were sent exception reports so they could provide targeted encouragement to contractors. There was a hugely positive response to this data, and we are very grateful to LPCs for their support.

Email newsletters

As agreed at the last subcommittee meeting, the office has continued to send daily email updates due to the large amount of information we still have for contractors and to provide consistency for subscribers. The scope has been extended to cover all news, rather than just COVID-19 updates. Whilst recent statistics reports (see the end of this paper) show that email open rates are reducing to pre-COVID levels, engagement is still higher overall due to the increased frequency of the emails.

COVID-19 Hub

The large COVID-19 Hub section of PSNC's website continues to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. This includes recent updates to the pages on staff safety, details of PSNC's work and our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) library.

PSNC digital communications reports (full May and June reports overleaf)

May 2020 overview: Popular topics this month included the Pandemic Delivery Service, PHE's COVID-19 public information posters for pharmacies, and bank holiday openings. Our largest peak in website numbers was on Friday 1st, the day that NHSE&I announced that pharmacies were required to open between 2pm and 5pm on the Early May Bank Holiday (8th May).

June 2020 overview: This month the PSNC Pharmacy Advice Audit, the findings of the independent review into contractor representation and support, and PHE's COVID-19 public information posters for pharmacies were generating a lot of interest. Our largest peaks in website numbers were on Monday 29th and Tuesday 30th, when the Pharmacy Advice Audit began.

July 2020 overview: Whilst the month is not yet over, initial data shows that staff risk assessments and the newly announced Part 1 2020/21 Pharmacy Quality Scheme are high on visitors' agendas.

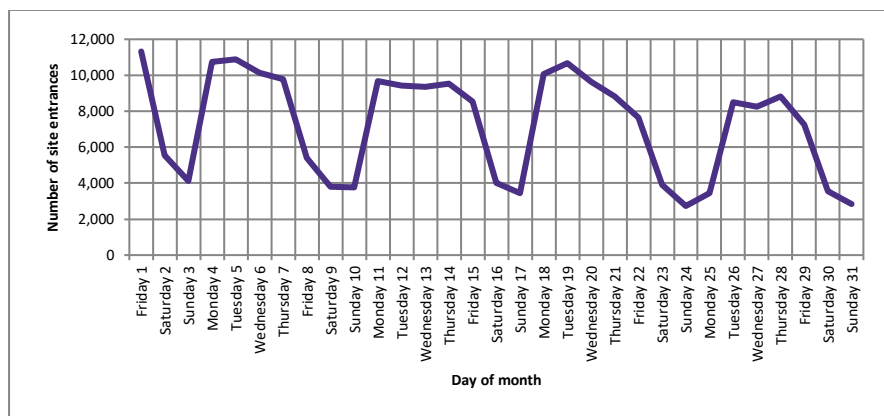
Conclusion

This paper has been created just for review; no action is required. However, subcommittee members are welcome to share their feedback or questions on any of the above.

PSNC digital communications report – May 2020

PSNC Website

Audience	May	April
Number of unique visitors (site entrances)	225,815	315,936
Number of unique pageviews	369,334	522,895



Pages	Views
Price concessions and NCSO	24,381
Pandemic Delivery Service	5,552
Controlled Drug prescription forms and validity	5,284
COVID-19 Hub	3,815
EPS Prescription Tracker	3,646

News stories	Date	Views
COVID-19: Updated PHE posters	13 April	10,917
Contractor Update: 25th May Bank Holiday Opening	11 May	3,151
COVID-19: CHM advice on ibuprofen and coronavirus	15 April	2,425
NHSE&I announcement on 8th May openings	1 May	2,233
COVID-19 payments: How and when they will be made	26 May	2,133

PSNC Briefings	Views
003/20: Updating Smartcards for multi-site and SCR usage	311
013/20: Smartcard Role and Activity codes and how to update them	300
016/19: EPS Controlled Drugs (CD) FAQs	286
023/19: SSPs – A guide for community pharmacy teams	278
002/20: Changes to FP10 NHS prescription form and EPS Tokens	241

Webinars/videos	Plays
A digital guide to the Pandemic Delivery Service	754
Simon Dukes video message 15th May 2020	462
Future of Pharmacy animation	130
Simon Dukes video message 31st March 2020	17
COVID-19 Webinar for Pharmacy Contractors	12

PSNC Emails

PSNC Newsletter	May	April	Other health newsletters
Open rate	34%	38%	23%
Click rate	4%	5%	6%
Clicks to opens	10%	13%	20%

