

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee
Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) Subcommittee Agenda
Wednesday 3rd February 2021 at 11.15am
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 Strategy (**Confidential**)
6. PSNC Annual Report 2019/20 **Appendix 03/02/2021**

Report

7. PSNC and LPC Websites Upgrade **Appendix 04/02/2021**
8. Pharmacy Communications **Appendix 05/02/2021**
9. Parliamentary Engagement and Public Affairs **Appendix 06/02/2021**
10. Any other business

Subject	PSNC Annual Report 2019/20
Date of meeting	February 2021
Committee/Subcommittee	Communications and Public Affairs
Status	Not confidential
Overview	Progress made on PSNC's annual report for 2019/20
Proposed action(s)	Approve final draft of the report
Author(s) of the paper	Zoe Long and Melinda Mabbutt

PSNC Annual Report 2019/20

Introduction and Progress

Production of the PSNC annual report for 2019/20 has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the work associated with that. The report is now drafted and has been designed, with just the CEO and Chair comments being finalised and last design adjustments being made.

We will share a copy of the report with the subcommittee by email this week (by Friday 29th January) and are looking to publish on Friday 5th February.

The next report that we will work on will be the pharmacy prospectus as discussed previously by the subcommittee. Zoe Long will give a brief verbal update on the thinking on this.

Subcommittee Action

The subcommittee is asked to:

- Review the annual report (to follow by email) and share any feedback or comments.
- Share any further thoughts on the pharmacy prospectus following the verbal update.

Subject	PSNC and LPC Websites Upgrade
Date of meeting	February 2021
Committee/Subcommittee	Communications and Public Affairs
Status	Not confidential
Overview	Summary of progress on the upgrade to the main PSNC website and the template LPC sites
Proposed action(s)	None
Author(s) of the paper	Melinda Mabbutt

PSNC and LPC Websites Upgrade

Introduction

This paper sets out progress made on a website upgrade to improve accessibility and resilience, as well as to provide a fit-for-purpose website for PSNC (or a rebranded negotiating organisation) in line with the recommendations of the independent review into contractor support and representation. This upgrade looks to improve both the main PSNC website and the template sites offered to LPCs.

Project Brief

Following guidance from our potential IT agency, we have produced a briefing document providing as much detail as possible about the PSNC and LPC websites upgrade project. This is effectively our project specification document. Melinda Mabbutt led on compiling the brief that covered:

- Primary aim;
- Context – including how PSNC operates and how we current engage with our audience;
- Objectives – what the website needs to achieve;
- Current pain points – pressing issues for site visitors and bugbears for administrators;
- New website(s) – our specifications (as previously discussed with the subcommittee);
- Ongoing support – assistance needed during and after the upgrade; and
- Initiating the project – rough budget and suggested timescale.

On top of the brief for the upgraded website the document set out the current features of the PSNC and LPC websites, data and statistics on their usage, and the feedback collected from LPC site administrators (shared with the subcommittee at the November 2020 meeting). Teams across PSNC were asked to contribute, review and feedback on the information included.

Approaching Technical Experts

To help improve our understanding of the latest options and recommended approach for our website, the PSNC Communications Team approached an expert in the field. As well as many others, he supports the Chemistry World website. He provided insights on information-heavy websites, including the best value management system and the importance of learning about visitor journeys. He also recommended a second IT agency who he felt could be a good fit for us, as well as a couple of information governance experts who could advise on the management of our content.

Next Steps

The project brief is being used to fully explain the work required to the two IT agencies, enabling them to understand what exactly we need and then provide us with final cost proposals. We will receive one final pitch from an agency this week and hope to have the second pitch soon afterwards so that we can select a provider. Once we have a preferred provider we will update the subcommittee by email with final costs and more detail on the proposals.

Subject	Pharmacy Communications
Date of meeting	February 2021
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.

PSNC in the press

2021 began with a surge in national press activity. Here is a round-up some of the recent press coverage PSNC has been involved in.

