

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee
Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) Subcommittee Agenda
Tuesday 7th September 2021 at 1pm
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 and update on actions

Action

5. Public Affairs Priorities **Appendix 02/09/2021**
6. Website Upgrade Project **Appendix 03/09/2021**
7. Annual Report 2020/21 **Appendix 04/09/2021**

Report

8. Pharmacy Communications **Appendix 05/09/2021**
9. Parliamentary Engagement and Public Affairs **Appendix 06/09/2021**
10. Any other business

Subject	Public Affairs Priorities
Date of meeting	September 2021
Committee/Subcommittee	Communications and Public Affairs
Status	Not confidential
Overview	A review of our public affairs objectives following the Year 3 agreement.
Proposed action(s)	Consider the policy objectives and next steps for public affairs work.
Author(s) of the paper	George Foote and Zoe Long

Public Affairs Priorities

Following the announcement of a deal on Year 3 of the contractual framework, this paper revisits PSNC's policy objectives and sets out early thoughts and proposals about how we should engage with key stakeholders, particularly Parliamentarians, over the coming months. Following the subcommittee discussion, we will develop this into a more detailed action plan, as well as talking to the other pharmacy bodies about their priorities and the potential for joint work over the next six months.

Parliamentary strategy update: Autumn 2021

In the first half of 2021 we have been implementing the public affairs strategy that was outlined back in February in [CPA Appendix 02/02/2021](#). Key achievements have included the launch of the Twitter account aimed at external stakeholders; significant Parliamentary and national media lobbying around COVID-19 costs; the launch of the animation; briefings to MPs on key topics including the Pharmacy Advice Audit and COVID-19 costs; and APPG work including their new Parliamentary update emails.

Outstanding actions which we now want to pick up are:

- Work with wider external stakeholders in line with the outline plan discussed by CPA in July ([CPA Appendix 04/07/21](#))
- Work to influence NHSEI officials, Board Members and the new CEO
- Production of the pharmacy prospectus and briefings to reflect the Year 3 agreement
- Boosting pharmacy's engagement locally, working with LPCs and through our Commissioners Emails (this will also be supported by the website upgrade project)
- Further briefings to MPs and targeting of Select Committee Members to cover the Year 3 agreement and next steps for pharmacy, and our policy objectives
- Mobilisation of LPCs to support this work

Parliament will shortly revert back to pre-covid arrangements meaning meetings, briefings and functions with MPs can be held in person so we will consider how a return to face to face briefings and events can support our objectives.

PSNC policy objectives

The subcommittee last reviewed PSNC's Policy Objectives (or Policy Asks) in September 2020. Since then a significant amount of work has been focused on the two key objectives to get contractors' COVID costs covered by HM Government, and to seek an uplift to core CPCF funding. For reference, the previous policy asks can be found in [Appendix CPA 04/09/2020](#) which is available here: [Communications-and-Public-Affairs-Subcommittee-Agenda-September-2020.pdf \(psnc.org.uk\)](#)

Following the announcement of the agreement on Year 3, the subcommittee is asked to consider some revised suggested policy objectives as follows. Suggested priorities are highlighted in purple.

Community pharmacies need additional core funding to cover increased operational costs following COVID-19 and to ensure they can maintain current service levels. In particular they need:

- Provision of additional monies (over and above the global sum) to protect pharmacies, recognising increased operational costs brought about by COVID-19 which are ongoing.
- Fair and transparent long-term funding to give NHS community pharmacy contractors certainty and security for the future.
- A commitment from the NHS and HM Government to support and safeguard the network of 11,400 community pharmacies beyond 2024.

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

- Clarity from HM Government about the role it wants the network of 11,400 pharmacies to play after the pandemic and in any future crises.
- Wider commissioning of services to allow more community pharmacies to act as centres for COVID-19 vaccinations and booster vaccinations.

As the NHS continues to operate under extreme pressure, community pharmacies must be empowered to continue to play a vital role in the provision of primary care, prevention and public health services, helping to reduce inequalities. To support this they need:

- National commissioning of a wider range of healthcare services from community pharmacies. This could include:
 - o Ongoing provision of a wider range of vaccinations
 - o Services to help tackle obesity and support public health
 - o Further development of Healthy Living Pharmacies
 - o Support for patients prescribed new medicines for a wider range of conditions
 - o Providing healthcare consultations to patients with minor conditions on a walk-in basis
- Removal of the NHS Prescription Charge, recognising the administrative burden it places on pharmacies to collect.
- A significant increase in referrals to community pharmacies via the CPCS and DMS.
- Community pharmacies to be included in IT systems that fully integrate local health and care records where appropriate permissions are given, including patient consent.

Pharmacies are a critical part of the medicines supply chain, ensuring that all patients receive and can safely take the medicines they need. To support this critical role, we would like to see:

- 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.

Turning some of these into a plan for engagement with key stakeholders and supporters we believe we can talk to supporters and new contacts as follows:

1. Positives
 - Talk about value of pharmacy, especially in midst of pandemic. Stats showing uptake in services and how favourably the public view them. Give details of recently commissioned services and play the animation video.
2. Negatives

- What would the consequences be if pharmacy sector did not receive fair funding: pharmacy closures, big waiting times at remaining pharmacies, increased pressure on NHS services.
- 3. Specific asks
 - Have some clear specific asks that are easy to action immediately and can be agreed at that time. E.g. agree to sign an open letter to the health secretary, written parliamentary questions, APPG membership.

Tactics and Next Steps

Based on these policy objectives and reflecting on the Year 3 agreement we can define some key next action points as follows:

- **Win support for fair/sustainable funding for future CPCF years:** Explain to policymakers the impact that an under-funded pharmacy sector will have in the long term. Explain the financial pressures that will inevitably result from the recently agreed CPCF and the ongoing uplift to operational costs caused by COVID. Important not to dwell on this too much, but we need to urgently work to try to put pressure on ahead of Year 4 negotiations.
- **Start to float and win support for a fair and transparent long term funding package** to enable pharmacy contractors to have certainty about the future. What would we like to see the next 5-year funding/services package to include?
- **Win support and recognition for healthcare services from community pharmacies,** including explaining recent wins on NMS, smoking cessation and hypertension case-finding.

