

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee
Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) Subcommittee
Minutes from the Meeting held on 18th January 2023 at 10.00am

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

In Attendance: Sam Fisher, Jamie Gilliam, Jas Heer, Zoe Long, Melinda Mabbutt, Adeola Wilson, Janet Morrison, Anil Sharma

Apologies: David Broome, Fin McCaul

Conflicts of interest: None received.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

Zoe Long welcomed Adeola Wilson to her first CPA Meeting. Adeola is PSNC's new Media and Corporate Communications Manager and will be working closely with Melinda Mabbutt and Jamie Gilliam.

Item 1: Pharmacy Pressures Survey

- 1.1 Subcommittee Members considered the Pharmacy Pressures Survey. This will be broadly the same survey as PSNC ran last year and we are expecting more media coverage of the survey this year given the contacts that have been built with the national press. The survey results will also be invaluable in public affairs briefings and discussions.
- 1.2 The aim is to launch the survey in January and for it to stay open for three weeks, with there being the potential to extend the survey by a week if more responses are needed.
- 1.3 The Chair noted that the survey is itself quite long and asked if any questions could be removed to ease the burden on contractors. Stephen Thomas suggested that some of the questions from PSNC's contractor webinars before Christmas should be added to the survey.
- 1.4 Sam Fisher suggested asking about pharmacists and pharmacy teams separately, and it was noted that some questions need an update to remove references to COVID services and reference more topical issues such as SSPs and supply.
- 1.5 The need to articulate the value of the survey in PSNC's communications to avoid contractors viewing the survey negatively was discussed.

ACTION: The Office will review and finalise the survey questions with a view to launching in January.

Item 2: Influencing

- 3.1 A short update on public affairs activities was given. George Foote is continuing to work with the MPs who joined PSNC's Parliamentary drop-in event in November. PSNC has a meeting with Steve Brine MP, Chair of the Health Select Committee, at the start of February. And the team have briefed the Shadow Health Team ahead of Parliamentary Health Questions next week. In addition, the APPG will be launching its manifesto shortly.
- 3.2 Janet Morrison has written to Amanda Doyle, National Director for Primary Care and Community Services at NHS England, and will be meeting with her later this month.

- 3.3 On January 4th, PSNC hosted a meeting of the national pharmacy bodies to discuss joint influencing work. Following that discussion Zoe Long has drafted a plan for a joint influencing campaign, with the objective being to turn the dial in pharmacy's favour in the short and longer term. The focus of this campaign will be the need for sustainable funding for the sector and building the pressure on Government regarding the introduction of a Pharmacy First service. Several tactics for the campaign are outlined in the paper.
- 3.4 The need to put pressure on senior decision makers within NHS England as well as MPs was highlighted, and the difficulties of securing a funding increase for the sector given the external environment was also considered.
- 3.5 Janet Morrison suggested that getting patient groups involved with PSNC's influencing work should be a priority.
- 3.6 The Subcommittee considered the asks for patients and it was felt that a key tactic for the campaign could be a petition.
- 3.7 The need to draw increased attention to pharmacy closures and health inequalities was noted. Clare Kerr stated that the CCA has already done some modelling on this. Members also discussed whether pharmacy closures provided an opportunity to specifically target "Red Wall" seats.
- 3.8 Anil Sharma stated that PSNC needs to make more of the fact that community pharmacy is one of the only sectors that kept its doors open during the pandemic and that hasn't gone on strike since.

ACTION: The Office will continue discussions with the other pharmacy organisations and take forward the #saveourpharmacies campaign.

Item 3: Rebrand and contractor communications

- 3.1 Zoe Long gave an overview of the paper in the agenda which is a summary of what IE Brand have found out regarding PSNC's brand and includes a series of recommendations about what they think Community Pharmacy England (CPE) should do. The recommendations follow several workshops and interviews with contractors, LPCs, other pharmacy bodies and committee members and a small survey of contractors.
- 3.2 The findings show that people generally think PSNC lacks assertiveness and is distant. They rate our reputation poorly and believe that we are not interested in representing contractors. Zoe Long noted that the issues with PSNC's brand will not be solved overnight, partly because PSNC's reputation is intrinsically linked to the funding deal that we negotiate with the Department and NHS. However, the finding and recommendations show us that there are many things that PSNC can do now to better communicate with the contractors we represent.
- 3.3 The idea of a contractor only area of the website, through which PSNC could directly speak to contractors in a different tone, was discussed as well as changing the way that we present our news to contractors. The subcommittee were asked for their reflections on IE Brand's recommendations and on what PSNC can do now to improve its reputation.
- 3.4 The importance of tone of voice was discussed as well as the importance of re-educating LPCs and contractors about the work PSNC does, for example, via the production of some short myth-busting pieces.
- 3.5 PSNC needs to get better at managing expectations, celebrating its successes, and fostering a shared sense of ownership of the organisation with contractors.
- 3.6 PSNC should provide contractors with as much information as possible about the negotiations and provide context about how the negotiations work in practice.

3.7 Zoe Long outlined the next steps in the PSNC rebrand project. IE Brand will shortly be drafting the core messaging that will underpin the project and has started work on the visual design. The subcommittee will have opportunity to review the key messaging and visual design at a special meeting in March.

3.8 The intention is for PSNC to start to be known as CPE from April 2023. PSNC's Communications Team will be drafting a comms plan to be shared with the subcommittee in due course.

ACTION: Office to book in March rebranding meeting.

ACTION: Office to draft CPE Communications Strategy.