Pharmacies and C-19 vaccination

On 6th January 2021, the Telegraph ran a front-page article on pharmacy's ask for a greater role in the COVID-19 vaccination programme. The story drew heavily on an interview with PSNC Chief Executive Simon Dukes and was prompted by a briefing that Simon had given the journalist. Since its publication we have provided follow-up interviews on the subject with the BBC News Channel, BBC Radio 5 Live, Times Radio, Associated Press, LBC Radio and its sister channel LBC News. The other national pharmacy bodies and LPCs have also supported this messaging.

[Click here to see the Telegraph story and listen to some of the radio interviews](#)

Also, in Parliament, Munira Wilson, Liberal Democrat MP for Twickenham, asked the Prime Minister to confirm pharmacy's role in C-19 vaccination programme during PMQs. He responded:

"I must say that the Honourable Lady is absolutely right to draw attention to the to potentially vital role of community pharmacies. There are about 12,000 in this country, as I'm sure she knows. In my experience they're great places, they're hygienic, the staff are knowledgeable, they're professional and I think they can... We've already signed up 100s to do the... 100s to the campaign and there'll be many more, I can assure her, to follow."

Promisingly, PSNC's national media push provoked Ministerial support as well as a series of meetings with the Government and NHS to start work on a plan for the wider involvement of more pharmacies in the vaccination programme.

C+D podcast: pharmacy and C-19 vaccinations

After all the press coverage sparked by the initial story in the Telegraph, Chemist+Druggist were keen to discuss how it came about and what happens next with PSNC CEO Simon Dukes. They recorded an interview with Simon for their podcast, as well as creating an associated feature article. These were published on 22nd January 2021: [Pharmacy still not viewed as part of 'NHS family', says Simon Dukes](#)

PJ podcast interview: financial pressures

The Pharmaceutical Journal approached PSNC requesting an interview with Simon for their monthly podcast. This was an end/start of year piece focussing on the financial pressures the sector is currently facing, the impact of this (e.g. closures) and what might be expected in the future. The podcast is due to be released by the end of January 2021, but was not yet available at the time of writing.

C+D interview: 2020 review

Simon was also asked by Chemist+Druggist to share his thoughts on the developments of the past year for the community pharmacy sector. The resulting article was published on 23rd December 2020: [PSNC and PDA chiefs reveal their highs and lows of 2020](#)

Community pharmacy case studies

The interest in the COVID-19 vaccination programme provided opportunities for shining a light on the contribution of community pharmacists. Focusing on PSNC Committee Members we have already published case studies from Sheffield (Garry Myers) and Kent (Sunil Kochhar) with another in the pipeline from south Tyneside (Mark Burdon) and would welcome further contributions from Committee Members.

Support during the second COVID-19 wave

In late November 2020 PSNC published an [update on the negotiations action points](#) that we have been discussing with the NHS and Government to address contractor workload and staffing pressures during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. As experienced in the first wave of COVID-19, decision-making remains slow and so the PSNC policy team felt it was important to let contractors know that we were pushing for a range of support for pharmacies.

A month later, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) agreed to PSNC's request for more flexible timings for completion of the work within the Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS) Part 2 2020/21 and the removal of some Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) requirements for 2020/21. This included delaying the launch of the Discharge Medicines Service by six weeks (to 15th February 2021).

Chief Executive Blogs and Vlogs

PSNC CEO Simon Dukes continues his monthly blogs and has also released a number of video messages (or 'vlogs'). These are being actively promoted through the daily newsletter and social media, as well as being given more prominent positioning on the website (i.e. as part of the rotating slides on the homepage). Feedback has been positive, with contractors being appreciative of Simon's strong stance on negotiations. You can read and watch the blog via the below links.