Our next step is to work up a detailed programme of work to achieve this, using the following tactics:

- Meet known supporters in Parliament to provide an update on recent PSNC work and the Year 3 deal, and to raise key policy objectives. We will also consider whether any Parliamentary events could bring value, working with the other pharmacy organisations.
- Reflect on who our key MP targets are: analyse all recent pharmacy-related parliamentary questions and actively propose meetings with possible new supporters.
- Develop relationships with staff/researchers of key MP supporters in the coming parliamentary term. This will enable faster, more efficient action when required. E.g. access to HoC library research/briefings, parliamentary question submissions, quicker meeting access to supporters.
- Pick up on past relationships with external stakeholders, charities, patient/health groups. Explore how we can work together on shared priorities and develop media strategy on how to jointly promote shared aims/get message out. We can also highlight the animation and pharmacy audit results and ask them to share these.
- Flu campaign: Parliamentary activity to encourage MPs to be vaccinated in pharmacies. The APPG may be able to support this.
- Regional MP briefings: as done previously, conduct regional briefings with small groups of MPs and their local LPCs.
- Targeting key groups using our new public affairs Twitter account to promote pharmacy and encourage engagement. The website upgrade project could also support this.
- Consider whether we could ask supporters to sign a joint letter of support for the sector and our objectives to either the press, or Sajid Javid and/or Amanda Pritchard. This could be linked to a wider digital stakeholder engagement event.

Subcommittee Action

The subcommittee is asked to consider:

- Public affairs work: what are our priorities following the announcement of the Year 3 agreement and resolution of COVID costs?
- Is there any feedback on the proposed policy objectives, and which are the priorities?
- Can we turn any of these policy objectives into very clear asks (as we did previously re writing off COVID loans)? Who are the key targets for these?
- Which activities/tactics should we prioritise over the next six months?
- How should we be working with the other pharmacy organisations?
- What further work, if any, can we do now to start to prepare for the negotiations on the next five-year deal?

Subject	Website Upgrade Project
Date of meeting	September 2021
Committee/Subcommittee	Communications and Public Affairs
Status	Not confidential
Overview	An update on progress made and next steps.
Proposed action(s)	Review and discuss progress on the project.
Author(s) of the paper	Melinda Mabbutt and Zoe Long

Website Upgrade Project

Introduction

Over the summer, the project moved from the initial behind the scenes preparation stage to a more active and visible one. PSNC staff are beginning to get a sense of what the new website will look like and LPCs have now begun to receive guidance about their new sites.

PSNC website

Design/development

Design work has been progressing with some new mock-ups relating to the search functionality and main category landing pages. PSNC has also provided a full list of additional functionality that its teams would like to explore. Make will scope each and help us determine which to take forward. Make are now putting in place a live development version of the site on which we will be able to fully view and test how the new site will function. Melinda Mabbutt and Zoe Long will talk through the latest designs and design updates during the meeting.

Content audit

The review of content on the PSNC website is almost complete. All teams have provided spreadsheets of changes they wish to make, and these are now being checked by the Communications Team and Make for consistency across the sections. The next task will be to action the changes, but only after Make have created an archive of the website as it currently stands. We hope that the audit process will result in a more streamlined and up-to-date site.

Re-organisation survey

As discussed at the last subcommittee meeting, the office has found a way to seek input from actual website visitors (and super users) into the reorganisation of the website's menu navigation. [Optimal Workshop](#) is software that allows site users to get involved in the categorisation of content. This card sorting software will give us insight into how people conceptualise, group and label ideas, enabling us to make confident, informed information architecture decisions.

Given the size of the PSNC website, this could be a lot of work so the team has broken the task down into chunks and has gathered a list of contacts who would be most likely to engage with it. We will therefore run an 'open' sort survey first, to help us identify our main navigation menu tabs, and then a 'closed' sort survey to help clarify where the smaller themes best fit into that main navigation menu. We have worked with both Make, and with Wordsmith (who know the sector well and have used card-sorting technology on other websites) on the surveys which are due to launch just prior to this subcommittee meeting.

Photos

To give us an updated database of high-quality photos for use on the website we plan to commission a photographer to take a new set of photos. We will once again make these photos available to LPCs for their websites and other communications purposes. If Committee Members know of any newly refurbished or visually attractive pharmacies that we could take photos in, please let us know.

LPC template sites

Guidance and support

PSNC and Make have begun sending regular email updates to those LPC employees involved in the website project. The first email confirmed which deployment wave LPCs will be in and gave links to the first in a series of self-help guides for the migration process. It also marked the launch of an LPC support website portal with FAQs and a system for raising tickets directly with Make's technical team.

The series of LPC guidance documents and training materials will be released in stages over a number of weeks. Upcoming guides will include a simplified version of PSNC's content audit (for those who wish to review their content ahead of the site migration) and a site set-up checklist (similar to those created for the current LPC sites). The guides will use lots of screenshots to make things as clear as possible and plans are also underway for a virtual training session to provide LPCs with a live demonstration of an active site.

Support planning

The majority of LPCs have now informed PSNC of which support package they would like, with the results are as follows:

- Self Setup (£0) – 50%
- Self Setup Extended (£250) – 13%
- Managed Setup (£1,000) – 10%
- Managed Setup+ (£2,000) – 27%

It seems many LPCs felt there would be sufficient support provided as part of the free package to opt for that, but it's also reassuring to see some will be taking advantage of the additional help that has been made available by Make.

Currently, 17 LPCs have chosen to go in the first wave of websites to migrate to the new design, with a reasonable mix between the package options requested. Whilst all LPCs will be given access to migration guidance and technical support at the same time, those in the first wave will need to be prioritised to begin with as they will be going live sooner.

Timing of LPC website waves

Over the summer, the project team reviewed progress and decided to adjust the timings of the three deployment waves slightly to give those in the first wave more time to be supported through the process. The waves will now aim to go live with their upgraded websites as follows:

- Wave 1 – October
- Wave 2 – November
- Wave 3 – December

LPCs can still decide to move waves should they wish to do so.

Domain names and LPC Emails

PSNC has been exploring domain name options for the new LPC sites. With Make's expertise, we have been assessing the viability of offering associated email addresses as well.

Key ambitions for the LPC website domains were to ensure that LPC websites are clearly about pharmacy, consistent across the country, and not automatically linked to PSNC. In line with this, we came up two possibilities for LPCs to consider:

Location.communitypharmacy.org.uk
Location.localpharmacy.org.uk.

A survey of LPCs showed a clear preference (89%) for location.communitypharmacy.org.uk. Any LPCs who already pay for their own domain name, or wish to do in the future, will be able to do so with their chosen URL directing to their website in the usual way.

