

Briefing 022/26: Summary of September 2026 Committee Meeting

Community Pharmacy England met on 16th and 17th September 2026. Committee discussions were largely focused on the political outlook following the change in Prime Minister, feedback from regional events during the summer and the contractual reforms programme. The two days also covered preparations for 2027/28 negotiations, considering our approach and ambitions.

CPE's policy and advisory subcommittees met in and around the main meeting to consider a range of topics, including the implementation of independent prescribing into the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF), reform topics such as improvements to retained margin, LPC elections and event planning.

Overview of the Committee Meeting

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

Contractual Reforms

As part of the CPCF 2026/27 settlement, Community Pharmacy England, the Government and NHS England agreed a joint programme of reforms to support the future sustainability of the sector. The programme will include both short and longer-term changes and will need careful consideration of the future direction of the sector and the current economic outlook.

The Committee considered the progress to date, areas of preliminary discussion and the key asks. The reforms work is at an early stage and conversations with DHSC are covering a range of areas including dispensing and medicines optimisation; clinical services; access and market sustainability; margin and medicines supply; and regulatory and efficiency matters.

Discussions to date have focused primarily on a range of shorter-term options across these areas, which will help inform the CPCF 2027/28 negotiations. Longer-term, more fundamental reforms are also being framed, recognising that changes of this scale will require longer and more detailed evidence, evaluation and consideration. The Committee spent time identifying and discussing areas of priority and risk.



A Reforms Steering Group has been established from Committee Members which will have an overview of all workstreams, prioritise key issues, and consider major strategic issues. The Steering Group will inform definition of options for Committee discussion and decision, helping guide on tactical considerations.

The other sector bodies have been briefed, and we will continue to engage with them, LPCs and the whole sector at key points in the process.

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

“The contractual reforms programme secured as part of the 2026/27 settlement is about more than improving the current system; we must create the conditions for community pharmacy to thrive in the years ahead.

While we are exploring shorter-term opportunities to support the sector and inform the next CPCF negotiations, we are also considering the longer-term work needed to deliver more fundamental changes. This is complex work that will take time, but we will continue to engage with pharmacy owners, LPCs, and sector bodies as this work develops, ensuring their views inform discussions with Government and NHS England.”

Preparing for Negotiations: 2027/28 Asks

The Committee considered negotiating approach and ambitions, looking at what Community Pharmacy England should press for and how to prioritise those asks. Sector bodies have also once again been invited to input into this work by submitting their negotiating priorities.

The implications of the new Burnham administration, priorities and outlook

Chris Hopson (former NHS England Chief Strategy Officer) and Ed McRandal (Executive Director) of Lexington public affairs agency presented to the Committee, providing strategic advice on what the change of Prime Minister and Ministerial reshuffle in recent months means for the sector and our engagement with Government. The Committee discussed the repercussions and worked through options for the best approach going forwards.

You can read more about this in a blog from our CEO Janet Morrison: [Navigating the shift: What the new Burnham Government means for community pharmacy.](#)

Community Pharmacy England has also produced resources to help with autumn MP visits and we are planning to run an MP engagement webinar, supported by Lexington, in early November. These are



intended to support pharmacy owners and LPCs in contacting their local MPs and building relationships with them.

Constitution changes: to reflect composition changes

An update on our constitution changes was provided and the Committee voted in favour of changes to Community Pharmacy England's Constitution and Rules, to reflect the agreement reached with sector bodies and the Committee's subsequent decision, about committee composition, in June.

Full details are available in our news story: [Constitution changes pave way for 2027 pharmacy elections.](#)

Committee effectiveness survey

Following a review of Committee effectiveness, Members considered feedback from an internal survey, looking at overall impressions, opportunity for improvements, and learning and development requests. In accordance with good governance, Members had the opportunity to discuss without the Executive Team present.

This survey follows the [Transforming Pharmacy Representation](#) (TAPR) implementation review, which will be published shortly.