[November 2020 Blog](#)

[December 2020 video message](#)

[December 2020 Blog](#)

[January 2021 video message](#)

In the latest message to the sector Simon reflects on the extraordinary year just passed and looks to the challenges ahead, noting in particular the stoicism and commitment of community pharmacy teams and calling for an end to the slow responses and lack of support from policy makers.

End of the Brexit Transition Period

In December, PSNC and the British Medical Association (BMA) issued a [joint statement](#) on medicines supply ahead of the UK's EU exit. The joint statement indicates the united position across primary care and stresses the importance of collaborative working to maintain patient care to their members.

Complementing the work of the Community Pharmacy Brexit Forum which met in December 2020, PSNC's Communications Team arranged an associated meeting with communications representatives. The meeting, which included an update from NHSEI, was useful to ensure that everyone was on the same page and would take a united approach should any supply problems occur. The group met again in January and will be stood up again if necessary.

LPC communications and support

James Wood, formerly Chief Officer at Community Pharmacy Surrey & Sussex, joined PSNC in January 2021 as Director of Contractor and LPC Support. James will take on responsibility for certain LPC communications, such as LPC New, and a new role has been created to support this and PSNC's wider

digital communications work. The 'Digital Communications and LPC Support Officer' will support both our busy communications functions and our LPC and Contractor Support Directorate. We are currently reviewing applications and interviews will take place w/c 8th February. The role will report to Melinda Mabbutt who has been promoted to be PSNC's Pharmacy Communications Manager.

C-19 vaccination programme webinar with NHSE&I

Zoe Long co-ordinated a webinar for LPC Chief Officers with NHSE&I representatives (including Chief Pharmaceutical Officer Keith Ridge) to discuss plans for the rollout of community pharmacy COVID-19 vaccination sites as part of the local Enhanced service. Held on 13th January, the session covered both the logistics and communications plans around the first wave of sites due to go live.

GP CPCS animation and infographic

PSNC has developed an animation and infographic to help describe the GP referral pathway into the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS), primarily aimed at GP practice teams. An infographic complements the animation but in a one-page factsheet format.

We have been working with NHSE&I and others to raise awareness of the benefits that GP CPCS can bring with Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and general practice teams – NHSE&I will be sending the resources out to their GP/PCN stakeholders and the BMA has also agreed to highlight them on their weekly newsletter. We also hope they will help LPCs and pharmacy teams to initiate local discussions on implementing the service in their areas.

[View the animation and infographic](#)

PSNC Pharmacy Advice Audit 2021 resources

We launched a second Pharmacy Advice Audit in response to increasing concerns about the pressures that pharmacy teams are under during the COVID-19 pandemic and also about reports that general practice teams are referring patients to pharmacies for consultations informally, rather than via the agreed Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) route. The audit aims to provide crucial evidence for our ongoing funding discussions with HM Government and the NHS, as well as giving us a sense of the impact the ongoing pandemic is having on pharmacy workload.

To support the audit a number of contractor resources are available:

[Team Briefing Sheet](#)

[Audit Template](#)

[Digital guide](#)

Issues with PPE reimbursement

There were some teething issues with the opening on the claim period for pharmacy contractors' personal protective equipment (PPE) expenditure in 2020. Working with Rob Thomas and Suraj Shah from our Funding Team, the PSNC Communications Team used the daily newsletter to reassure contractors that we were aware of the situation, were very conscious that the delays will cause problems for them and had raised this issue with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Once it had gone live, PSNC received numerous queries on how the claim process works and so we created a **[Pharmacy PPE Claim process FAQs webpage](#)** to help contractors better understand the process and the reasons behind it.

PSNC digital communications reports (November and December reports overleaf)

November 2020 overview: There was a surge in popularity for any information and guidance on Part 2 of the Pharmacy Quality Scheme, whilst the Flu Vaccination Service continued to be a topic of significant interest. Our largest peak in website numbers was on Friday 20th, the day confirmation was given that the 50-64 age group would become eligible for NHS flu vaccination from 1st December.

