

Briefing 022/23: Summary of our July 2023 Committee Meeting

Community Pharmacy England met in Leeds for a full Committee Meeting on 12th and 13th July 2023.

Committee Members considered urgent matters such as pressures in the sector and the ongoing Primary Care Access Plan negotiations, as well as strategic issues such as the Vision for Community Pharmacy.

In two Committee firsts, they discussed sector opinion polls which had been undertaken to inform the meeting and welcomed LPC leaders from the Yorkshire and Humber region to join part of the meeting.

Engaging with Community Pharmacy Owners

As part of Community Pharmacy England's commitment to working more closely with pharmacy owners, we asked the sector a series of questions ahead of July's meeting. This was a first for the Committee, who were delighted to hear that more than 800 people had responded.

Many of the findings came as no surprise, articulating the ongoing and very concerning pressures that pharmacy owners and their teams are feeling at present. These ranged from workforce and medicines supply issues, through to spiralling costs and capacity, given the continued increase in demand for healthcare advice.

Some of the key findings can be found in [Briefing 021/23: What pharmacy owners told us in July 2023](#).

The opinion polling results were reviewed by all Committee Members ahead of the meeting and we had a full discussion on the results augmented with feedback from the Regional Representatives, who are all serving LPC members, as well as drawing on them throughout the meeting.

We have already begun using some of the results in our influencing work – such as at our recent [Parliamentary event on medicines supply](#) – and we are looking to secure national media coverage.

Our Negotiating Team is also considering how else they may be used to support ongoing and future negotiations, as we remain fully focused on finding solutions to the complex challenges facing



pharmacy businesses.

Janet Morrison, Chief Executive of Community Pharmacy England, said:

“July’s meeting came at an important moment, allowing us to discuss key topics that will feed into the ongoing negotiations. We spent a substantial amount of time considering overarching critical issues and what the Committee identified to be the priorities and red lines. At this critical stage, we are grateful to everyone who completed our polls as your feedback has been incredibly valuable.

“Enabling pharmacy owners to feed directly into Community Pharmacy England Committee meetings is a key strand of our new ways of working with the sector. Never before have pharmacy owners been able to directly inform our Committee and have their opinions discussed at length as an agenda item in its own right.

“The results of the polls weren’t easy reading and laid bare the struggles that pharmacies have to manage on a daily basis. In particular, the Committee noted the severe pressures being faced by pharmacy owners in terms of the ongoing instability of generic medicines supply, dispensing at a loss and margin delivery within the constraints of Year 5 of the contract. It’s important that Committee Members hear this kind of feedback to help ensure they can accurately represent and make the best decisions for the whole sector. It also helps us to raise awareness of issues that matter to you with the public and policymakers.”

Discussions from our Subcommittees

Funding and Contract (FunCon) Subcommittee

FunCon covered a wide-ranging agenda including reviewing changes to funding for the other primary care contractor professions and elsewhere across the UK. Fee and margin delivery were discussed and both shortages and price concessions debated in detail.

FunCon members gave their opinions on the latest reimbursement reform issues around Drug Tariff Categories A and M, and noted the value generated for pharmacy owners by our Pricing Audit Team.

Service Development Subcommittee (SDS)

SDS reviewed the service aspects of the Vision for Community Pharmacy, which is being developed for us by the Nuffield Trust and The King’s Fund. A further discussion on the service development



options which could be included in the vision will take place at the start of next month, to inform the final version of the vision.

The subcommittee also reviewed the implementation of the Hypertension Case-Finding Service. It then moved on to consider the Flu and COVID-19 vaccination services, ahead of the forthcoming publication of the service specifications for the autumn programmes.

LPC and Contractor Support (LCS) Subcommittee

LCS discussed support for LPCs to continue to help them to make changes at a local level to implement the [Review Steering Group \(RSG\) proposals](#), to March 2024.

The subcommittee also helped to shape plans for the Conference of LPC Representatives, due to be held in October 2023. This is an important annual event for Community Pharmacy England to hear from pharmacy representatives at a local level.

Legislation and Regulatory Affairs (LRA) Subcommittee

LRA met on 6th June ahead of the full Committee Meeting, and discussed our work continuing to push DHSC and NHS England for further regulatory easements to help address the current cost and workforce pressures. LRA also discussed the General Pharmaceutical Council's proposed fee increase, finding it unreasonable given previous fee increases and the cost pressures the sector is facing.

Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) Subcommittee

CPA met on 14th July to consider both the outputs of the full Committee Meeting and to oversee our engagement, communications and influencing work.