On emails, following requests from some LPCs we considered whether PSNC could offer email addresses to LPCs linked to their website domains. The advantages of this would be that all LPCs would be using consistent, professional email addresses, managed centrally. Disadvantages would be cost and administration – with 69 LPCs all wanting multiple email addresses, this would be no small task.

Make reported that while the technical maintenance of such email addresses would be fairly straightforward (if time consuming) the increasing storage capacity required going forwards would need careful consideration. There could also be a significant amount of admin associated with maintaining emails for all 69 LPCs. Make estimates that the amount of storage needed could cost up to £250 (plus VAT) per month after five years, and administration costs will be on top of that.

When we asked LPCs, there was no clear answer on whether LPCs wanted PSNC to provide associated emails: responses were split between yes, no, and unsure. PSNC therefore needs to decide whether it wants to make this offer to LPCs, and for how long it can cover the costs of this.

Working group

Whilst we are now moving into a period of more direct communication with LPCs, we will continue to need the support of the working group. In particular, we will be calling on them to review and provide feedback on draft guidance before it is sent out to all LPCs.

Subcommittee Action

The subcommittee is asked to:

- Share views on the updated website designs and progress of the project.
- Share any ideas for people who could take part in the card sorting exercise (volunteers welcome!)
- Consider the proposal for PSNC to provide LPC email addresses linked to their new website domains – is this feasible, and given the mixed views of LPCs, should we go ahead?

Subject	Annual Report 2020/21
Date of meeting	September 2021
Committee/Subcommittee	Communications and Public Affairs
Status	An update on progress made preparing content for the digital-first report.
Overview	Review and discuss progress on the report.
Proposed action(s)	Not confidential
Author(s) of the paper	Melinda Mabbutt

Annual Report 2020/21

Introduction

We have been preparing content for and designing the digital-first publication. This work is on track to publish the annual report in September.

Final contents

Below is a slightly amended version of our original content plan for the annual report. This gives more prominence to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on both community pharmacy teams and on PSNC's work in 2020/21.

1. **Comments from the CEO and Chair:** messages about the year.
2. **The year at PSNC:** a timeline of the significant moments across 2020/21.
3. **Promoting pharmacy:** lobbying MPs, media coverage and collaboration with others.
4. **COVID-19 response:** how resources were diverted to the pandemic response.
5. **CPCF and ongoing work:** PSNC's regular work supporting contractors.
6. **PSNC annual accounts:** the year's financial statements.
7. **Looking to the future:** the Wright Review and formation of the Review Steering Group.
8. **The year ahead:** a more immediate consideration 2021/22 work for PSNC.

Animation plans

Three short animations have been commissioned to accompany the report. Plans for these are outlined below.

PSNC championing pharmacy

This animation will link with sections 2 (the year at PSNC) and 3 (promoting pharmacy). It will show the campaigning journey that built support for pharmacy's ask to have its COVID costs covered, looking at both the negotiations and our wider influencing work.

PSNC supporting pharmacy

This animation will link with sections 4 (COVID-19 response) and 5 (CPCF and ongoing work). It will show our stewardship role that protected the pharmacy network whilst also showing the sector's commitment to supporting national public health goals.

PSNC progressing/developing pharmacy

This animation will link with sections 7 (looking to the future) and 8 (the year ahead). It will show that PSNC is an organisation which is not afraid to review its own work and structures to improve outcomes and services for contractors.

Designs

The Communications Team commissioned the same designer who created the 2019/20 report but tasked him with updating the design. This time things are a bit bolder, although still retaining the familiarity of PSNC brand colours. A series of images follow on the next page. **Please Note:** These are smaller than life size to show you the design rather than the text. The text included is not the final text – we will share a full copy with the subcommittee ahead of publication.



2021

Annual Report and Statement of Accounts



Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee

PSNC promotes and supports the interests of all NHS community pharmacies in England. We are recognised by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care as the body that represents NHS pharmacy contractors. We work closely with Local Pharmaceutical Committees (LPCs) to support their role as the local NHS representative organisations. | **Published:** September 2021 | **Visit:** <https://psncar2021>



1 Comments from the CEO and Chair



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Chief Executive's Comment



Simon Dukes | PSNC Chief Executive Officer

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2 PSNC Annual Report and Statement of Accounts 20/21

Chair's Comment



Sue Killen | PSNC Chair

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3 PSNC Annual Report and Statement of Accounts 20/21

2 The year at PSNC 20/21

Looking back | Here we look back on the key achievements and developments during 2020/21; a remarkable year not only for the community pharmacy sector but also the country as a whole.

- 20/21** **Pandemic delivery service** | A new medicines delivery Advanced Service is launched at short notice to ensure that the most clinically vulnerable 'shielded' patients can continue to receive their medicines during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 04/20** **Advance payments** | Following representations from PSNC, Ministers agree to inject £370 million of advance funding into community pharmacies during the early months of the pandemic in recognition of the significant cashflow pressures facing the sector at this time.
- 04/20** **Pharmacy representation review** | An independent review into community pharmacy representation and support recommends a new integrated LPC/PSNC structure for the future, setting out a standardised governance framework and measures to bring local and national representation functions closer together.
- 06/20** **Pharmacy quality scheme 20/21** | The scheme was broken into two parts, with the first focussing on ensuring pharmacy contractors and their teams had put in place all reasonable measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, protecting both themselves and the people using their services.
- 07/20** **Pharmacy quality scheme 20/21** | PSNC publishes the findings of its 2020 Pharmacy Advice Audit, showing the huge number of informal patient consultations that community pharmacies carry out and the positive impact of these consultations both on patients and other healthcare services.
- 09/20** **NHS Test and Trace concerns** | PSNC and other pharmacy leaders write to Minister and NHS officials to issue an urgent warning that NHS test and trace discrepancies could close pharmacies down, posing a potential threat to the timely supply of medicines to local communities.
- 10/20** **Review Steering Group (RSG) formed** | A group of AIM, OCA and independent representatives is formed to take forward the work to improve community pharmacy contractor representation and support as recommended by the Pharmacy Representation Review.
- 11/20**