December 2020 overview: COVID-19 lateral flow testing for pharmacy staff was a big topic this month, whilst Part 2 of the Pharmacy Quality Scheme and supply issues maintained their popularity. Our largest peak in website numbers was on Wednesday 2nd, the day after the 50-64 age became eligible for NHS flu vaccination and an announcement about Christmas Bank Holiday opening was made.

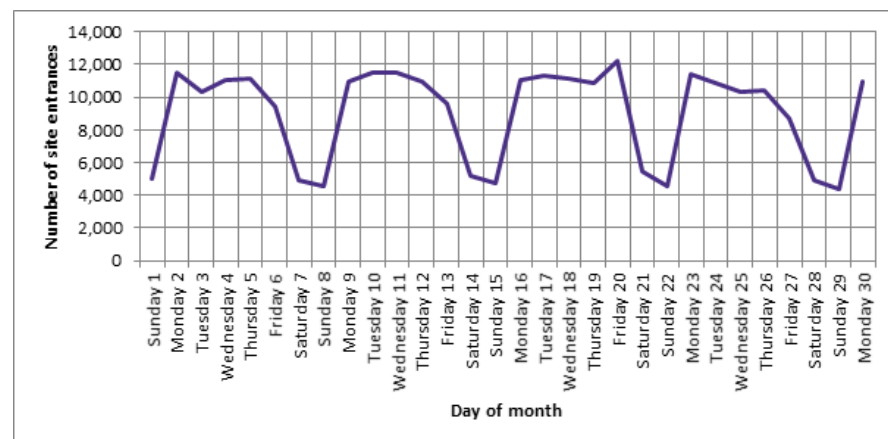
Conclusion

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

PSNC digital communications report – November 2020

PSNC Website

Audience	November	October
Number of unique visitors (site entrances)	271,159	268,858
Number of unique pageviews	464,355	442,327



Pages	Views
PQS 2020/21 Part 2	23,078
Price concessions	15,673
Pharmacy Quality Scheme	8,742
Controlled Drug prescription forms and validity	6,279
Flu Vaccination Service	6,153

News stories	Date	Views
50-64 year old flu vacs to start 1st Dec	20 Nov	4,181
Requirement to sign prescriptions suspended	30 Oct	3,671
Guidance published on accessing DHSC flu vac stock	2 Nov	3,553
Pandemic Delivery Service restarts across England	4 Nov	3,366
Supply Notification: H2-antagonists – Update	28 Oct	3,203

PSNC Briefings	Views
041/20: Part 2 2020/21 Pharmacy Quality Scheme – Evidence checklist	1,289
024/20: PQS Essential Criteria Checklist for COVID-19 - Evidence checklist	806
022/20: NHS Test and Trace – FAQs (UPDATED 12 October 2020)	506
040/20: Requirement to sign prescriptions suspended: guidance	453
023/19: SSPs – A guide for community pharmacy teams	436

Webinars/videos	Plays
Introductory guide to PQS Part 2 2020/21	643
Part 1 PQS 2020/21 digital guide	199
Future of Pharmacy animation	174
Digital Guide to the 2020/21 Flu Vaccination Service	82
Pharmacy Representation Review: Taking the process forward – LIVE	77
Pharmacy Representation Review: Taking the process forward	20

PSNC Emails

PSNC Newsletter	November	October	Other health newsletters
Open rate	33%	32%	23%
Click rate	4%	4%	6%
Clicks to opens	11%	12%	20%

