

Minutes of the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee meeting

held on 24th and 25th November 2021

at De Vere Grand Connaught Rooms, 61-65 Great Queen Street, London

Present: Reena Barai, David Broome, Mark Burdon, Peter Cattee, Clare Kerr, Ian Cubbin, Marc Donovan, Samantha Fisher, Mark Griffiths, Jas Heer, Tricia Kennerley, Ifti Khan, Sue Killen (Chair), Rhys Martin, Fin McCaul, Has Modi, Lucy Morton-Channon, Roger Nichols, Bharat Patel, Jay Patel, Indrajit Patel, Prakash Patel, Adrian Price, Sian Retallick, Anil Sharma, Stephen Thomas, Faisal Tuddy, Gary Warner

In Attendance: Shiné Brownsell, Alastair Buxton, Mike Dent, George Foote, Gordon Hockey, Zoe Long, Melinda Mabbutt, Suraj Shah, Rosie Taylor, Rob Thomas

Wednesday 24th November

Item 1 – Update on the work of the Review Steering Group

- 1.1 Zoe Long gave a presentation to update the Committee on the progress of the Review Steering Group's (RSG) work to date and next steps.
- 1.2 Following a Q&A session with the RSG members present, the Committee met in groups to discuss in more detail how best to engage with contractors, whether the Committee agreed with mapping future local structures to the developing NHS landscape, whether there should be a shared governance framework and their views on the proposals for a Board and Council of Community Pharmacy England; how they should work together; and term limits.
- 1.3 Sue Killen requested that the Committee provide any further thoughts to the RSG programme team and members.

Thursday 25th November

Item 2 – Welcome from the Chair

- 2.1 Sue Killen welcomed the Committee to the meeting and commented how good it was to see everyone in person.
- 2.2 Sue Killen commented that it had been a busy period with COVID-19 cost negotiations and congratulated everyone involved in that work. Unfortunately, extra global sum funding had not been agreed and contractor's costs are much more challenging now. Workforce issues have become critical and are having a negative impact on contractors; this was the number one concern raised at the recent LPC Conference.
- 2.3 Recruitment continues for a new PSNC Chief Executive. In the interim the Leadership Team are working together, and the Chair noted that they are doing an excellent job.

Item 3 – Apologies for absence

- 3.1 Apologies for absence were received from Sunil Kochhar, Margaret MacRury and Umesh Patel.

Item 4 – Conflicts or declaration of interest

- 4.1 Adrian Price declared that he is a member of the Supervision group.

Item 5 – Minutes of the 8th September 2021 meeting

- 5.1 The minutes of the meeting which took place on 8th September 2021 were approved.

Item 6 – Matters Arising

6.1 None.

Item 7 – Introduction from the Leadership Team

- 7.1 Gordon Hockey gave an introduction on behalf of the Leadership Team and thanked the Committee for their support and advice. Gordon reiterated that the five Directors are jointly making the key decisions. They are the key executive function and are used to working together, and that they are supported by fantastic staff.
- 7.2 Gordon commented that a relationship with Maria Caulfield MP, who is the new pharmacy minister, has been established. PSNC worked with DHSC to arrange the Minister's recent visit to Reena Barai's pharmacy.
- 7.3 Gordon talked about workforce issues and thanked Marc Donovan for speaking at the LPC conference on this topic. It was noted that the Committee needed to consider solutions for all contractors.
- 7.4 The office also looked at fuel shortages in October and took part in a cross-sector meeting, where everyone worked together to find a solution.
- 7.5 Recent engagement with DHSC has included work on reimbursement and COVID-19 costs and it was noted that 95% of contractors had already been paid their COVID-19 costs claims.