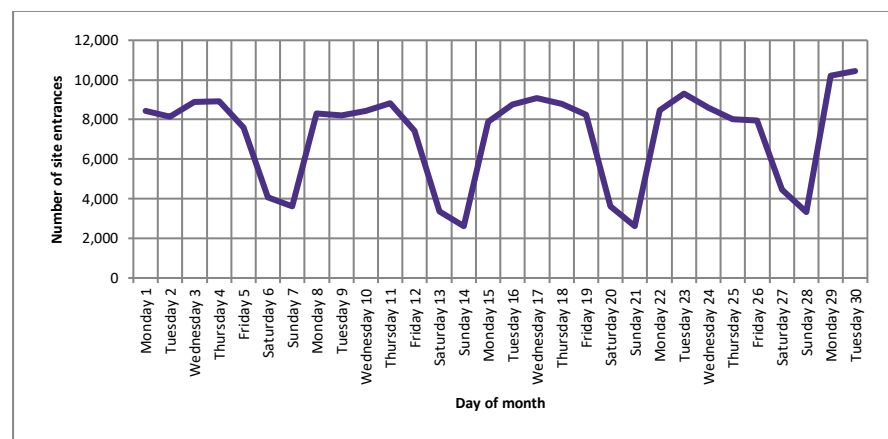
Social media

	May	April
Twitter reach	198,300	261,200
Twitter interactions	4,682	9,048
Facebook reach	8,465	43,681
Facebook interactions	804	7,344
LinkedIn reach	8,391	12,401
LinkedIn interactions	420	1,043

PSNC digital communications report – June 2020

PSNC Website

Audience	June	May
Number of unique visitors (site entrances)	216,629	225,815
Number of unique pageviews	361,915	369,334



Pages	Views
Price concessions and NCSC	23,718
Controlled Drug prescription forms and validity	5,046
Medicines Use Reviews (MURs)	4,896
Personal protective equipment, staff safety and security	4,731
PSNC Pharmacy Advice Audit	3,538

News stories	Date	Views
COVID-19: Updated PHE posters	13 April	5,898
21 products reclassified as special containers	5 June	3,973
NHS Test and Trace: Update for community pharmacy	3 June	3,354
COVID-19: Updated public information posters	10 June	2,197
Supply Notification: H2-antagonists	Dec '19	1,994

PSNC Briefings	Views
021/20: PSNC Pharmacy Advice Audit – Team Briefing Sheet	4,535
019/20: Emergency closure checklist for community pharmacy	606
020/20: Contractor Representation and Support Review Summary	602
016/19: EPS Controlled Drugs (CD) FAQs	258
023/19: SSPs – A guide for community pharmacy teams	209

Webinars/videos	Plays
PSNC audit presentation on-demand	1,075
PSNC CEO Pharmacy Advice Audit video message	620
Pharmacy Representation Review: A Contactor Webinar – LIVE	223
Future of Pharmacy animation	123
A digital guide to the Pandemic Delivery Service	49

PSNC Emails

PSNC Newsletter	June	May	Other health newsletters
Open rate	33%	34%	23%
Click rate	3%	4%	6%
Clicks to opens	10%	10%	20%

Social media

	June	May
Twitter reach	175,400	198,300
Twitter interactions	3,625	4,682
Facebook reach	5,583	8,465
Facebook interactions	704	804
LinkedIn reach	5,896	8,391
LinkedIn interactions	491	420

Subject	Parliamentary Engagement and Public Affairs
Date of meeting	July 2020
Committee/Subcommittee	Communications and Public Affairs
Status	Not confidential
Overview	A summary of PSNC's public affairs work and engagement with external stakeholders in recent months.
Proposed action(s)	None
Author(s) of the paper	Jessica Ferguson

Parliamentary Engagement and Public Affairs

Introduction

This paper presents an overview of the public affairs work PSNC has carried out since the last meeting of the subcommittee.

MP engagement

Below is a summary of the work we have been doing to engage with MPs, either as PSNC, through supporting the LPCs, or via the APPG.

Support for LPCs

LPCs are continuing to report queries from their local MPs about the community pharmacy response to COVID-19. MPs are still submitting letters to the Minister calling for support for the sector and some are beginning to visit pharmacies again. We are updating our MP resources for LPCs, including a crib sheet of key messages, template press release and guidance for Zoom meetings or visits. Over the summer we are seeing if we can work with the LPCs to help arrange regional action days with their local MPs, taking the form of a Zoom briefing or via work on social media.

