

**Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee
Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) Subcommittee
Minutes for the meeting held on
Tuesday 24th November 2020**

Minutes of a meeting of the PSNC CPA Subcommittee held via Zoom on Tuesday 24th November at 3.00pm.

Members of CPA present: David Broome, Tricia Kennerley (Chair), Clare Kerr, Sunil Kochhar, Fin McCaul, Jay Patel and Prakash Patel.

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

Apologies: Apologies were received from Stephen Thomas.

Conflicts of interest: None received.

Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the meeting held in October 2020 were approved. Updates on actions would be picked up in the course of the meeting.

Matters arising: None.

Action:

Item 1 – Influencing and 2021 Planning

1.1 Zoe Long gave an update on the key actions and challenges for PSNC's communications and public affairs workstreams over the coming year. This included a commitment to maintain the daily email newsletters in 2021 following a short break over the Christmas period. The subcommittee commented that these newsletters had been well received but suggested considering other ways to push out information as part of the website upgrade project, including apps such as Telegram/WhatsApp. Jay Patel said PSNC should be proud that there has been a step change in our contractor communications compared to a year ago.

Action 1: Office to consider new ways to engage with contractors via apps (as part of the website upgrade programme).

1.2 Fin McCaul recommended providing contractors with more regular video (rather than written) updates from Simon Dukes. Other subcommittee members agreed, reporting positive feedback from LPCs about his updates at the September LPC Conference and November Meeting of LPCs and PSNC. There was some concern that the written blogs have been missed and that perhaps we need to promote these better on the website.

Action 2: Office to review CEO communications to see how we can make these more accessible and better promote them to contractors. In 2021 we will plan for more video blogs from the CEO.

1.3 It was also suggested that we could try to involve others, from outside of the sector, in PSNC webinars to encourage contractors to start thinking more about integration with other healthcare professionals.

Action 3: Office to consider how we can bring in external voices to support PSNC's communications to contractors in 2021.

1.4 In terms of engaging with external stakeholders, Clare Kerr recommended sharing some of the big, positive statistics we have on what pharmacy achieves. Whilst it was noted that we will need to carefully consider our language to help messages get traction, the subcommittee were agreed that we need to get messages about the sector's value out there more and this might need to focus more on the local angle. Prakash Patel requested an update to last year's 5-year CPCF infographic, which gave the right amount of information as a one-pager. **[See Action 6 below]**

1.5 The end of the Brexit Transition Period is a key upcoming date, with a recent LPC poll finding 50% concerned that pharmacies will be blamed for supply problems. Simon Dukes reported that he has been in touch with the BMA's General Practitioners Committee about messaging to GPs around the need to maintain sensible prescription durations. The subcommittee indicated that if we can give some detail about the reasons behind medicine shortages, it would educate patients and the public, and consequently help take the blame away from pharmacists. It was suggested that we prepare some public messaging in case we see a surge in shortages, particularly SSPs, and perhaps call for national NHS communications on medicines supply akin to the current spokespeople for the COVID-19 response. Community Pharmacy Cheshire & Wirral have in the past found advertising useful to explain this issue to patients too.

Action 4: Office to explore these ideas and consider actions with the other pharmacy comms teams, and to look to produce a range of resources and messages ahead of the end of the Brexit Transition Period for use nationally and locally.

1.6 Zoe Long also indicated that the APPG is likely to be quite proactive on supporting pharmacy's COVID-19 costs and pressures case, pointing to the recently launched COVID-19 impact inquiry. The subcommittee felt this was absolutely the right focus for now. Thinking more widely, the subcommittee suggested that we could invite MPs and local councillors for flu (and COVID-19) vaccinations in pharmacies, and Sunil Kochhar felt that at some point in 2021 the APPG could ask MPs to call on their local PCN Clinical Directors to engage fully with community pharmacy.

Action 5: Jessica Ferguson will feed ideas into the APPG planning group, and the office will consider national and local MP engagement plans for 2021, linking in with the public affairs actions being worked on from the last CPA meeting.

Item 2 – PSNC and LPC Websites Upgrade

2.1 Zoe Long described the considerations around how the LPC site templates fit into the wider PSNC website upgrade, whilst Melinda Mabbutt outlined the results of an LPC site survey to learn what the LPCs need. The developers the office has spoken to agree that the biggest challenge will be to give LPCs something that will be both visually appealing as well as accessible for all abilities.

2.2 The subcommittee agreed that the office could push ahead with template LPC websites that would remain linked to the PSNC website, and Sunil Kochhar offered his expertise on the LPC working group.

Item 3 – PSNC Annual Report 2019/20

3.1 Zoe Long indicated that the team has now pulled together a huge amount of information for the annual report and we are in the process of using that to create our pages, focusing on chopping it down into infographics etc. to make it visually appealing. The annual report for the pharmacy sector will come out first, with the external audience report modified to cover the 2020 calendar year instead.

3.2 As mentioned in item 1.4, the subcommittee felt we need to pick out some of the big, positive statistics to promote pharmacy's value. Tricia Kennerley also suggested that it should be in the guise of a prospectus about what we could do and how we can get there. The upcoming value of pharmacy animation and an updated five-year CPCF infographic could tie in with this.

Action 6: The office will look to launch a second report – in the form of a Pharmacy Prospectus – early in 2021 to showcase all the work that pharmacy has done in 2020. We will look to tie the messaging in with other resources including the animation and an updated infographic, and then to work with LPCs to use these messages and resources as widely as we can.

Item 5 – Pharmacy Communications

5.1 The subcommittee noted the paper in the agenda. As mentioned in item 1.1, subcommittee members reported that the daily email newsletters have been well received.

Item 6 – Parliamentary Engagement and Public Affairs

6.1 Jessica Ferguson gave an update on the APPG, reporting that the pharmacy workforce survey linked to its COVID impact inquiry has had more than 1,000 respondents in its first week. Also, following the mail out of a cross-party letter, there has been a surge of MPs asking to join the group.

6.2 The subcommittee noted the paper in the agenda.

Any Other Business

7.1 The subcommittee agreed that it would be prudent to schedule meetings for every other month in 2021. The office will schedule these meetings in.