

**Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee
Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) Subcommittee
Minutes for the meeting held on
Wednesday 2nd February 2022**

Minutes of a meeting of the PSNC CPA Subcommittee held on Wednesday 2nd February 2022 at 3.15pm.

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

In Attendance: Reena Barai, David Broome, Mark Burdon, Alastair Buxton, Peter Cattee, Ian Cubbin, Mike Dent, Lindsey Fairbrother, Sam Fisher, George Foote, Jamie Gilliam, Jas Heer, Ifti Khan, Sue Killen, Zoe Long, Melinda Mabbutt, Has Modi, Bharat Patel, Indrajit Patel, Umesh Patel, Sian Retallick, Faisal Tuddy, James Wood.

Apologies: None received.

Conflicts of interest: None received.

Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2021 were approved by the subcommittee.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

Action 1: Communications on the Annual Review have now been published: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/first-annual-review-of-cpcf-paves-way-for-year-4-negotiations/>

Action 2: Significant national media work was completed throughout December, and we are now working on the next phase of this, pending subcommittee discussion, with support from Luther Pendragon.

Action 3: Lobbying work in support of a walk-in service is ongoing, and the GPC have indicated that they would be willing to support this once PSNC has finalised its case for the service.

Item 1- PSNC Objectives and Cross-Sector Work

ZL provided an update on joint work with the other pharmacy bodies, noting the very positive suggestions that had come from a recent brainstorming session hosted by PSNC.

Subcommittee Members agreed that events/roundtables with charities (particularly those working in cardiovascular health) and patient representatives could be a useful way to re-engage with advocates, but noted that any events should have clear expected outcomes, and form part of a wider engagement plan. Events should seek to go beyond just sharing enthusiasm about the sector. The subcommittee also felt that using the patient voice to tell pharmacy's story would be helpful – HealthWatch could assist with this – and it was suggested that LPCs would welcome resources to help them engage with local patient groups.

The Subcommittee felt that the hypertension case-finding event in Parliament must go ahead, perhaps a little later in the year to give us time to collate stories about the impact the service has had. Resources could also support MP visits to pharmacies to learn about the service; a Powerpoint should be developed based on the funding and capacity briefing; and we could consider other Parliamentary events e.g. to give MPs their flu vaccinations.

Action 1: The team will work, preferably with the other pharmacy organisations, on a plan for engagement events and follow-up actions to help us re-engage usefully with charity and patient advocates.

Action 2: Planning will resume on the Parliamentary hypertension case-finding event.

Item 2- Immediate Priorities: Pharmacy Pressures and Year 4 Support (Confidential)

ZL gave an update on immediate priorities including Pharmacy pressures and Year 4 support – around 1,000 team members have now responded to our survey, and this is due to close on Monday. Media coverage to support our case for a walk-in service will be sought very shortly.

Subcommittee members had found the early findings of the pressures survey very difficult reading – they painted a picture of a sector in crisis. PSNC will need to consider very carefully how to use the results of the survey, including ensuring that it helps to make the case for the sector with NHSE&I and DHSC.

The subcommittee was particularly concerned about the scale of the funding and workforce issues facing the sector, with many reports of pharmacy team members leaving their jobs due to current stress levels. The survey must lead to actions, and PSNC should start thinking about what contractors can do about the challenges they face. We would also need to try to get across the extent of issues like temporary closures, and the volume of phone calls that pharmacies are now dealing with – larger companies may be able to provide data on this.

The subcommittee considered next steps and messaging, noting:

- The need to use case studies and the patient voice to help to get across the level of complexity of the clinical advice that pharmacists now provide. Pharmacy patient participation groups could be helpful way forward, if they were embedded at ICS level.
- The need to focus on what is best for patients, rather than just on our resource and remuneration perspectives.
- The usefulness of resources that explain everything that pharmacists and pharmacies do every day – particularly with new local leaders coming in who need to be engaged with.
- The complexity of our story – we want to be ambitious in asking for other roles e.g. to support COVID vaccinations, but we are also saying that we simply cannot do anymore at the moment. The pressures story must be used to support a bid for more funding.
- The need to highlight very strongly the value of pharmacy to the NHS.
- Roles that may continue to expand such as in prescribing, private services, diagnostics etc.
- The need for PSNC to consider the upcoming Women’s Health white paper and the MHRA consultation on HRT medicines – what could pharmacies’ role be here, and how would we make the case for that?

- The need for a clear vision of what we are offering, and what we would need to deliver that.
- We should look at developing patient participation groups in community pharmacy and it would be helpful if they were embedded at ICS level.

In addition, subcommittee members suggesting tying in information on the social capital that pharmacies provide and the role that pharmacies can play in reducing health inequalities.

In addition to engaging with MPs, PSNC needs to focus on targeting NHS officials, including possibly local NHS officials, who are potentially the biggest influences for our sector. We also need to support our ongoing MP work with targeted work on Treasury and Cabinet MPs, and officials. This could include holding briefing sessions with people who have been new in post during the pandemic.

Action 3: The team will consider the final results of the pressures survey and draft an action plan to make best use of them.

Action 4: The team will consider further how best to craft our messaging, taking forward the national media and lobbying work to support the case for a walk-in service, and considering how best to engage with NHS and other influential officials.

Item 3 – PSNC and LPC Websites Upgrade

ZL gave an update on progress on the website upgrades project, thanking MM and JG for all their work on to support LPCs through this. We are currently in the third wave of the LPC upgrades, with the fourth and final wave due to go live at the end of this month. Whilst there have been some slight and inevitable glitches on the tech side, these have all been resolved quickly and effectively by Make. JW noted that the project has led to more standardisation across LPC websites, particularly in their transparency, in line with the Wright recommendations.

The PSNC website is also progressing well and will be (soft) launching next week. Initially, this will be for PSNC staff to test and tweak it if needed, before opening it up to external visitors who will have a choice of whether to use the new website or the old one, while we continue testing the new site.

Subcommittee members thanked the team for their work on this project, noting that the LPC websites were a step forwards, and that LPCs seemed generally happy with their new websites. All LPCs received help with their new site menus from the PSNC team, but it would be interesting to hear how much value LPCs using the paid option from Make had derived. The need for PSNC to change its name and logo were noted, and this will happen in due course following the outputs of the RSG's work.

Action 5: The team will follow up with subcommittee members who offered to help test the new PSNC website.

Action 6: Project wash-up sessions, including with the LPC website working group, will be arranged in due course.

Item 4 - Pharmacy Communications

The subcommittee noted the paper in the agenda. Melinda Mabbutt highlighted the positive impact that the national media work had had on building relationships with key health journalists.

Item 5 – Parliamentary Engagement and Public Affairs

The subcommittee noted the paper in the agenda.

Item 6 – Any Other Business

None