First name Surname

Role and organisation

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- 11/20** **Flu vaccination service extended** | The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) announces that community pharmacy contractors, along with GPs, will be able to vaccinate 50- to 64-year-olds against flu, making the 2020/21 flu vaccination programme the largest ever undertaken in England.
- 12/20** **PPE reimbursement** | PSNC and DHSC agree a mechanism by which pharmacy contractors can claim reimbursement for their expenditure on personal protective equipment (PPE) during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.
- 12/20** **Measures to address workload** | Following requests from PSNC, service changes were introduced to create extra capacity in community pharmacies during the ongoing pandemic. These included more flexible timings for completion of Part 2 of the 2020/21 Pharmacy Quality Scheme and the removal of some contractual requirements.
- 12/20** **COVID-19 vaccinations** | The Telegraph ran a front-page article on pharmacy's ask for a greater role in the COVID-19 vaccination programme. Hundreds of pharmacy contractors submitted expressions of interest to run designated vaccination sites to NHSEAI.
- 01/21** **Discharge medicines service commences** | NHS Trusts begin to refer patients to community pharmacies on discharge from hospital, improving links between community, Primary Care Network and hospital pharmacies.
- 02/21** **Call to write off COVID-19 loans** | Ahead of the Budget, PSNC writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer asking him to intervene in the ongoing COVID-19 funding negotiations and ensure that pharmacies do not have to pay back any of the £370m in emergency loans they received in 2020.
- 03/21** **First RSG engagement events** | The RSG holds its first engagement sessions with LPCs and pharmacy contractors, then appoints The Berkeley Partnership as programme management advisers to create a programme plan and develop the stakeholder engagement approach.
- 03/21** **COVID-19 test distribution service** | Community pharmacies race to sign up to help distribute COVID-19 lateral flow device (LFD) test kits to non-symptomatic patients as part of a newly commissioned NHS service.

3 Promoting pharmacy



A key part of PSNC's role is communicating with audiences outside of pharmacy – such as politicians, charities and national media – to build support and gain advocates who can champion the sector on our behalf.

Demonstrating the sector's value

PSNC was particularly keen to demonstrate to others the value of community pharmacy teams during the COVID-19 pandemic. As other healthcare providers became more difficult for patients to access, pharmacies were handling more requests for advice than ever before. In summer 2020 and again in early 2021, PSNC conducted audits to assess the number of informal – and therefore unfunded – patient consultations that happen in community pharmacy.

We found that pharmacists and their teams respond to over 600,000 patient queries a week, saving almost half a million GP visits. Every year 5 million people visit a pharmacy because they have been unable to access other healthcare and, during the pandemic, 1 in 4 consultations involved COVID-19 related advice. Briefings, infographics and social media assets were developed to promote the important role pharmacies play in public health. During a Parliamentary debate in March 2021 examining the effect COVID-19 has had on community pharmacies, the results of PSNC's audits were mentioned several times, as MPs used the opportunity to highlight the sheer number of informal consultations occurring in pharmacies and their value to patients.

Getting pharmacy's voice heard

Brexit concerns rumbled on in the background as the UK reached the end of its Transition Period. In late 2020 PSNC reconvened its Community Pharmacy Brexit Forum, where more than 20 organisations across the pharmacy, wholesale and wider primary care sectors met to discuss Brexit matters ahead of the 31st December deadline. PSNC and the British Medical Association (BMA) also issued a joint statement on medicines supply, indicating the united position across primary care.

In January 2021, a concerted effort began to demand a greater role for pharmacies in the COVID-19 vaccination programme. The Telegraph ran a front-page article on pharmacy's ask, drawing heavily on an exclusive interview with PSNC Chief Executive Simon Dukes. PSNC also provided follow-up interviews with the BBC News Channel, BBC Radio 5 Live, Times Radio, Associated Press, LBC Radio and LBC News. This led Prime Minister Boris Johnson to be asked in Parliament to confirm pharmacy's role in the programme. The national media push ultimately provoked Ministerial support as well as a series of meetings with the Government and NHS to plan for the wider involvement of more pharmacies in the vaccination programme.

Raising funding concerns

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Pharmacy, of which PSNC is a co-sponsor, launched an inquiry into the pressures of COVID-19 on the sector, which concluded that some pharmacies could be forced to close without additional Government support. Ahead of the 2021 Budget announcement, PSNC wrote to Chancellor Rishi Sunak, outlining the impact that repayment of the £370 million COVID loans could have on community pharmacies. National media and Parliamentary activity co-ordinated by PSNC aimed to put further pressure on the Chancellor to intervene in the ongoing COVID costs negotiations. Around 50 supportive MPs and Peers were sent a briefing demonstrating the sector's value and calling for the loans to be written off and at least 8 MPs sent letters directly to the Chancellor calling for additional financial support for community pharmacies and the APPG began enlisting MPs to co-sign a letter calling for pharmacies' COVID loans to be written off.

Chair of the APPG and former Health Minister, Jackie Doyle-Price, organised a Parliamentary debate about the impact of the pandemic on community pharmacies, which was addressed by Pharmacy Minister Jo Churchill MP and a further 13 MPs contributed to. Many MPs also called for urgent financial assistance for the sector, including by writing off the advance payments.

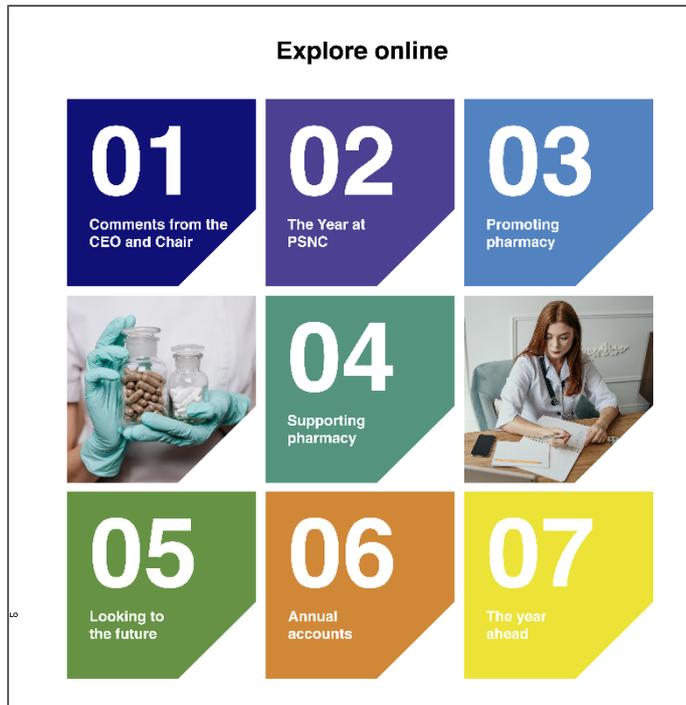
Working with others

In October 2020, PSNC collaborated with a group of healthcare bodies – including fellow pharmacy bodies, consumer healthcare association PACS and NHS Clinical Commissioners – to call for a national self-care strategy. The Clinical Consensus on Self Care recommended NHS leaders explore additional pathways to access the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) and enable community pharmacists to populate medical records with fully integrated IT systems.



