

**Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee  
Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) Subcommittee  
Minutes for the meeting held on  
Monday 19th October 2020**

Minutes of a meeting of the PSNC CPA Subcommittee held via Zoom on Monday 19th October at 12.00 noon.

**Members of CPA present:** David Broome, Tricia Kennerley (Chair), Sunil Kochhar, Fin McCaul, Stephen Thomas.

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

**Apologies:** Received from Clare Kerr and Jay Patel.

**Conflicts of interest:** None received.

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

**Matters arising:** Zoe Long gave an update on the actions from the last subcommittee meeting.

The communications grid discussed last time has now been published for LPCs to use, and we have launched the library of social media resources that underpin it. This will grow over the next few months as our designers work on more resources. Priorities have been the value of pharmacy, the role of pharmacies through the pandemic and flu. Animations on pharmacy's work during COVID-19 and on the GP CPCS are in development.

**Action:**

The subcommittee focused on public affairs, considering how PSNC can start to influence HM Treasury and other key policy makers more effectively.

**Action 1: The office will use the discussion outputs to work on a Whitehall and Wider Influencing Strategy.**

Clinical advice

Some local NHS teams are issuing communications that signpost people with coughs to community pharmacies. The subcommittee considered the need for clear clinical guidance on when people should or should not present to pharmacies.

**Action 2: Examples to be sent to the office who can then raise this with the national NHSE&I team.**

APPG

Jessica Ferguson gave an update on work with the All-Party Pharmacy Group noting the recent appointment of a new Secretariat agency – Tendo. The Chair of the Group understands the challenges facing pharmacies and is going to write to MPs on this topic with a view to then sending a cross-Parliamentary letter to the Health Secretary. We would like to have 100 signatories to this letter, which is an ambitious target.

The APPG will also soon launch a flash inquiry into community pharmacy and COVID-19, looking at funding and other challenges. This will result in a report with recommendations in November and it should help to get some media coverage of PSNC's asks for the sector. The inquiry could also be used as a prompt for a meeting between MPs on the group and Treasury or other officials.

**Action 3: PSNC to work to use this inquiry to get key messages about the sector to HM Treasury. This will include building support for the inquiry and the cross-party letter using the LPC network and their local MP contacts.**

#### Working with MPs

Although we have many MP supporters, a lot of MPs do not understand the pressures that pharmacies are under and the potential risks to their constituencies. We need to have a look at constituency-level data, eg on closures, and then target MPs in those constituencies who are most affected or at risk.

There is also much to do to build MP support for future roles for community pharmacies – both in the pandemic and beyond. And PSNC can do more to build relationships with influential MPs (eg those on the Health and Public Accounts Select Committees) and with Committee Clerks.

**Action 4: The office will contact and seek to brief key Select Committee MPs and Clerks.**

#### Working with officials

The subcommittee identified the need to start building better relationships with HM Treasury and senior NHS officials as well as with MPs. There was general agreement that many officials do not understand how pharmacy businesses operate and the challenges that they face on a day to day basis.

While we have good relationships with pharmacy officials at NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) and the Department of Health and Social care (DHSC), we also need to try to influence more senior officials eg NHS Chief Executive Simon Stevens. Special advisors to Health and Treasury Ministers would also be key contacts for PSNC.

**Action 5: The office will review NHSE&I Board Meeting and other publications on an ongoing basis, looking for opportunities to engage with senior officials and Board Members.**

**Action 6: The office will look to make contact with and brief key special advisors.**

#### Messaging and other voices

PSNC should look to gather case studies to help support our key messages. We also need to use the patient voice, if we can, to tell our stories. We need to bring to life what our requests for funding mean for patients. Case studies could also be used to help tackle the abuse that some pharmacy teams are getting from patients, and also to try to improve working with GPs.

We should continue to look for areas of common interest with the GPs and to lobby together for those eg improvements to IT systems. And local Healthwatch teams could prove helpful in getting messages out to the public – PSNC could seek to influence this nationally.

**Action 7: The office will continue to seek case studies and to work closely with the GPC on joint objectives, and we will begin Healthwatch work by finding out more about local activity from LPCs.**

#### **Any Other Business**

None.