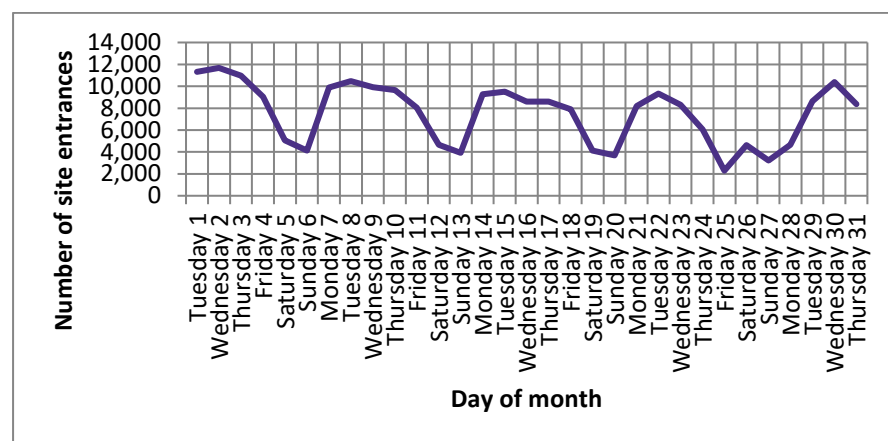
Social media

	September	August
Twitter reach	148,200	113,600
Twitter interactions	4,052	2,100
Facebook reach	11,386	2,520
Facebook interactions	1,161	262
LinkedIn reach	9,001	3,614
LinkedIn interactions	929	112

PSNC digital communications report – December 2020

PSNC Website

Audience	December	November
Number of unique visitors (site entrances)	234,481	271,159
Number of unique pageviews	380,603	464,355



Pages	Views
PQS 2020/21 Part 2	16,446
Price concessions	13,327
Pharmacy Quality Scheme	5,794
Controlled Drug prescription forms and validity	4,870
COVID-19 vaccinations	4,564

News stories	Date	Views
COVID-19 lateral flow testing for pharmacy staff	17 Dec	7,470
Boxing Day 2020 Opening Hours	18 Sept	3,358
Changes to EPS token submission	7 Dec	3,336
Supply Notification: H2-antagonists – Update	28 Oct	2,463
C-19 PPE reimbursement: how to make a claim	23 Dec	2,144

PSNC Briefings	Views
024/20: PQS Essential Criteria Checklist for COVID-19 - Evidence checklist	529
042/20: How to become a HLP and maintain it (updated Nov 2020)	466
023/19: SSPs – A guide for community pharmacy teams	355
041/20: Part 2 2020/21 Pharmacy Quality Scheme – Evidence checklist	331
037/20: Serious Shortage Protocol: SSP08 Salazopyrin® EN-Tab 500mg	248

Webinars/videos	Plays
Simon Dukes vlog 9th December 2020	371
Introductory guide to PQS Part 2 2020/21	353
Future of Pharmacy animation	108
Part 1 PQS 2020/21 digital guide	83
Digital Guide to the 2020/21 Flu Vaccination Service	16

PSNC Emails

PSNC Newsletter	December	November	Other health newsletters
Open rate	32%	33%	23%
Click rate	3%	4%	6%
Clicks to opens	11%	11%	20%

Social Media

	December	November
Twitter reach	112,700	160,300
Twitter interactions	2,244	3,189
Facebook reach	5,812	9,438
Facebook interactions	532	783
LinkedIn reach	5,932	5,548
LinkedIn interactions	341	247

Subject	Parliamentary Engagement and Public Affairs
Date of meeting	February 2021
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 parliamentary engagement and public affairs work since the last subcommittee meeting.

Briefing events for MPs

In previous years we have hosted drop-in sessions in Parliament to engage with large numbers of MPs at one time. As COVID-19 prevents us from doing this, we have been hosting virtual events with LPCs, giving MPs the opportunity to hear about community pharmacy from local and national representatives.

At the time of writing, we have worked with eight LPCs to host four briefing events for MPs. These events have been an opportunity to brief MPs on how community pharmacies have been responding to the pandemic, as well as explaining some of the financial challenges facing the sector.

We have so far engaged with 15 MPs, including:

- James Cartlidge, Conservative MP for South Suffolk and PPS to Steve Barclay MP (junior treasury minister);
- Alex Norris, Labour MP for Nottingham North and the shadow minister responsible for pharmacy;
- Dame Cheryl Gillan, new APPG member and prolific backbench MP; and
- Several of the Conservative MPs from the new intake (elected in 2019).

