

Communications and Public Affairs Subcommittee Minutes

Date: 5th February 2026

Start time: 3.30pm

Location: Hosier Lane, London

Members present: Tricia Kennerley (Chair), Lindsey Fairbrother, Sian Retallick, Ian Strachan

In attendance: Dame Jenny Harries, Sami Hanna, Fin McCaul, Anil Sharma, Rebecca Butterworth, James Davies, Melinda Mabbutt, Janet Morrison, Zoe Long, David Onuoha, Rosie Taylor, Adeola Wilson.

Apologies: Prakash Patel

Conflicts of interest: None declared.

Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 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 2025/26

1.1 The subcommittee reviewed the final update on progress on the 2025/26 workplan, noting the volume of work that had been done over the year.

Item 2: Subcommittee Workplan 2026/27: draft

2.1 The subcommittee noted the draft CPA workplan which is in line with the full Committee workplan as approved by the Committee earlier in the day. This was approved. Progress updates will be provided throughout the year at CPA meetings.

Item 3: Outputs from Committee Meeting and Sector Polling

3.1 The full Committee had considered the results of the polling – these showed very distressing levels of abuse and even violence against pharmacy teams.

3.2 The subcommittee reflected further on this and discussed what could be done at a national and local level, with ideas including briefing NHS England and DHSC, seeking

national media coverage, contacting the police, setting up a channel to capture incidents, and pressing for community pharmacy to be included on priority lists for protection and support. There was agreement on the need for clear advice to LPCs.

- 3.3 There was also discussion about what Community Pharmacy England's role and responsibility is in this area – particularly in terms of who the relevant authorities are who can act on these issues, for example, ICBs and other local and national bodies.

ACTION 1: Survey results to be worked into a press release, with the findings and next steps discussed with LPCs at CLOT.

- 3.4 The subcommittee reflected on the discussions held over the past two days, much of which had been focused on the upcoming negotiations and the pressures on the sector. The ongoing medicines supply problems and price concessions are also serious concerns. The Subcommittee noted ongoing press reports about pharmacies going into administration and court judgments being issued and agreed that this sort of information should continue to be shared with Government, and more widely when appropriate.

- 3.5 The subcommittee considered the priorities for the post-meeting communications to the sector, including the need to:

1. **Explain the value of the work we do**, setting this in the context of the levy increase.
2. **Set out our objectives and priorities for the year**, including sharing our workplans.
3. **Reflect the pressures on the sector** using evidence and case studies to back this up and highlighting the impact and risks for patients.
4. **Explain medicines supply and price concession pressures clearly** and highlight the impact this has on businesses.

- 3.6 The subcommittee also looked ahead to the future need to announce funding arrangements for the sector in 2026/27 (once these have been negotiated). Reflections on last year's announcement were that the animations and rapid online explainer events had worked well and should be repeated.



ACTION 2: Issue post-meeting communications and prepare for future funding announcements.

Item 4: Communications Planning

- 4.1 The subcommittee considered the possible functionality options for an app. The most popular suggested features were notifications about regular polling, meetings, webinars and other important activities, with an emphasis on interactivity; a facility for reporting pricing issues; and a chat or messaging function.
- 4.2 The subcommittee agreed that running a survey to understand what people in the sector would want from an app would be a sensible next step.
- 4.3 The subcommittee agreed that the other suggested actions were appropriate. It was felt that a resource centre on the website would be very useful in helping to showcase the resources, events and learning available. The subcommittee felt that topics such as sector pressures, campaigning for pharmacy, price concessions and medicines supply updates should feature more prominently on the homepage and be easier for visitors to find.
- 4.4 Zoe Long noted the general views of the Committee on the need to ensure that our communications tone and channels are reflecting the pressures in the sector. The branding and current homepage have done a great job in landing Community Pharmacy England as a credible voice, but they could now do more to reflect the crisis in pharmacies. The subcommittee also discussed the importance of reviewing our news outputs and homepage appearance, so that key messages do not get lost in the volume of news stories published on our site, and people can more easily see the information that is most relevant to them on the website and homepage. We can explore how best to make changes within our current branding framework and website with IE Brand and Make.
- 4.5 The Subcommittee also discussed the importance of communications that focus on what people have done to make a difference in their pharmacies, and the need to continue sharing practical tools that can support people across the sector.
- 4.6 The Pressures Survey 2026 was also discussed. Zoe Long provided an update on plans for communicating the results differently this year, including the possibility of a Pressures

Action Week type campaign, with a range of activities for the sector, MPs and policymakers, and raising awareness of the survey data in national media through the use of human impact case studies.

ACTION 3: Undertake a sector survey on our communications to test preferences, including on app functionality.

ACTION 4: Review website and branding to improve functionality of the homepage and website (including development of a resources centre) and ensure that we are more effectively reflecting the crisis in the community pharmacy sector.

Item 5: Public Affairs Tender (joint paper with Audit & Risk Subcommittee)

5.1 The subcommittee noted the progress made on the public affairs agency tender process. There were no additions to the suggested selection criteria, which have also been reviewed by the Audit & Risk Subcommittee.

ACTION 5: Tender process to continue, with input from the subcommittee Chair and Vice-Chair.

Item 6: Communications and Public Affairs Updates

6.1 The report paper and work done by the team was noted by the subcommittee.

ACTION 6: Continue to share information with LPCs about the MPs who we engage with, to help with their local engagement.

Item 7: Any other business

7.1 The timing of CPA meetings was mentioned in the full Committee meeting, with a suggestion that CPA will hold a quick review meeting at the end of Committee Meetings to consider immediate messaging and communications, with the main CPA meetings to be held at another time. This followed good engagement with the December online meeting.

7.2 There was an enquiry about whether the APPG had released plans for their events taking place this year. Zoe Long responded that she would provide an update in due course, as details have not yet been confirmed. Since the new Chair of the APPG took over in November, plans have been finalised and an inquiry report published.