Micro site

Make, the team behind the website project upgrade, will be hosting a new mini website (or micro site) where the digital version of the report will be published. PSNC already owns psncannualreport.com and we will map that URL to the new site. Our designer has brought elements from the page designs into the main structure of the website. See a screenshot below from the website homepage.



Subcommittee Action

The subcommittee is asked to:

- Share any feedback on the plans for the annual report and the designs so far.

Subject	Pharmacy Communications
Date of meeting	September 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 and Jamie Gilliam

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.

COVID Cost Claims

Briefings and guidance

Following the announcement of the claims process for COVID-19 costs, PSNC issued a series of guides to support contractors in making their claims:

PSNC Briefing 016/21: Funding for COVID-19 related costs – summary and FAQs

Briefing describing the arrangements agreed between PSNC and DHSC to reimburse community pharmacy contractors for the extra costs incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside answers to a number of questions about the process and the deal.

PSNC Briefing 020/21: COVID-19 Costs – Background and NHSBSA claim form overview

More in-depth and practical information about the COVID-19 costs claiming process.

PSNC Briefing 021/21: COVID-19 Costs – Further guidance and claim-related FAQs

Further guidance on openings, change of ownership and permanent closures, and claim-related FAQs.

Practical FAQs: After receiving enquiries about some of the practicalities around making a claim, we provided further information through an additional series of FAQs.

Workshops

We ran a briefing session for LPCs to help them understand the claiming process and held two COVID-19 Cost Claims Workshops for contractors. During the workshops PSNC's CEO and Director of Pharmacy Funding explained the deal reached with HM Government, described the claiming process, and worked through some examples. Whilst the first workshop focussed more on the deal, the second emphasised the urgency of gathering evidence and completing the claim form. Subtitles were included in the second workshop following a request from a contractor.

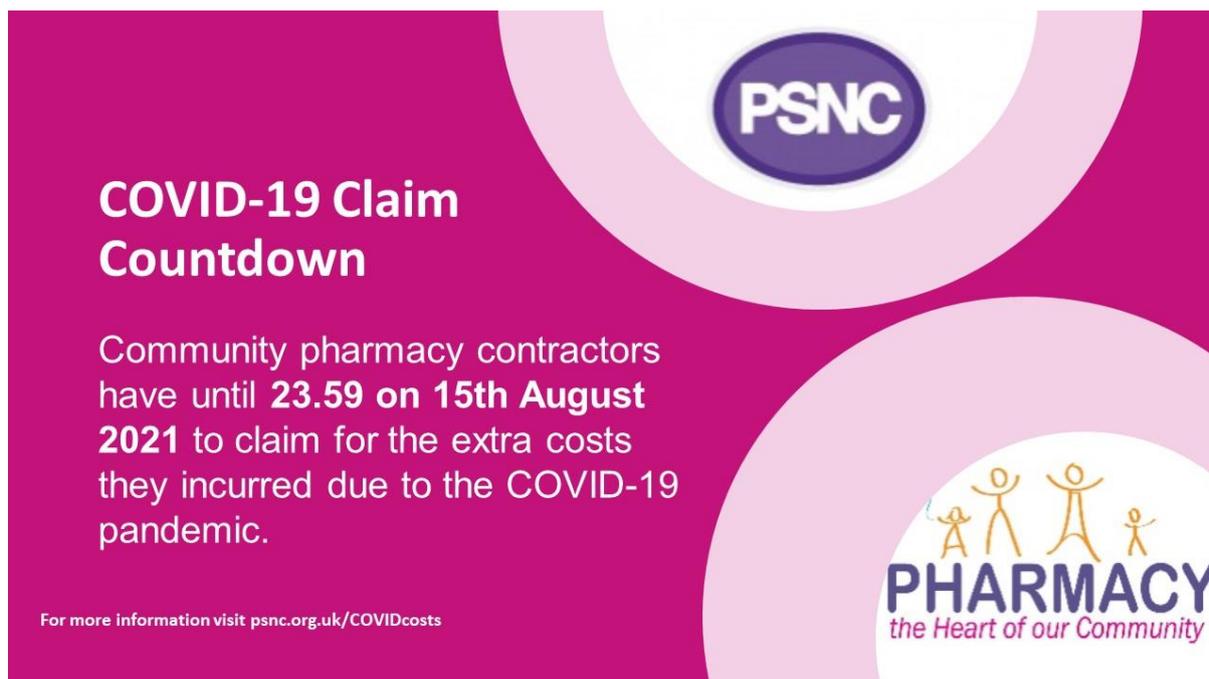
Workshop	First	Second
Live attendees	788	356
Usefulness rating	93%	96%
Recommendation rating	88%	89%

An [on-demand version of the final webinar](#) was released, alongside a [copy of the slide pack](#), for those who missed it or wanted to review the information again.

Countdown emails and social media

During the final fortnight of the claiming period, the Communications Team increased the frequency of reminders. Email news alert reminders were sent out every other day to all PSNC mailing list subscribers. We also sent one out to all NHSmail pharmacy mailboxes on Friday 6th August.

As well as posting text on social media, Digital Communications Officer Jamie Gilliam created graphics to help draw attention to the messages:



This graphic also formed the basis of a pop-up that appeared for visitors to the PSNC website.

Year Three CPCF Announcement Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS)

Given the delay between the PSNC Committee agreeing the deal for Year Three of the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) and Government sign-off of the announcement, PSNC requested that initial information on the PQS be published as soon as possible to give contractors a head start on preparation. The PQS announcement was made on Thursday 12th August, at which point PSNC also published some initial guidance for contractors: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/new-pharmacy-quality-scheme-for-2021-22-announced/>

Year 3 announcement

We were finally given the green light to publish the details for Year Three on Monday 23rd August at 12 noon. The pharmacy press were provided with an embargoed press release on the preceding Friday afternoon. LPCs and pharmacy trade bodies attended a briefing on the morning of the announcement.