They reviewed the ongoing work to influence Government, including the recent [medicines supply event](#), submission to the Health and Social Care Select Committee on its Pharmacy Inquiry, and plans for this year's party conference events. The Vision for Community Pharmacy and its use as a tool to help influence future negotiations was also discussed, and the subcommittee considered progress on the Community Pharmacy England rebrand and our recent engagement activities.

Overview of the full Committee Meeting

The full Committee considered at length matters arising from the ongoing negotiations about the additional £645m funding for community pharmacy. They discussed progress and explored options to get as much money flowing into pharmacies as possible from this opportunity, without adding



further pressures. The discussion also covered new materials for pharmacy owners explaining the negotiating process:

- Press statement: [CEO update on the negotiations](#)
- News article: [Demystifying the negotiating process](#)
- Blog: [The £645m – so what’s happening now?](#)
- Infographics: contained on a [new webpage](#)

Committee Members discussed progress on the Vision for Community Pharmacy, ahead of the launch of the latest [Vision engagement opportunity for the sector](#).

The Committee received a [progress update](#) on the Transforming Pharmacy Representation (TAPR) work programme, which referenced the general positive feedback received on the rebrand to Community Pharmacy England and our support for LPCs becoming [Community Pharmacy Locals](#).

Over 60% of the proposals for changes to representation have now been implemented, with the others now in progress or scheduled as future steps to 2024/25.

Committee Members also reviewed a new-style risk register that more closely aligns to our strategic objectives for the year.

Following the retirement of Bharat Patel earlier this year, the Committee appointed Adrian Price as its new Vice Chair. Adrian has been a pharmacist for over 30 years, and is Tesco’s Superintendent Pharmacist. He has served on the Committee since 2010 as a representative for the Company Chemists’ Association.

Adrian Price, Vice Chair of Community Pharmacy England, said:

“I’m delighted to be appointed as Vice Chair, especially at the start of a new chapter. Delivering the best representation for my community pharmacy colleagues is something I care a lot about and is something I will continue to work hard to deliver. Throughout the meeting, we were focused on progress. Mainly, the progress of ongoing negotiations, which is paramount; the TAPR project – which is developing considerably well; our collaboration with LPCs, which continues to grow stronger; and our Governance review, which I feel is crucial to the strength and success of our Committee in the future.”



Governance Improvements

As part of our commitment to strengthen representation, and in line with the [RSG proposals](#), we have commissioned an independent governance expert, Victoria Finney, to lead a comprehensive governance review, working with the Committee and LPCs. Victoria presented a new draft governance framework, including principles, along with values and behaviours for Community Pharmacy England to the Committee, and a full discussion was held on these.

This session followed a full-day workshop held last month in which Committee Members reviewed UK Government standards for governance of organisations' boards and considered research findings from our rebrand project, which had explored what values pharmacy owners and LPCs wanted us to have.

Working with LPCs

As part of our commitment to unity and working collaboratively across the sector, the Committee were joined by LPC leaders from the Yorkshire and Humber region for part of the meeting. This was the first time LPCs had attended a committee meeting to provide input and observe, whilst the meeting was being held in the region. We were delighted to welcome:

- Ashley Cohen, Chair of Community Pharmacy West Yorkshire
- Lynn Murrie, Vice Chair of Community Pharmacy South Yorkshire
- Ian Dean, Chief Officer of Community Pharmacy North Yorkshire
- Paul McGorry, Chief Officer of Community Pharmacy Humber

The LPC attendees had the chance to network with Committee Members and they each gave presentations to the Committee on their experiences of local commissioning, working with Integrated Commissioning Boards and other local issues. Thank you to the LPCs who joined us for what was a lively and informative session.

Ashley Cohen, Chair of Community Pharmacy West Yorkshire, said:

"I was pleased to be able to meet and talk with Community Pharmacy England Committee Members at the meeting in Leeds, as more dialogue and engagement with LPC leaders is vitally important for us to move forward together. I presented to the Committee on how we are working with the developing NHS ICS in West Yorkshire and some of the issues that we face at a local level."



Next Steps

The negotiations are our most pressing priority, and we will continue to keep the sector updated about their progress. The discussions with DHSC and NHS England are continuing and we will continue to push hard to get them completed as quickly as possible.

We look forward to the input from many in the sector about the Vision for Community Pharmacy, via the [engagement opportunity](#) which has just launched. Publication of the final report will happen later this year.

Our Committee will also continue to develop the new governance framework for Community Pharmacy England and LPCs.

If you have any queries or require more information, please contact: comms.team@cpe.org.uk