



Communications and Public Affairs Subcommittee Minutes

Date: 16th December 2025

Start time: 7pm

Location: Online (MS Teams)

Members present: Tricia Kennerley (Chair), Sian Retallick, Prakash Patel

In attendance: Dame Jenny Harries, Dervis Gurol, Jas Heer, Has Modi, Beran Patel, Mayank Patel, Anil Sharma, Stephen Thomas, Sharlyn Beltran, Rebecca Butterworth, James Davies, Mike Dent, Zoe Long, Janet Morrison, Adeola Wilson, James Wood.

Apologies: Lindsey Fairbrother

Conflicts of interest: None declared.

Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2025 were approved by the subcommittee.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising. Actions from the last meeting had been completed or were picked up in the agenda papers.

Item 1: Subcommittee Workplan

- 1.1 The progress on delivering the workplan was noted, and a final update for this year will be given at February's meeting.

Item 2: Outputs from Committee Meeting and Sector Polling

- 2.1 The post-Committee communications have been published, with a focus on the preparations for the upcoming CPCF negotiations. Zoe Long noted the polling which once again shows the scale of the pressures facing the sector, and also that the next polling has already been released with a focus on aggression against pharmacy teams, as requested at the recent LPC Conference. This poll also covers VAT issues.

ACTION 1: Polling promotion and results collation to proceed as usual.



Item 3: Engagement Strategy Review

3.1 The subcommittee considered the progress made on the engagement strategy which was launched three years ago. Committee Members' general feedback was positive: communications were recognised as having improved significantly over the past couple of years and are moving in the right direction. The Chair of CPA echoed this, saying the focus should now be on fine-tuning – including the tools used, media and engagement tactics, and other channels and materials.

3.2 A variety of communications options were considered including:

- **Commissioning research into our branding:** this could be supported by IE Brand again. The subcommittee concluded that research to help understand the communications preferences of people in the sector receiving our communications would be the most helpful approach.
- **Using snap polling to take “temperature checks” on key issues:** this was felt to be a good idea.
- **Creating a WhatsApp or Telegram broadcast channel:** the resource that would be needed to properly engage with people via this channel was noted, and it was suggested that we seek pharmacy owner views on the value of any broadcast channel like this. A better approach may be to do more to promote the communications channels we already have with pharmacy owners.
- **Exploring a Community Pharmacy England app:** this could make it easier for information to be shared between CPE and pharmacy owners in both directions, but would require some additional resource to develop and then provide ongoing support. The subcommittee were keen to scope this, thinking about what an app would do and how it could benefit pharmacy owners: the first step would be to define what the purpose of an app would be.

3.3 Zoe Long also talked through the digital training and support plan, including expanding video content and webinars next year. The subcommittee felt that useful topics would include finances, margin and how funding works. Short videos on funding and reimbursement have performed well over the past year, and plans are in place to continue these. Committee members suggested running short, bite-sized webinars of

around 15 minutes, focusing on key topics. Afternoon sessions were suggested, as some pharmacies close at lunchtime. This approach has worked well for some LPCs and content can be accessed on demand. The LCS subcommittee will consider training plans further in February.

ACTION 2: Develop these plans, including starting to scope out what a Community Pharmacy England app could deliver, for further discussion by CPA and LCS.

Item 4: Influencing and Public Affairs Planning

- 4.1 In line with the decision from the Audit & Risk subcommittee, a process to retender for public affairs support is now underway with agencies expected to be invited to pitch for the work in the first week of January.
- 4.2 Zoe Long also explained that planning for a number of public affairs events in 2026 is underway, with the first being the Primary Care Parliamentary Drop-In Event in January.

ACTION 3: Public affairs tender process and wider planning to proceed in line with the subcommittee workplan and public affairs strategy.

Item 5: Pharmacy Pressures Survey: Planning for 2026

1. Pressures Survey data is used to monitor the health of the sector, to feed into Department and NHS officials, and to inform and keep MP and other briefings up to date. But where results change little year by year, we should consider new tactics and media angles in 2026.
- 5.1 The subcommittee considered a number of options for sharing the results in 2026, including working with a broadcast partner, sharing real-life human impact case studies, using social media and regional and consumer press or having an action day or week, and linking activities to Parliamentary work through events or debates. The subcommittee also noted that linking our data where possible to current news topics and or wider news agendas keeps stories relevant and interesting.

ACTION 4: Continue planning for the 2026 Pressures Survey and results publication.



Item 6: Communications and Public Affairs Updates

- 6.1 The information in the report paper was noted.
- 6.2 Since the papers were written there has been a significant amount of public affairs work to quantify the impact of the Budget on community pharmacies (working with the funding team who provided analysis of this) and to brief MPs on that. Two policy reports have also been published and shared with key stakeholders, and work with the primary care bodies has resulted in a joint statement, with planning underway for the January drop-in event.
- 6.3 Communications work has supported all of these events and publications, and there has been national media coverage related to the flu vaccination season.
- 6.4 On events, planning for next year's sector regional events is underway, and media training sessions have been scheduled in for both pharmacy owners and LPCs next year. Community Pharmacy England will also be partnering with Pharmacist Support to provide digital events to help pharmacy owners, team members and LPCs with wellbeing, managing stress, and building resilience.

Item 7: Any other business

- 7.1 The subcommittee considered the news that Community Pharmacy England and Luther Pendragon have been shortlisted for a public affairs award. Committee members were concerned about the optics and timing of this, and about whether it could undermine future negotiations: some pharmacy owners had shared negative feedback on this.
- 7.2 Janet Morrison and Zoe Long explained that from a Government perspective, public affairs awards are a well-known feature of the Westminster world. Being recognised by an independent body for an effective campaign is usually seen as an opportunity to raise the profile of organisation and the issues they are championing, and gives a clear message that an organisation is capable of galvanising support and delivering impactful campaigns, meaning they need to be taken seriously by policy-makers.

ACTION 5: Explanatory lines to be shared with Committee and on the website.



7.2 Zoe Long raised the Community Pharmacy and General Practice Conference which is being arranged by trade media publisher Cogora (which publishes Pulse and The Pharmacist). The aim of the Conference is to boost collaboration across the two sectors which is an aim we very much support. The NPA are headline supporter for the Conference but Cogora would also like to offer Community Pharmacy England a lower key partnership offer – giving us a platform, and the opportunity to promote collaboration and shape the agenda for the conference, in return for some promotion of it. Committee members shared feedback, concluding that it is crucial for us to be part of this conference.

ACTION 6: Take forward partnership offer with the Community Pharmacy and General Practice Conference.