Community Pharmacy England Minutes

Dates: 31st January and 1st February 2024

Start time: 3pm on 31st January

Location: 14 Hosier Lane, London, EC1A 9LQ

**Members present:** Sue Killen (Chair), David Broome, Peter Cattee,Ian Cubbin,Phil Day,Marc Donovan,Lindsey Fairbrother,Sami Hanna, Jas Heer, Tricia Kennerley,Ifti Khan, Fin McCaul**,** Niamh McMillan,Jay Patel, Prakash Patel, Beran Patel, Adrian Price, Sian Retallick, Anil Sharma, Stephen Thomas, Faisal Tuddy, Gary Warner

**In attendance:** Janet Morrison (Chief Executive), Mitesh Bhudia, Shine Brownsell, Alastair Buxton, Jack Cresswell, Mike Dent, Michael Digby, Daniel Fladvad, Gordon Hockey (Wednesday only), Zoe Long, Melinda Mabbutt, David Onuoha, Suraj Shah, Rob Thomas, James Wood, Katrina Worthington

**Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from Peter Cattee (Wednesday only), Clare Kerr, Niamh McMillan (Wednesday only), Olivier Picard, Anil Sharma (Wednesday only) and Ian Strachan.

**Papers for report:** The information in the agenda was noted.

The Chair referred to the various letters that were sent to Ministers since the last meeting which illustrated the huge contribution the sector is making to the NHS and healthcare; however, at the same time reiterating the point that the sector was suffering financially.

The Chair also referred to the Transforming Pharmacy Representation (TAPR) work programme papers in the agenda and confirmed that this work was near completion.

The Chair commented on Community Pharmacy England’s Values and that confidentiality, collective responsibility and the need to represent the whole sector, were the foundations of how Community Pharmacy England should operate.

The Chair confirmed that the Committee’s declaration of interest documents were being updated on the website, including the Committee Member’s biographies.

**Conflicts of interest:** Ifti Khan confirmed that he had been appointed as a Council member at Community Pharmacy Scotland.

It was noted that Boots had used PA Consulting previously, who will be carrying out the negotiations training with the Committee on 28th February.

**Minutes of the last meeting:** The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd – 23rd November 2023 were approved by the Committee.

**Matters arising:** The Chair noted the action points from the last meeting which had been completed.

A member pointed out a typo in the document. The year under the meeting reference should have read November 2023.

**ACTION:**

* Shine Brownsell to correct the year from 2024 to 2023 in the original document.

**Welcome from Chair:** The Chair gave a formal introduction on 31st January and a short introduction on 1st February as outlined in the minutes below.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair congratulated everyone on the launch of Pharmacy First and also referred to all the positive pieces of news that were coming in the media during the day. It was noted that the sector had played a strong hand in getting messages across and supporting implementation, and there was agreement that the sector was stronger when united. The Chair felt that Pharmacy First had been positively accepted by the public and the Government, and that it was key that Pharmacy First was a visible success as it would create a strong platform for community pharmacy’s future.

The Chair reflected on the General Election due to take place in 2024 and noted that with the current challenging economy, Community Pharmacy England would have to work hard to make a strong case going forward, given the challenging environment the sector was operating in.

## Day 1

## Item 1: Subcommittee reports

* 1. Key points of the discussion at the Resource Development and Finance (RDF) Subcommittee were presented by David Broome.

The subcommittee looked at KPIs for Community Pharmacy England and it was noted that some were difficult to measure. The subcommittee felt these should be reviewed to ensure it was worth the time to gather that data.

The following recommendations were approved:

* 2024/25 Draft budget
* The proposed investment plans

**ACTION:**

* Committee Members were asked to submit any outstanding expenses.
	1. Key points of the discussion at the Service Development (SDS) Subcommittee were presented by Fin McCaul.

Phil Day replaced Claire Nevinson on the subcommittee.

Fin referred to the implementation of Pharmacy First and congratulated the team for the work they had done and also the hard work put in by the LPCs. It was also worth noting that all of the webinars relating to Pharmacy First were fully booked and there were nearly 10,000 views of the recordings.

Fin reported that there was a proposal from NHS England and DHSC for the lateral flow service to be extended from 1st April 2024 for a year. The eligible patient cohort would also be expanded, which means an additional 1.4 million patients would be able to access lateral flow devices via pharmacies. The recommendation to agree the proposed service extension and expansion was approved.

* 1. Key points of the discussion at the Legislation and Regulatory Affairs (LRA) Subcommittee were presented by Ian Cubbin.

During the meeting the subcommittee discussed Supervision, Hub and Spoke and Market Entry for which there were recommendations for further reform. There was discussion around subcommittee meetings occurring that day, for which minutes were not yet available. The subcommittee also considered a DHSC proposal for a medicines distribution Enhanced service related to weight management; however, there were concerns that the proposal would have unintended implications for the supply chain and what was required was discussions with DHSC on the distribution and supply of expensive items.