We are hosting another round of these events with an additional seven LPCs towards the end of February. The LPCs who have taken part so far have found the events to be very useful and we are also working to ensure we continue to engage with the MPs involved, making sure we keep them informed of our latest messaging and briefing material.

Other MP engagement

Following the national media coverage on pharmacy's role in the COVID-19 vaccination programme, lots of MPs and Peers have questioned why officials weren't making best use of pharmacy teams.

We issued some messaging to supportive MPs and Peers on the role community pharmacies could play in administering COVID-19 vaccinations and have since provided an update to those we were in contact with, many of whom have been keen to understand where community pharmacies can fit in to the programme.

Parliamentary Business

Community pharmacy was mentioned during Prime Minister's Questions twice in consecutive weeks:

- On 6 January, Munira Wilson, Liberal Democrat MP for Twickenham, said pharmacies would provide vital capacity and asked whether all pharmacies – large chains and independents – would be involved in the programme.
- On 13 January, Karl Turner, Labour MP for Kingston upon Hull East, said many of the country's 11,000 pharmacies stand ready willing and able to administer vaccinations, and asked whether the pharmacy network would be fully mobilised.

Community pharmacy was also discussed in a meeting of the Health and Social Care Committee, where APPG member Taiwo Owatemi, Labour MP for Coventry North West, asked Matt Hancock why

community pharmacists were not initially considered in the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccination scheme.

Many other MPs and Peers have also raised this topic in Parliament and key mentions have been collated below:

- **Emma Lewell-Buck, Labour MP for South Shields:** “...we want to know why the Minister will not allow all those experienced and dedicated community pharmacies to deliver the vaccine.”
- **Tim Farron, Liberal Democrat MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale:** “...many hon. Members have talked about the importance of community pharmacists; involving them would allow the Government to roll out the vaccine really close to where people live and get it done more quickly.”
- **Alex Norris, Labour MP for Nottingham North:** “...it was disappointing and surprising to see [pharmacies] having to take to the front pages of national newspapers last week to get the Government's attention, but now, with them in the plan, will the Minister reassure the House that he is fully engaged with their representative bodies and that they are satisfied that they are being used properly?”
- **Lord Lansley, Conservative peer and former health secretary:** “...we should not have arrived at the point yesterday where the pharmacy sector was saying that it did not know whether it would be used. Thousands of trained vaccinators are an essential resource. Can my noble friend confirm that they will be integral to our vaccination programme?”
- **Baroness Tyler of Enfield, Liberal Democrat peer:** “...critically, we must make full use of the roughly 11,400 local pharmacies that already administer millions of flu jabs every year. They have the capacity to vaccinate about 1.3 million people each week, which will save the lives, particularly, I suggest, of people who are not registered with a GP. What assurances can the Minister give that this will now happen?”
- **Lord Hunt of Kings Heath, Labour peer:** “...could the noble Baroness come back to the issue of community pharmacists? They have huge experience of flu vaccination, are used to opening all hours and are very accessible, yet the Government and NHS seem very reluctant to use them in the vaccination programme. Is that being reviewed?”
- **Lord Newby, Liberal Democrat peer:** “...why more pharmacists are not planned to be involved. They have an extremely good track record in administering flu jabs. What reason is there for not involving in the Covid vaccination programme any pharmacy that takes part in the national flu vaccination programme?”

We helped brief some of these MPs and will continue to work with them on wider community pharmacy matters, making the most of their support for the sector.

Parliamentary Questions

Written questions concerning community pharmacy are continuing to be submitted – on the subject of COVID-19 vaccinations and wider sector matters. The following are examples which have been published since the last subcommittee meeting:

- **Alexander Stafford, Conservative MP for Rother Valley,** asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that community pharmacies are financially viable businesses.
- **Dr Luke Evans, Conservative MP for Bosworth,** asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support the provision of healthcare by community pharmacies during the COVID-19 outbreak.