<https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/contractor-announcement-cpcf-arrangements-for-2021-22-agreed/>

PSNC guidance and support

On the day of the announcement, we published a series of guidance briefings:

[PSNC Briefing 026/21: Community Pharmacy Funding in 2021/22](#)

[NMS expansion – additional conditions and flexibilities added](#)

[Hypertension Case-Finding Advanced Service](#)

[Smoking Cessation Advanced Service](#)

[PSNC Briefing 027/21: CPCF in 2021/22 – Frequently Asked Questions](#)

PSNC will hold an online contractor event on the CPCF for 2021/22 on Wednesday 1st September at 7:30pm. This will be a chance for contractors to hear from the Chief Executive and Leadership Team and to ask questions about the 2021/22 arrangements. PSNC is also planning to release further briefings and hold additional webinars on specific aspects of Year Three, such as the new services and the Pharmacy Access Scheme.

Value of Pharmacy Animation

In July we launched the Value of Pharmacy Animation referenced in previous subcommittee meetings. The video animation showcases the important work that community pharmacies do and explains how, with sustainable funding and ongoing support from Government, their role could be developed further. It adds to the collection of resources produced using the results of our 2021 Pharmacy Advice Audit. We will use the animation in conversations with national stakeholders including MPs, and have encouraged LPCs and pharmacy teams to share it with local commissioners, politicians, and others.

Promotional resources

Whilst the full video is only a few minutes long, we prepared the following shorter clips of the animation. These can be used to make specific points and gain more traction on social media.

Current value: the importance of pharmacy advice

Financial barriers: pharmacy's need for fair funding

Future potential: expanding the role of pharmacy

Also for social media, the Communications Team developed a series of [draft tweets](#), all using the hashtag #valueofpharmacy.

PSNC newsletters

From w/c 2nd August, PSNC has only been sending planned newsletters on Tuesdays and Fridays. Given the changes in Government policy on COVID-19, combined with the start of the summer season, this seemed a sensible time to reduce the email frequency down from daily. We have continued to add news to our website and, when significant news has been announced on another day (e.g. the details of the 2021/22 Pharmacy Quality Scheme), we have sent a special email news alert out.

We have heard from a small number of people asking for the daily emails to be reinstated, so we are keeping this under review. As well as taking into consideration the volume of news articles and guidance PSNC's teams are producing, we will check our subscribers' views on the future frequency of the PSNC newsletter using the poll function in Mailchimp (our mailing software).

Press coverage and proactive communications work

Contractor case study: Implementing the GP CPCS

Jamie Gilliam interviewed Adam Clark of Clark's Chemist in Barnsley about his experiences of GP referrals into the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS). Clark's Chemist is one of the many pharmacies now receiving a significant number of minor illness referrals from general practices every week. [Read the case study.](#)

Other press queries

Beyond the Year Three announcement, the PSNC Communications Team has recently received press queries on COVID-19 booster vaccinations, the COVID cost claims process, self-isolation rules for pharmacy staff, commissioning through Integrated Care Systems (ICS), and the future of the Pharmacy Earlier Payment Scheme (PEPS).

Chief Executive Blogs and Vlogs

PSNC CEO Simon Dukes has continued his monthly blogs and video messages (or 'vlogs') over the summer. You can read or watch via the below links.

23rd June Video: Simon encourages community pharmacy contractors to get engaged with the work of the Pharmacy Review Steering Group (RSG) as it begins to map out new structures and ways of working for PSNC and the LPCs.

2nd July Blog: Simon reflects on the detail of the COVID-19 costs agreement that PSNC has successfully negotiated with HM Government, and calls on every contractor to claim back their COVID costs.

5th August Video: Simon welcomes this year's Flu Vaccination Service as an important public health programme for the sector to participate in, whilst recognising that COVID-19 vaccine boosters and the expanded age cohort could lead to some bumps in the road.

27th August Blog: Simon talks more about the Year 3 deal, reflecting on the gap between how the sector rightly views itself, and how pharmacies are treated by Government and the NHS.

LPC communications and support

PSNC continues to publish a monthly newsletter for LPCs containing details about upcoming events that may interest LPC Chief Officers and Chairs/Members and relevant news updates.

Several additions have been made to the LPC Members Area. PSNC has published guidance outlining a discussion framework that participants of LPC meetings should follow to avoid concerns regarding competition law. The slides from the LPC Chief Officer's briefing on the COVID-19 Cost Claims process have also been published, and the resources from the June meeting of LPCs and PSNC.

PSNC digital communications reports (full reports overleaf)

June overview: The most popular topics this month were price concessions, Part 2 of the 2020/21 Pharmacy Quality Scheme, and Controlled Drug prescriptions. Unsurprisingly, the news article outlining the deal that PSNC reached with government on contractors' COVID-19 costs was also very popular. Our largest peak in website numbers was on Wednesday 30th June, the day we published the final list of price concessions granted for the month.

July overview: This month, the most popular topics were price concessions, the COVID-19 lateral flow device distribution service, and Controlled Drug prescriptions. The news article outlining the advice for pharmacies with the Government's easing of lockdown restrictions on 19th July also proved popular. Our largest peak in website numbers was on Wednesday 14th July, the day we held our first COVID-19 Cost Claims Workshop for contractors.

Conclusion

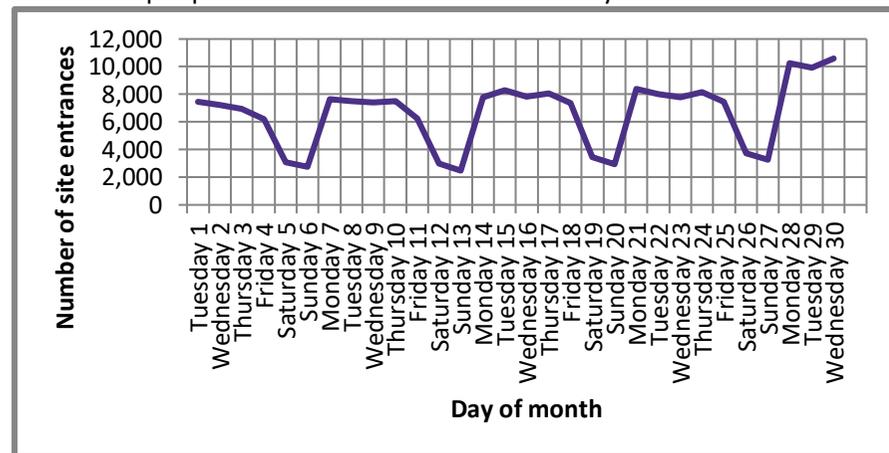
This paper has been created just for review; no action is required. However, subcommittee members are welcome to share their feedback or ask questions on any of the above.