* 1. Key points of the discussion at the Funding and Contract (FunCon) Subcommittee were presented by David Broome.
	2. Key points of the discussion at the Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) Subcommittee were presented by Tricia Kennerley.

During the last subcommittee meeting the members spoke about the need to improve funding and margin communications as it was an important subject for pharmacy owners to understand. A Category M and retained margin webinar which took place on 23rd January was well received, with 62% of attendees in the survey stating they would recommend the webinar to others.

Tricia also highlighted all the Parliamentary events which took place and thanked Zoe Long and her team for doing an excellent job with all the engagement events.

1.6 Ifti Khan provided an update from the LPC and Contractor Support (LCS) subcommittee, the meeting of which was stood down in November, due to member availability. Ifti highlighted that LCS was due to meet on day 2 of the Committee meeting and provided a summary of the agenda items, including reviewing the Conference of LPC Representatives 2023 and planning to shape the national forum of LPC representatives

## Item 2: Pharmacy Owner Polling Results

2.1        James Wood presented the results from the most recent pharmacy owner opinion polling, looking at the feedback on Pharmacy First preparations and resources. Community Pharmacy England have worked with LPCs to drive further participation in the polling and will continue work on the dashboard development.

2.2 There was a comment that there was not much awareness about the LPC members area on the website, and that some LPC members did not have their login details. James confirmed that his team will look into this and will remind LPC members about the members area on the website at the next Community Pharmacy England and LPC Operations Team meeting. All 650 LPC members in England were provided with access and login credentials in July 2023.

2.3 There was a comment that it was difficult to track the pressure indicators from the last four polls. There was a request for the data to be merged so that it can be tracked on graphs.

2.4 The Chair commented on the significance of the statistics as it showed Community Pharmacy England’s engagement with the sector.

## Item 3: Governance

3.1 Gordon Hockey provided a presentation on Governance, looking at the implementation of the Governance and People subcommittee and other subcommittees (appointment of members), draft role descriptions for the Negotiating Team (NT) and subcommittees and draft terms of reference for the NT.

3.2 There was discussion of terms of reference for NT members. Gordon Hockey confirmed that the term of office for NT and other subcommittees has been and will remain two years, but all would now have a total term of office of 6 years. (3 x 2-year terms). There was consideration of this and concern from some.

3.3 The Committee agreed that additional wording should be added to the governance arrangements to indicate that the NT and subcommittees require specialist knowledge and while external persons can be appointed, it made sense to retain able and experienced members if this best serves the Committee and the sector (recognising the need for churn to bring on board new knowledge).

3.4 It was suggested that provision should be made for training Committee members ready for appointment to the NT. The Chair said that in addition to the training for the Committee it is planned that more in-depth negotiating training will be delivered to the NT. She mentioned that PA Consulting was attending a session at the Committee meeting the following day, as they are scheduled to start negotiation training with the Committee later in February.

3.5 There was a comment that the Committee could look at succession planning for the Committee which would help with the process of getting more people thinking of putting themselves forward to join Community Pharmacy England. It was also noted that the NT would have no delegated decision-making authority until this is agreed by the Committee.

3.6 The Committee also agreed the following proposals in the agenda paper:

* Fitness requirements (and other relevant governance positions) to apply to external appointees.
* That existing subcommittees should remain in place until members of the new subcommittees have been appointed.
* The role descriptions for the NT, Governance and People subcommittee, Audit and Risk subcommittee, policy and advisory subcommittees.
* NT terms of reference.

3.7 On 1st February, following a proposal from the Vice-Chair, the Committee appointed the following Committee Members to the Governance and People subcommittee: Ian Cubbin, Jay Patel and Gary Warner.

3.8 Also on 1st February, Adrian Price confirmed that the terms of reference and role specification for the Governance and People subcommittee had been sent to LPC members and that in March he hoped to be able to ask the Committee to appoint two non-voting LPC representatives (likely LPC Chairs) to the Governance and People subcommittee.

**Committee Composition**

3.9 Gordon Hockey provided a presentation on the Committee composition, looking at the background and timeline to date, and the arguments for and against a mid-term change.

* 1. The Committee discussed this in groups considering whether the Committee should revise the policy decided last year and agree that in exceptional circumstances, it could initiate a mid-term review of sector ownership that could lead to a change in its composition. The Committee also discussed whether the Governance and People subcommittee should be asked to consider all the relevant issues to provide advice to the Committee.

Following a discussion, the Committee voted in favour of referring the issues to the Governance and People subcommittee for the subcommittee to consider and advise the Committee on the way forward. The voting results were as follows:

* In favour of passing to the G&P Subcommittee: 15
* Not in favour of passing to G&P Subcommittee: 7
* Two members abstained.