- **Fabian Hamilton, Labour MP for Leeds North West**, asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that community pharmacy staff are regularly tested for COVID-19 including when they are not displaying symptoms.
- **Dr Julian Lewis, Conservative MP for New Forest East**, asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason pharmacies have not been used to administer COVID-19 vaccinations; and if he will make it his policy to utilise the pharmacy network for that purpose.
- **Alex Norris, Labour MP for Nottingham North**, asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to adapt the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine programme to allow more local communities to receive the vaccine from their community pharmacy.

APPG

The APPG is continuing to develop its workplan for the year. An event on COVID-19 vaccinations and the role community pharmacy can play will be held in upcoming weeks, as the group is keen to capitalise on the interest among parliamentarians, give them an opportunity to hear from the sector, and make them aware of our asks. Jackie Doyle-Price has also been supported in recent weeks with media comments in response to pharmacy's role in the COVID-19 vaccination programme. The group has also been approached by the APPG for Health to do a joint event later in the year, which is being built into the workplan, topic as of yet undetermined.

Cross-party letter

The APPG's cross-party letter was sent to Matt Hancock in follow up to the inquiry. This was finally signed by 29 parliamentarians and we are awaiting the response.

Flash inquiry

In December the APPG published the results of its inquiry into COVID-19 pressures on pharmacy. The survey was completed by 1,604 pharmacy professionals and found:

- More than 9 in 10 felt their place of work was under financial pressure.
- Almost half of the pharmacy owners who responded felt it was either very likely, likely or somewhat likely that their pharmacy would be forced to close within a year.
- Nearly 8 out of 10 pharmacy owners felt that the financial support offered so far has not been enough to mitigate financial pressures.
- 91% felt the Government did not appreciate the role of pharmacy in frontline healthcare.

The report recommended that:

- The Government look back at the response from pharmacies during COVID and use this as a basis to reevaluate a clear vision of what the country needs from pharmacy as vital frontline health care workers.
- The Government and NHS leaders should consult on and undertake action to empower pharmacists to do more by providing more resources for training and supercharge the workforce which has shown it is a vital component of the NHS. In particular, a focus on training more independent prescribers and, critically, commissioning services that enable them to put their skills to best use, would be helpful.
- There needs to be a revaluation at both the heart of Government and within finance teams in the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England about the value of pharmacy.

- The government write off the advanced payments as an immediate way of providing relief to the sector. The Government should consider the financial implications of asking the sector to pay back the £370m advanced payments at a time where immediate pressures are pushing many community pharmacies to the brink and payments had not been enough to cover the financial pressures brought on by COVID-19.
- In order to preserve the future sustainability of pharmacies the Government was urged to consider boosting overall funding in recognition of both the great financial pressures faced and the huge contribution made to frontline healthcare during the pandemic.

The report was launched at a virtual event which was attended by 38 people, including 14 parliamentarians, 3 journalists and a number of pharmacy professionals. The report was also featured in the Mail on Sunday and several trade media outlets as part of the launch.

Over the next few months, the group is carrying out a parliamentary engagement plan building on the recommendations of the inquiry. Activities will include supplying members with parliamentary questions, asking members to raise the findings of the inquiry during debates and health questions and the launch of a regular newsletter to all officers and members, keeping them informed of the latest updates and key sector news. The plan had been to arrange for a Westminster Hall debate on pharmacy and the report's recommendations, but unfortunately these debates have been postponed for the foreseeable due to COVID-19, so the group will look to ramp up the other parliamentary activities in place of that. This will also include a virtual event on the report's recommendations aimed at MPs and officials.

We are also working to incorporate the report and its findings into our own wider influencing work, making best use of the support of the group and chair.

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.