PSNC digital communications report – June 2021

PSNC Website

Audience	June	May
Number of unique visitors (site entrances)	198,749	189,624
Number of unique pageviews	329,023	308,026

Number of people who visited the site on each day of the month:



Pages	Views
Price Concessions	17,642
Pharmacy Quality Scheme 2020/21 Part 2	7,110
Controlled Drug prescription forms and validity	5,707
COVID-19 lateral flow device distribution service	5,237
Community Pharmacist Consultation Service	4,737

News stories	Date	Views
COVID-19 Costs: PSNC reaches deal with Government	28 June	2,587
Supply Disruption Alert: Champix 0.5mg and 1mg tablets	24 June	1,521
Deadline approaching for completion of PQS Part 2 work	10 June	1,426
Data Security & Protection Toolkit: new PSNC guidance	29 April	1,368
Flu Vaccination: Confirmation of training requirements	14 June	1,268

PSNC Briefings	Views
012/21: CPAF screening process for 2021/22	978
016/21: Funding for COVID-19 related costs – summary and FAQs	466
041/20: Part 2 2020/21 Pharmacy Quality Scheme – Evidence Checklist	232
023/19: SSPs – A guide for Community Pharmacy teams	195
036/20: SSP07 – Fluoxetine 30mg capsules	154

Webinars/videos	Plays
GP CPCS Animation	1,019
PSNC CEO Vlog June 2021	94
Future of Pharmacy Animation	72

PSNC Emails

PSNC Newsletter	June	May	Other health newsletters
Open rate	29.5%	29.6%	23%
Click rate	2.0%	2.4%	6%
Clicks to opens	6.8%	7.9%	20%

Social media

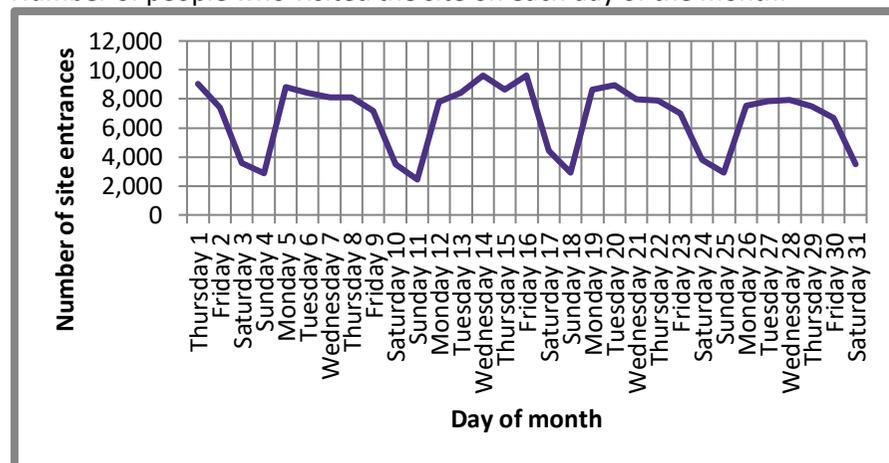
	June	May
Twitter reach	139,396	116,840
Twitter interactions	3,481	2,990
Facebook reach	3,965	1,655
Facebook interactions	245	122
LinkedIn reach	9,378	5,679
LinkedIn interactions	73	54

PSNC digital communications report – July 2021

PSNC Website

Audience	July	June
Number of unique visitors (site entrances)	209,079	198,749
Number of unique pageviews	337,344	329,023

Number of people who visited the site on each day of the month:



Pages	Views
Price Concessions	21,534
COVID-19 lateral flow device distribution service	6,010
Controlled Drug prescription forms and validity	5,782
Discharge Medicines Service	3,093
EPS Prescription Tracker	3,033

News stories	Date	Views
Face coverings and PPE in pharmacies from 19th July	13 July	4,085
Supply Disruption: Champix 0.5mg and 1mg tablets	24 June	2,581
Healthcare staff may be able to avoid self-isolation	19 July	2,572
Test & Trace: Disagreeing with assessments	Sept 2020	2,246
COVID-19 Costs: PSNC reaches deal with Government	28 June	2,191

PSNC Briefings	Views
016/21: Funding for COVID-19 related costs – summary and FAQs	2,149
012/21: CPAF screening process for 2021/22	1,854
020/21: COVID-19 Costs – Background and NHSBSA claim form overview	1,550
021/21: COVID-19 Costs – Further guidance and claim-related FAQs	1,442
017/21: Hub and Spoke dispensing	409

Webinars/videos	Plays
Value of Pharmacy Animation	863
GP CPCS Animation	373
Part 2 PQS 2020/21 Digital Guide	61
Future of Pharmacy Animation	52

PSNC Emails

PSNC Newsletter	July	June	Other health newsletters
Open rate	29.3%	29.5%	23%
Click rate	3.3%	2.0%	6%
Clicks to opens	11.1%	6.8%	20%

Social media

	July	June
Twitter reach	130,378	139,396
Twitter interactions	3,923	3,481
Facebook reach	1,723	3,965
Facebook interactions	131	245
LinkedIn reach	5,696	9,378
LinkedIn interactions	30	73

Appendix CPA 06/09/21

Subject	Parliamentary Engagement and Public Affairs
Date of meeting	September 2021
Committee/Subcommittee	Communications and Public Affairs
Status	Not confidential
Overview	A summary of PSNC's Parliamentary engagement work since the last subcommittee meeting.
Proposed action(s)	None
Author(s) of the paper	Jessica Ferguson, George Foote and Zoe Long

Parliamentary Engagement

This paper presents an overview of parliamentary engagement and public affairs work since the last subcommittee meeting.

PSNC Resourcing

Following the resignation of Jessica Ferguson in mid-July we worked quickly on a recruitment process, seeking a more senior Public Affairs and Policy Officer to replace Jessica, and to focus more on strategic work ahead of negotiations on the next five-year deal for the sector. We recruited on a one-year contract basis, recognising that we will be reviewing resourcing following the outputs of the Review Steering Group, but with a view to extending that contract, or offering a very similar role, next year. Jessica spent her final month at PSNC preparing handover documents and also ensuring that all our MP guidance was up to date.

George Foote started as Public Affairs and Policy Officer on 25th August. George has considerable Parliamentary experience and contacts having worked in the offices of two MPs previously. This included work for Sarah Wollaston MP, giving him a strong working knowledge of the Health Select Committee and how to influence health policy. George will be spending his first few weeks getting to know more about the sector; reviewing our public affairs activity to identify gaps and opportunities; and planning the next phases of our public affairs work including picking up on the stakeholder engagement plans discussed by the subcommittee in July (see [CPA Appendix 04/07/21](#)).

