

**Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee
Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) Subcommittee
Minutes for the meeting held on
Thursday 9th February 2023 at 3.45pm**

Note: These minutes have been redacted to protect conversations around items of a confidential nature.

Members of CPA present: David Broome, Tricia Kennerley (Chair), Clare Kerr, Fin McCaul, Stephen Thomas.

In Attendance: Peter Cattee, Lindsey Fairbrother, Sam Fisher, George Foote, Jamie Gilliam, Jas Heer, Zoe Long, Melinda Mabbutt, Has Modi, Janet Morrison, Gary Warner, James Wood and Katrina Worthington.

Apologies: Received from Jay Patel and Sunil Kochhar.

Conflicts of interest: None received.

Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the meetings held on 16th December 2022 and the workshop on 18th January 2023 were approved by the subcommittee.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising. Updates on actions were given as follows.

The actions from the December and January meetings were either picked up in Agenda papers or had been commenced or completed. These included: the launch of the Pressures Survey including with WhatsApp promotional messages for Regional Reps to use; the agreement and development of the SaveOurPharmacies campaign; the development of a public affairs strategy; and the booking of a separate PSNC meeting to consider the rebranding work in March.

Zoe Long reported that as of that morning over 1,100 team members had responded to the Pressures Survey, along with 400 contractors representing around 1,500 contracts. Further comms to promote the survey will follow.

Item 1: Subcommittee Workplan

1.1 The subcommittee considered the progress on the workplan as agreed by RDF. Progress has been made on all the points that were listed for the first quarter.

Item 2: Public Affairs and Engagement Strategy 2023

2.1 Zoe Long gave an overview of the public affairs strategy set out in the agenda noting that we will have to continue to be reactive to the political landscape and policy situation. George Foote will be working on delivery of the strategy, supported by Luther Pendragon.

2.2 The subcommittee noted that the first draft objective – *a complete re-think of the CPCF and of community pharmacy's role as part of primary care* – is very bold and would need detailed thinking about funding models. This will need to be picked up when the vision work is completed later in the year. Other workstreams such as the economic review of the sector will feed into this.

2.3 Zoe Long talked through the tactics section of the paper giving an update on the #SaveOurPharmacies campaign and the plans for the results of the Pressures Survey. PSNC is leading

on the Parliamentary event that will take place as part of the campaign, and activities will begin in March. The team are also actively considering what more could be done to influence for the fully funded Pharmacy First service, including thinking about public polling or research.

2.4 The subcommittee felt that the strategy was good and comprehensive, but noted that the SaveOurPharmacies campaign would need to be the start of a long-term programme of activity to influence future CPCF negotiations, including influencing NHS England. It was also noted that longer lead-in times for significant campaigns would be helpful to help contractors get involved.

Action 1: Consider further short-term actions to press for a fully funded Pharmacy First service.

Action 2: Consider longer term joint planning for the #SaveOurPharmacies campaign.

Item 3: Contractor Communications and Engagement

3.1 A paper had been written to help with the development of a communications and engagement strategy which will be brought to the Committee in March, along with the rebranding work.

3.2 A discussion was had around IE Brand's recommendation to 'soften your tone' to be more approachable. It was agreed that this should be used with careful consideration, and clearly this applies to our relationship with the sector, not to negotiations. We must find a way to allow contractors to be heard and to share their experiences with us and with their peers, alongside offering them practical help and information.

3.3 The subcommittee noted that we will need to consider what success looks like for the new engagement strategy and as we launch the new branding to remain very mindful of the severe challenges contractors are facing. The committee discussed the extent of the pressures and what could be done to help contractors at this point.

3.4 The subcommittee considered WhatsApp groups and the potential benefits and limitations of having a WhatsApp group. It was considered that a PSNC WhatsApp group could prove too unwieldy to be effectively monitored and useful.

Action 3: Draft a Communications and Engagement Strategy for Community Pharmacy England.

Item 4: Pharmacy Communications and Media Work

4.1 The subcommittee noted the information in the agenda and Melinda Mabbutt highlighted in particular the recent national media coverage.

Item 5: Parliamentary Engagement and Public Affairs

5.1 The subcommittee noted the report paper and the ongoing work to raise the profile of the crisis in the pharmacy sector across Parliament. Recent work had included two MP letters which a number of MPs had signed and which were ready to be sent to the Secretary of State.

5.2 Work to brief the Shadow Health Team is ongoing as they develop their health policies.

5.3 Zoe Long confirmed that we are tracking LPC and contractor contacts with MPs where we know about these. An email to LPCs to ask if they have any recent contacts to report would be helpful.

Item 6: AOB

6.1. The full Committee will meet in March to consider the rebrand and the frequency of CPA meeting will remain under review.