Item 8 – Annual Review of the 5-year deal and funding for the sector

- 8.1 It was noted that this was the first annual review that has taken place. Mike Dent talked the Committee through the process and the key points. It was noted that external communication of the annual review will need some careful consideration.
- 8.2 In group discussions, the Committee provided their reflections on the annual review process; how to improve it next year; and how to present it to the sector and external stakeholders.
- 8.3 Following the group discussions, the Committee agreed the annual review document set out in the agenda and to proceed to Year 4 negotiations.
- 8.4 The Committee also agreed that we should make a renewed bid for additional funding and discussed what evidence and data could support that bid.

Item 9 – Efficiencies and the impact of workforce issues

- 9.1 Mike Dent noted the logic of the 5-year deal depended on enabling and keeping dispensing efficiencies. DHSC are pursuing several approaches referenced in the agenda and market forces are influencing operating models and investments in technology.
- 9.10 The Committee reflected on lobbying positions and how to demonstrate the current squeeze which contractors are feeling.
- 9.11 Alastair Buxton talked about the workforce challenges the sector is facing and it was noted that these can only be addressed by collective action by the pharmacy sector and representative bodies, working with the Government and NHS. The Committee fed back what actions PSNC should take relating to the workforce crisis.

Item 10 - Service developments in Year 4 – what is achievable?

- 10.1 Alastair Buxton noted there are various services that are still to be fully implemented; however, contractors' capacity is already constrained by workforce and workload challenges.
- 10.2 The Year 4 mandate will likely propose several service developments and PSNC will seek to address the lack of funding for walk-in consultations.
- 10.3 It was noted that any new service developments will need to be balanced against the capacity of the sector to deliver them and that there is a need for additional funding.

- 10.4 The Committee met in groups to discuss the various potential scenarios that were set out in the agenda, which may result from the Year 4 negotiations. The feedback from this discussion will inform the initial approach of the negotiating team.
- 10.5 The Committee also discussed in groups their views on distributing funding for the walk-in service.

Item 11 – Governance

- 11.1 The Committee unanimously agreed to co-opt Lyndsey Fairbrother onto PSNC as the regional representative for East Midlands and South Yorkshire region, until 31st March 2023.

Item 12 – Subcommittee reports

- 12.1 Key points of the discussion at the Resource Development and Finance Subcommittee were presented by Mark Burdon.
- 12.2 Key points of the discussion at the Funding and Contract Subcommittee were presented by Peter Cattee.
- 12.3 Key points of the discussion at the Legislation and Regulatory Affairs Subcommittee were presented by Ian Cubbin.
- 12.4 Key points of the discussion at the Service Development Subcommittee were presented by Gary Warner.
- 12.5 Tricia Kennerley reported that a decision was made for the Communications and Public Affairs Subcommittee to meet after each PSNC Committee meeting.
- 12.6 The CPA subcommittee had recently met for a workshop to consider points raised at the last PSNC Committee meeting. It was noted the Annual Report had been published and that there has been quite a bit of national media coverage on flu vaccinations. There has been a slight delay with the LPC and PSNC website upgrade, however, the team are hoping to have a mock-up of that ready in time for the CPA subcommittee meeting on 9th December.
- 12.7 Key points of the discussion at the LPC and Contractor Subcommittee were presented by Sam Fisher. The Committee approved the LPC expenses policy as set out in the LCS agenda. Sam also thanked the LPC and Communications team and Admin team for all their hard work on the LPC hybrid event, which was a success.
- 12.8 Key points of the discussion at the Review and Audit Panel meeting were presented by Adrian Price.

Item 13 – Next steps

- 13.1 The office will review outputs from all of the discussions that took place during the meeting and will turn these into actions plans, which will feed into the subcommittees.
- 13.2 It was noted that the budget will need to be approved at the PSNC meeting in February 2022.
- 13.3 The Negotiating Team will have a strategy meeting in December to consider the Year 4 negotiations and the CPA subcommittee will consider related comms issues.
- 13.4 It was also noted that the RSG will report back in due course.

Item 14 – Any other business

- 14.1 The Chair thanked the Committee for their input and the staff and Executive team for all their hard work.