Updated MP visit guidance

As Parliament went into recess in late July we updated our guidance on hosting MP visits – this should help any LPCs or contractors wanting to engage with their MPs over the summer when MPs may have more time to focus on constituency work. See: <https://psnc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Guidance-for-hosting-pharmacy-visits-with-local-MPs-August-2021.pdf>

Parliamentary activity

Although Parliament entered recess for the summer in late July, just a few weeks after the last meeting of the subcommittee, there are some items to note.

Briefing Parliamentarians on COVID costs

Shortly after the COVID costs announcement, we contacted around 35 supportive MPs and Peers (focusing on those who helped with COVID costs lobbying – eg wrote letters to Ministers, tabled questions etc) to inform them about the agreed deal. We were clear that while the deal was good news in many ways, the burden on contractors was unwelcome, and the deal does not address the ongoing sustainability challenges facing the sector.

Health Questions

In July, during Health Questions, Taiwo Owatemi, Labour MP for Coventry North West and APPG Officer, asked about developing the role of pharmacies, and whether the Minister would prioritise a plan for unleashing pharmacies' potential to help them make a greater contribution to the nation's health to support pandemic recovery. Jo Churchill replied:

“We are committed to the five-year community pharmacy contract and to enabling community pharmacy to deliver more clinical services as well as being the first port of call for minor illnesses. Pharmacists are highly skilled members of the primary care team. We are making good progress with referrals from NHS 111 and general practice, with discharge medicines services from hospitals, and with 96% of pharmacies providing lateral flow tests as well as delivering vaccines. We know that community pharmacies are keen to deliver more, and we should be thinking pharmacy first.”

“I know that the hon. Lady speaks from experience, having been a clinical pharmacist before she came to this place. That potential needs unleashing. We are working across the profession to make sure that pharmacies are enabled to play a fuller part in the primary care family. We should think pharmacy first when we have minor ailments, and pharmacies should be enabled to do everything they can.”

Health and Care Bill

PSNC, along with the BDA, National Community Hearing Association and the Association for Eye Care Providers, co-badged a joint briefing to lobby MPs around the second reading of the Health and Care Bill. The briefing explained the benefit of investment into wider primary care outside of general practice – eg pharmacy, dentistry, optometry – and encouraged MPs to call for these sectors to be represented on the new Integrated Care Boards. During the debate around the second reading of the Bill, there were some mentions of pharmacy from MPs:

Steve Brine, Conservative MP for Winchester: On primary care, I welcome the formal creation of integrated care systems, but we need them to realise their potential, and to do so fast. If they are going to work, general practice needs to embrace the wider primary care family, which means finally to recognise the potential of community pharmacy, ophthalmology and dental services as vehicles of prevention as much as of treatment.

Anne Marie Morris, Conservative MP for Newton Abbot: We must look at what greater role our pharmacists can play. How can we improve our training so that people have more general skills that we can use in a pandemic such as this, so that everyone in the health system can be used? To support that, we will need to rework the membership provisions for the ICBs and the ICPs.

Parliamentary Questions

MPs are continuing to submit written questions about pharmacy:

- **Laurence Robertson, Conservative MP for Tewkesbury**, asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for increasing the availability of independent prescribers in community pharmacy settings.
- **Feryal Clark, Labour MP for Enfield North**, asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the role of (a) self-care and (b) pharmacy is represented within all Integrated Care Systems.
- **Peter Dowd, Labour MP for Bootle**, asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to support pharmacies to play a greater role in primary care provision.
- **George Howarth, Labour MP for Knowsley**, asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of a national approach to self-care that (a) encourages referrals to pharmacy for self-care advice and (b) empowers community pharmacists to refer people to other healthcare professionals as appropriate.
- **George Howarth, Labour MP for Knowsley**, asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2021 to Question 23077 on Primary health care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of referrals from the NHS 111 referral service to community pharmacy for self-treatable conditions in each month since November 2020.
- **Feryal Clarke, Labour MP for Enfield North**, asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what consideration he has made of the potential merits of pharmacists being given read and write access to medical records.

- [George Howarth, Labour MP for Knowsley](#), asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2021 to Question 23078 on Pharmacy: medical records, whether (a) his Department and (b) NHS bodies plan to publish its assessments of the potential merits of giving pharmacy write access to medical records; and if he will make it his policy to hold a consultation on providing that access to pharmacies.
- [Rachael Maskell, Labour MP for York Central](#), asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he is having with representatives of providers of covid-19 vaccination hubs on the future use of the systems established for the covid-19 vaccination programme.
- [Feryal Clark, Labour MP for Enfield North](#), asking the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the role of a (a) self care and (b) pharmacy is represented within all Integrated Care Systems.

All-Party Pharmacy Group

Following summer recess, the APPG is planning to launch a consultation on the future of pharmacy in the wake of Covid-19. The terms of reference have been agreed with the other co-sponsors and the APPG will open a call for evidence in September. The group is seeking views on a range of topics, including:

- What more community pharmacy can do to support the prevention agenda to help people stay healthy in their communities.
- How pharmacy can be used to support patients with the management of their long-term conditions
- How pharmacy can be better integrated into NHS care pathways and the role of newer services such as CPCS and DMS
- The pharmacy workforce including recruitment, retention, and professional development of the pharmacy profession, including greater use of independent prescribers
- Examples of pharmacy best practice across the four nations and any lessons to be learnt
- Future clinical services that could be provided in community pharmacy settings, such as an increased range of vaccinations
- The role of pharmacy in patient safety

Written evidence will be sought on these topics from community pharmacy as well as from wider primary care stakeholders and other healthcare organisations, such as charities, patient groups, professional bodies and membership organisations. In addition, a series of roundtable events will be held in the autumn to gather more detailed evidence from various stakeholders, but more details about these events will be available in due course.

All of this work will result in a ‘manifesto’ of recommendations to be presented to policymakers. The group is keen to use the manifesto, which should have the support of both the sector and wider healthcare stakeholders, to approach and brief the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the Pharmacy Minister, and the NHSE&I Chief Executive. This should help to demonstrate the value of pharmacy and its potential to contribute more to help tackle important health agendas and support pandemic recovery. The manifesto will also provide a good basis for future APPG work, and a launch event may be a good opportunity to hold an MP engagement event in Westminster.