## Day 2

## Item 4: Strategy Development

4.1 The Chief Executive provided a presentation on the Strategy for Community Pharmacy and Community Pharmacy England.

 Committee members signalled their approval for the Strategy for Community Pharmacy and for the CPE Strategy.

4.2 The Committee also considered the areas that were in and out of scope for CPE and where our core purposes lay. Whilst CPE would need to keep a watching brief on workforce as a factor in ongoing capacity and costs, some members felt that Community Pharmacy England should be more involved on workforce matters. It was noted that there was limited staff capacity within the organisation to increase our involvement in the policy area, but if Committee members could identify specific proposals as to actions we could take, those would be considered and where appropriate shared with the sector’s Workforce Development Group.

**ACTION:**

* Committee Members to send in their list of requests of actions to take related to workforce policy.

4.3 The Committee then worked in groups to consider the prioritisation of the list of future services which was included in the Vision for Community Pharmacy. Once collated these will be assessed as business cases, added to the Strategy for Community Pharmacy and discussed with DHSC and NHSE.

**Item 5: Margin**

5.1 Mike Dent provided a presentation on the Margin Survey, how it works and the validation of it.

5.2 The Committee were asked whether we should seek to amend the Margin Survey. It was noted that the primary issues around margin were not the measurement itself, but that the system is aiming to distribute an inadequate sum of money. It was agreed not to make any major changes to the Margin Survey at this juncture. It was noted that there will be changes to the survey that will happen over time to help with improvements, such as looking at the issues with lag and reviewing whether there are ways of speeding up the process without affecting the survey itself.

5.3 The Committee were asked whether to consult PA Consulting, who have recent experience in working with Government around medicine pricing, to consider alternatives to the current system of margin delivery. The Committee agreed to that; however, they suggested putting together a reference group to support the project.

5.3 Jack Cresswell and Michael Digby were thanked for their hard work on producing the paper.

**ACTION:**

* Mike Dent to consult PA Consulting to consider alternatives to the current system of margin delivery.

**Item 6: Supporting future negotiations (PA Consulting)**

6.1 The Chief Executive introduced the PA Consulting team to the Committee, as they will be working with us in providing negotiating training to the Committee and to the NT. The Chief Executive confirmed that they will also be operating alongside Community Pharmacy England as critical friends during the 2024/25 negotiations with DHSC and NHSE and working on key strategic projects to support our work laying the foundations for the next contractual framework.

6.2 They have previously worked with Treasury, DHSC, NHSE and the Ministry of Defence. They explained that they have experience with healthcare and wider Government and can bring that healthcare insight and outside perspective on how the process and dynamics play out, and help form a strategy and understanding on what each side wants to achieve.

6.3 PA Consulting gave an outline of the plans for the negotiating training session taking place later that month.

## Item 7: 2024/25 Negotiations

7.1 The Chief Executive updated the Committee on her meeting with The Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP, who was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at DHSC in November 2023. They discussed Pharmacy First and the Chief Executive also reiterated the point that the underlying funding contract was insufficient.

7.2 The Executive Team regularly meets with the other primary care representative bodies and the Chief Executive reported on recent discussions members of the team had with GPC England. It was noted that they are currently in negotiations with DHSC and NHSE.

7.3 The Chief Executive informed the Committee that at the time of the meeting, there had been no update on when Community Pharmacy England would be starting the 2024/25 CPCF negotiations.

7.4 Mike Dent referred to the paper in the agenda which included Community Pharmacy England’s asks for 2024/25 to sense check if the Committee were happy with what was being proposed.

7.5 There was a comment that costs of working capital and interest rates have increased, and whether that could be considered.

7.6 There was a comment to move towards a faster payment scheme to improve cash flow, to pay more accurately and more quickly.

7.7 The Committee confirmed they were happy with what was being considered, subject to a few adjustments to strengthen the asks.

7.8 Alastair Buxton touched on Community Pharmacy England’s policy on PQS which had remained the same.

## Item 8: Pharmacy First implementation update

8.1 Alastair Buxton shared some initial figures from PharmOutcomes, to give an idea of how it went on the first day. Alastair thanked all of the IT system suppliers for all their hard work within the short timeline they had to get the IT systems ready. The office, NHSE, other Pharmacy Bodies, the Committee and those beyond Community Pharmacy were all congratulated on a job well done.

8.2 The office will work on providing further resources and look at what else can be done to help pharmacies deliver the service.

8.3 Following discussions on tables, a consensus on pursuing the proposal to collect pharmacy self-care consultation data was achieved. Alastair confirmed that the Executive Team will discuss this further, including the budgetary implications.

## Item 9: Any other business

9.1 The Chair thanked the team and Committee for their hard work, especially working together on launching Pharmacy First as this was a big step forward.