

Briefing 025/25: Summary of September 2025 Committee Meeting

Community Pharmacy England met in London for a full Committee meeting on 24th and 25th September 2025. Committee discussions included preparation for the upcoming CPCF negotiations, governance, and project updates. The Committee had a full discussion on strategy and tactics ahead of the upcoming negotiations.

This was the first meeting for the new non-executive Chair of the Community Pharmacy England Committee, [Professor Dame Jenny Harries DBE DL](#). Committee Members and the Executive Team look forward to bringing Professor Harries' extensive knowledge and experience, as a former Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England and the founding Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency, to bear in our goal of securing a sustainable future for community pharmacy in challenging times.

Overview of the Committee Meeting

The full Committee considered the following topics at the September meeting.

Preparation for CPCF Negotiations: Strategy and Tactics

The Committee reflected on the outcome of the 2025/26 funding negotiations and the work that has been undertaken by Community Pharmacy England since then. This has included significant funding analysis projects and a huge programme of work to implement the various elements of the settlement.

Committee Members considered the political direction of travel, particularly in terms of the Government Spending Review and 10-Year Health Plan, and how that will impact on the future of pharmacy, along with all of the negotiating inputs that have been gathered, including financial analysis and forecasts, submissions by other national pharmacy bodies, sector workshops and polling of pharmacy owners. Members also agreed that, going forwards, ongoing work is needed to help pharmacy owners to better understand how pharmacy funding operates.

The Committee considered the impact of National Living Wage (NLW) increases on funding and pharmacy businesses, as well as possible other routes by which to raise this.



Committee Members reviewed both overarching principles and more detailed objectives for the next round of negotiations, building on previous work. This all informed a strategy discussion considering expectations and requirements for funding levels and our other key objectives.

The Committee reconsidered positioning and tone of voice which had previously been agreed in June 2024 and reconfirmed in November 2024. Members discussed the approaches to take in negotiations, and it was noted that it would be important to hold Government to account on the commitments made in the 2025/26 settlement, particularly to sustainable future funding and operational model

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

“The Committee met at a critical time for community pharmacy, with the political conference season underway and crucial CPCF negotiations on the horizon. Preparations for those negotiations are continuing at pace, with economic analysis and sector views central to shaping our priorities. Meanwhile, pharmacy teams are also busy, implementing new services and preparing for what is expected to be another challenging winter across the NHS.

It was a pleasure to welcome our new Chair, who said she was keen to get stuck into tackling these complex challenges. And it was particularly meaningful to hold our plenary session on World Pharmacists Day, a fitting moment to recognise the dedication of pharmacy teams and the service development opportunities that lie ahead

Yet, the sector’s financial pressures remain stark, with many pharmacy owners continuing to subsidise NHS services at personal cost – an issue we highlighted in national media coverage just a few weeks ago, and again with Ministers and shadow Ministers at the party conferences. There is no doubt that there are very difficult discussions ahead, but everything we’re doing to gather information, build evidence and consider tactics will give us the best possible platform from which to make the case for community pharmacy.”

Governance: Committee Composition

The Committee agreed to make changes to its composition in order to better reflect the make-up of the community pharmacy sector. The changes are part of ongoing work on governance at Community Pharmacy England, and follow independent expert recommendations to increase the number of 10+ multiple members of the Committee and give the Independent Pharmacies Association (IPA) appointment rights to Community Pharmacy England.

The decision came after a constructive meeting between Community Pharmacy England and the sector bodies – the Company Chemists’ Association (CCA), Independent Pharmacies Association (IPA), and



National Pharmacy Association (NPA) – over the summer, at which an interim agreement about composition was reached. The interim arrangements will be in place until Community Pharmacy England elections in April 2027.

Under the new interim arrangements, which will come into effect on 1st November 2025, the IPA will nominate two 10-plus multiple representatives to Community Pharmacy England. This is in addition to the existing three members of the Committee in the non-CCA multiples category. Also, an additional independent representative will be co-opted to the Committee, and the CCA representatives will be reduced by one (and the two Observers will step down from the Committee). Further information on the new interim arrangements can be found [here](#).

Remaining issues such as composition from April 2027 and LPC model composition, will be considered by Governance and People Subcommittee and then brought back to the full Committee at a later date.

Economic Projects Update

PA Consulting, an independent consultancy with extensive experience working across Government, attended the meeting and presented a detailed report of their most recent economic work on community pharmacy funding.

Implications of the settlement

PA set out their thoughts on the scale and consequences of the funding gap facing the sector and highlighted a number of options which might go some way towards closing it. The Committee considered their report and provided detailed comments and suggestions for next steps.

Retained margin

The retained margin mechanism delivers critical funding to pharmacy owners. PA has assessed the policy objectives for both Government and pharmacies for retained margin and set out a number of difficulties experienced by pharmacy owners in practice, following interviews with sector leaders. A long list of potential options for improvement were assessed against scale and certainty of impact, complexity, cost and risk. There are no quick wins and the more attractive options for improvements are somewhat complex with many changes either underway or under discussion with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

PA will come back again to present on progress to the Committee at a later meeting.



