

**Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee
Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) Subcommittee
Minutes for the meeting held on
Wednesday 13th May 2020**

Minutes of a meeting of the PSNC CPA Subcommittee held via Zoom on Wednesday 13th May at 7.00pm.

Members of CPA present: David Broome, Jas Heer, Tricia Kennerley (Chair), Clare Kerr, Fin McCaul, Jay Patel, Stephen Thomas

In Attendance: Simon Dukes, Jessica Ferguson and Zoe Long.

Apologies: No apologies were received.

Conflicts of interest: None received.

Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the meeting held in February 2020 were approved.

Matters arising: The majority of the actions from February are picked up in the agenda papers, but Zoe Long updated that the stakeholder map had also been updated and would be shared with the subcommittee once communications and public affairs plans had been updated.

Item 1 – Planning and CPA Objectives

- 1.1 Zoe Long gave an update on how communications and public affairs work has been adjusted through the COVID-19 pandemic and the subcommittee had a discussion on what PSNC needs to do next. There is more work to be done on messaging, particularly to showcase the value of pharmacy in responding to the COVID-19 outbreak (maintaining medicines supply, seeing more patients, 'going the extra mile', preventing the NHS from dramatic failings, etc.) It was suggested that we could create a crib sheet of key messages to be used across the sector, and the subcommittee noted that further press work is needed to tell the story of pharmacy's role. The HDA could be a useful partner for us in work around the value of the medicines supply chain.
- 1.2 The subcommittee also discussed engagement with GPs. Key messages and conversation topics for GPs could cover periods of treatment, increasing use of electronic repeat dispensing, and ideas for working together more collaboratively (including via integrated records). We should seek to create a joint paper with the BMA to explore our shared learnings from COVID-19.
- 1.3 The subcommittee considered other key audiences, noting that local commissioners and Clinical Directors had little understanding of the limitations of pharmacy PCN roles.

Action 1: Office to draft revised key messaging for external stakeholders (particularly the public and MPs) about the value and role of community pharmacy through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action 2: Office to prepare revised communications and public affairs plans, including updated messaging and plans for engaging with GPs.

Action 3: Office to approach BMA proposing a joint briefing for contractors and GPs.

Item 2 – PSNC Policy Asks

- 2.1 The subcommittee considered PSNC's policy asks which had been updated in light of COVID-19. Some of these could be broadened out eg to ask for more services, faster decision-making, fair funding and investment in the sector. The policy asks also need to be kept under review as PSNC develops policies at its upcoming meetings.
- 2.2 Suggested additions to the policy asks list included positioning pharmacy as a centre for COVID-19 vaccinations and antibody testing; allowing flexibility in consent models; and for the ask on removing the prescription charge to highlight the potential that this has for reducing burden.

Action 4: The subcommittee will revisit some updated policy asks once the full committee has met next week.

Item 3 – COVID-19 Communications and Public Affairs Wash-Up

- 3.1 The subcommittee felt that pharmacy communications work, especially the daily COVID-19 newsletters, had been useful and easy to digest. Subcommittee members liked the mix of written and digital (eg video) communications to contractors.
- 3.2 Members of the subcommittee reported that they are receiving more requests from contractors about when usual business such as the PQS will resume. Upcoming communications about the PSNC meeting must try to address these and should update on all our work.
- 3.3 The subcommittee also considered how we might approach MP engagement differently in a future crisis, and how we could feed into the national media more effectively. The subcommittee also noted that it would be helpful to review with NHSE&I and DHSC what has gone well through the crisis and what could be collectively improved.
- 3.4 The subcommittee felt that PSNC should look at communications and reputational risks for community pharmacy in preparation for the inevitable inquiries into the NHS response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action 5: The office will continue with daily newsletters for now, concentrating on a mix of written and digital formats, and using the upcoming PSNC meetings as focus points for communications on the work PSNC is doing and what it is asking for in negotiations.

Action 6: The office will consider communications and reputation risks for community pharmacy linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Item 4 – Pharmacy Communications During COVID-19

- 4.1 The subcommittee noted the paper in the agenda.

Item 5 – Parliamentary Engagement and Public Affairs During COVID-19

- 5.1 The subcommittee felt that some of the recent parliamentary engagement had been useful, and noted that the use of Zoom seems to have made politicians more accessible.

Item 6 – Digital Communications

6.1 This subcommittee noted the paper in the agenda and the increased traffic to the website.

Item 7 – Any Other Business

7.1 Website. The subcommittee noted the need to ensure that we have a contingency plan should there be any problems with the PSNC website.