Debate on pressures on independent pharmacies

Bob Seely, Conservative MP for the Isle of Wight, led a short debate on pressures on independent pharmacies. PSNC shared some general information highlighting pressures across the whole sector with Bob and our APPG members and there were some helpful contributions from a number of MPs.

Parliamentary questions

We are continuing to see many parliamentary questions submitted on pharmacy matters and there is also an increase in questions about winter pressures, including:

- Richard Holden, Conservative MP for North West Durham, asking what discussions have been had with the Chancellor on a transitional funding package for community pharmacists before and during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Chris Green, Conservative MP for Bolton West, asking when the assessment of new and pending applications to the Drug Tariff will resume.
- Emma Lewell-Buck, Labour MP for South Shields, asking what additional support was provided to pharmacies in response to the closure of GP surgeries during the initial phase of the COVID-19 lockdown.
- Lee Anderson, Conservative MP for Ashfield, asking what the timetable is for the publication of the NHS England review on making cholesterol lowering treatment available directly from pharmacists.
- Derek Twigg, Labour MP for Halton, asking what steps the DHSC plan to take to ensure that the influenza vaccine for winter 2020-21 is administered in a COVID-19 safe environment.
- Catherine West, Labour MP for Hornsey and Wood Green, asking what plans the Government has put in place to avoid a flu epidemic at the same time as managing the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Ed Davey, Liberal Democrat MP for Kingston and Surbiton, asking what assessment has been made of the potential merits of expanding the flu vaccination programme to help prepare for a potential second wave of COVID-19.

As Parliament enters summer recess, the majority of our MP work will be focused on providing the LPCs with support for their local engagement. We will also use the summer recess to finalise our MP engagement plan for when Parliament returns in September. This will likely be focused on upcoming winter pressures and the flu vaccination programme. We will also be seeking briefing with key MPs

towards the end of the summer to help communicate our asks and key messages for the sector as we head into the winter months.

All-Party Pharmacy Group (APPG)

The APPG is now officially re-registered after the AGM was held earlier this month. Jackie Doyle-Price, Conservative MP for Thurrock and former junior health minister, was formally elected as the chair of the group. To recap, the other officers are:

- Paul Bristow, Conservative MP for Peterborough
- Jason McCartney, Conservative MP for Colne Valley
- David Amess, Conservative MP for Southend West
- Julian Sturdy, Conservative MP for York Outer
- Taiwo Owatemi, Labour MP for Coventry North West
- Feryal Clark, Labour MP for Enfield North
- Baroness Cumberlege, Conservative peer
- Lord Clement-Jones, Liberal Democrat peer

The AGM was followed by a short meeting between the MPs and some representatives from the co-funding organisations gave a short update on developments in the sector, which was followed by questions from the MPs.

An op-ed from Jackie Doyle-Price has been drafted and will we hope be published in the Daily Telegraph in the coming weeks. Work has also been ongoing to develop a new website (as agreed as part of last year's budget), which will be relaunched during the week commencing 27 July.

The co-sponsoring pharmacy organisations have worked with Lexington Communications to develop a proposed APPG workplan for 2020/21, which is still in development but currently includes:

- A roundtable on winter pressures
- An inquiry into digital innovation in pharmacy
- Summer reception in Parliament (providing such events can go ahead by then)

Medicines and Medical Devices Bill

PSNC submitted [written evidence to the Medicines and Medical Devices Bill Committee](#) in June. This set out our concerns and asks on the legislation which will enable hub and spoke dispensing. We are continuing to monitor the Bill as it moves through Parliament.

Work with other organisations

Joint work with the other pharmacy organisations

We have continued to host weekly calls with the public affairs teams from the other pharmacy organisations and we also join a weekly communications call. This year we had planned to co-host events at the party conferences, however as the conferences have been cancelled we are working on a new plan to host virtual events, possibly exploring the future of pharmacy in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Carers Trust

In June we worked with the RPS and the Carers Trust to promote some resources for pharmacy teams and unpaid carers. The Carers Trust had received reports that some carers had found difficulty with some of the operational changes introduced in pharmacies as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, such

as queuing outside the pharmacy and limiting the number of people allowed in at one time. The resources developed included some actions for pharmacy teams to consider to help support carers in the community and a guide for carers to help them make the most out of their pharmacies with some useful hints and tips.

Conclusion

This paper has been created just for review; no action is required. However, subcommittee members are welcome to share their feedback or questions on any of the above.