Engaging with Pharmacy Owners

Ahead of the September Committee Meeting, pharmacy owners were asked about the future direction of the CPCF, seeking to better understand what they want from the 2026/27 negotiations. The opinion poll gathered views on potential funding allocations, service priorities and regulatory asks of Government. We also asked pharmacy owners about the financial outlook for their businesses and repeated the financial and operational pressures tracker.

Key findings were:

- A clear majority say that their biggest challenge is that core funding is still not sufficient to cover current business costs.
- Workforce costs and unpredictable revenue streams are currently the highest pressures.
- Respondents expressed confidence to deliver on almost all pharmacy services described in the Government's 10 Year Health Plan.

[A fuller summary of the findings is available here](#)

Analysis of the results was considered by Committee members who drew on this valuable information, augmented with feedback from the Regional Representatives, at various stages throughout the meeting. It was used to inform discussions around CPCF negotiations strategy and tactics, helping shape Community Pharmacy England's negotiating priorities, to supplement our own work on financial analysis and policy development guided by our strategy and objectives.

Alongside this polling, views on negotiating priorities were sought from the national community pharmacy sector bodies – the CCA, IPA and NPA – and these also fed into the Committee's discussions. The poll findings were also considered in terms of our ongoing influencing work at the Communications and Public Affairs Subcommittee.

Subcommittee Meetings

Discussions from Governance Subcommittees

Audit and Risk Subcommittee (ARS)

ARS reviewed the Auditor's report on the financial statements for 2024/25 and recommended these be approved by the full Committee, in light of the comprehensive work the Head of Finance had undertaken on the assurance framework. The accounts were subsequently approved by the Committee.



Subcommittee members reviewed plans to share our approach to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with LPCs to further enhance accountability and transparency. This will be part of work to help LPCs build on the self-evaluation framework that we provide.

The subcommittee also fed back on the final draft of the [annual report](#), which describes our activities, value and impact for pharmacy owners in 2024/25. Finally, they considered some recent [staff recruitment](#) to increase the support provided to LPCs and to further strengthen our insights and research work.

Governance and People (G&P) Subcommittee

G&P met twice over the summer to discuss issues, particularly proposed constitutional changes which were then presented to and discussed by the full Committee (see details of main agenda item above).

Updates from Advisory and Policy Subcommittees

Service Development Subcommittee (SDS)

SDS reviewed the ongoing work to implement the changes to the CPCF announced in March, including the development of support materials to help pharmacy owners to be ready for the changes in October. These CPCF changes include revisions to the Pharmacy First patient group directions (PGDs) and clinical pathways, including movement of some of the gateway points within the pathways, which should mean more consultations will be eligible for the payment of a fee. Later in October, emergency contraception will be added to the Pharmacy Contraception Service and the addition of depression to the New Medicine Service.

An update on work to conclude negotiations and support implementation of the new Childhood Flu Vaccination Advanced service was also provided to the subcommittee, with this service commencing on 1st October.

Feedback on the seasonal vaccination services was discussed, considering the views of pharmacy owners on how the flu and COVID-19 vaccination services were expected to fare over the next two months. This feedback will support negotiations for the 2026/27 seasonal vaccination programmes.

The Committee's policy on national health campaigns was reviewed and the progress of NHS England's Independent Prescriber Pathfinder Programme was considered, ahead of any discussions on a prescribing service within the CPCF within the forthcoming negotiations with DHSC and NHS England.



The subcommittee also agreed to support joint lobbying with other healthcare bodies on concerns about the potential unintended consequences of the Crime and Policing Bill's requirements for mandatory reporting by healthcare professionals.

Funding and Contract (FunCon) Subcommittee

As part of work to implement funding related elements of the 2025/26 settlement, the subcommittee considered a number of important topics. This included discussions around how best to take forward plans for accelerated advance payments in light of discussions with DHSC and the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA), the capping of services, and initiatives around the process of delivering and validating retained margin. All are aimed at both easing cashflow and providing a more equitable distribution of funding.

Given the number of topics requiring consideration by FunCon, an additional virtual meeting is being arranged to provide further time for discussion.

Legislation and Regulatory Subcommittee (LRS)

Following recent surveys of pharmacy owners and LPCs, LRS considered possible regulatory asks and which were the most appropriate to take forward. Subcommittee members reviewed requirements around off-site provision of vaccinations and considered pharmacist flexibilities, including a response to the [Government's consultation](#) on the topic. The consensus was to seek full flexibility, along the lines of the current practice in Scotland.

LPC and Contractor Support (LCS) Subcommittee

The subcommittee agreed to expand and improve the opportunity for LPC observers at Committee Meetings – further plans will be shared in due course. Plans for the upcoming Conference of LPC Representatives (as informed by the LPC working group) were also considered, including the structure and content of the day. Subcommittee members considered the impact of ICB mergers on the LPC network, as well as discussing support for LPCs and pharmacy owners with neighbourhood working and provider companies.

Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) Subcommittee

In a meeting held at the end of the Committee Meeting, the CPA subcommittee reflected on recent communications outputs (such as national media work and sector workshop events) and considered workplans in line with our existing public affairs and engagement strategies.



Discussing post-Committee communications, it was agreed to continue to provide as much information to the sector as we can, including around negotiation preparations and changes to Committee composition. Looking ahead, the subcommittee approved ideas to focus on messaging the whole sector can get behind, and to keep engaging with both existing and emerging political parties with a forward view to future elections.

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