Engaging with Pharmacy Owners

The Committee considered a report that summarised feedback gathered from pharmacy owners at the nine regional events across England and via polling over the summer.

Pharmacy owners generally welcomed the CPCF deal as providing short-term stability and being better than expected but felt it falls short of addressing long-term funding pressures. This echoed the assessment provided by Community Pharmacy England, including some of our concerns, particularly around independent prescribing. While reforms such as protected learning time were welcomed, further clarity is required regarding their implementation and associated funding levels.

More widely, pharmacy owners highlighted the ongoing pressures. A key concern was sustainability of medicines supply, particularly funding mechanisms where pharmacies are required to dispense medicines at a loss. Pharmacy owners welcomed the strategic direction of incorporating independent prescribing into the CPCF, but the fees raised serious concerns about viability, workforce capacity, governance and service delivery.



Pharmacy owners attending the regional events considered 15 possible topics for action and reforms, thinking about which were more important. The exercise provided insight into current priorities for those in attendance. Attendees also thought about some key questions for the future of the sector, such as where the balance between NHS and private income should be and market entry.

Pressures Survey findings

The results of the Pharmacy Pressures Survey were [published over the summer](#), evidencing the continuing financial strain on community pharmacies and the growing impact on patient care. The findings [attracted national media attention](#), with coverage in iNews and the Daily Mail, helping to raise awareness of the challenges facing community pharmacy.

Pharmacy owners and LPCs can help amplify these messages by sharing our social media posts, using the campaign resources, and writing to your local MP to highlight the pressures facing your pharmacy and patients. More support, including a range of resources, is available in our [Pharmacy Pressures Survey resources hub](#).

Thank you again to everyone who took the time to complete our 2026 Pharmacy Pressures Survey.

Subcommittee Meetings

Discussions from Governance Subcommittees

Audit and Risk Subcommittee (A&RS)

A&RS met before the main Committee meeting. The subcommittee recommended approval of the financial statements for 2025/26, having interviewed the auditors. These were subsequently approved by the full Committee. In addition to the usual scrutiny of management accounts, levy collections, KPIs and expenses, Members discussed the Committee Members' expenses policy and made recommendations around the refinancing of CPE's office in Hosier Lane. These were subsequently approved by the full Committee.

Governance and People (G&P) Subcommittee

G&P met in early September to review the draft changes to the CPE constitution and rules (which were agreed by the Committee at this meeting), as well as reviewing the subcommittee's two-year rolling agenda and recommending current subcommittee memberships remain until the end of the end of the current four-year Committee term on 31st March 2027.



Updates from Advisory and Policy Subcommittees

Service Development Subcommittee (SDS)

SDS spent a significant part of its meeting discussing the work undertaken by DHSC and NHS England since the last subcommittee meeting on the rollout of prescribing within the CPCF. Several documents were reviewed, some of which are expected to be published shortly, including guidance for prescribers on prescription management (i.e. issuing new prescriptions to replace those presented at the pharmacy for dispensing, but where there was e.g. a clinical error or a supply chain problem) and the Drug Tariff wording related to the inclusion of prescribing within the CPCF.

The subcommittee were very disappointed by the interim IT arrangements that DHSC and NHS England have put in place for the initial rollout of prescribing, with concerns being expressed about potential patient safety implications and the inefficiency of needing to use multiple IT systems and a manual payment claim. You can read further information on the interim IT arrangements and our commentary on them on our [Prescribing within the CPCF webpage](#).

The subcommittee then discussed progress made on implementing the priority community pharmacy service enhancements which we had developed following the publication of the Vision for Community Pharmacy three years ago. Many of the service enhancement have now been implemented, such as the addition of emergency contraception to the Pharmacy Contraception Service and the commissioning of a wider range of vaccination services from community pharmacies. When prescribing is added to the CPCF over the next few weeks, several other enhancements will be implemented.

The subcommittee also reviewed progress on vaccination services commissioning, including the MenB vaccination service. An update on work to support LPCs and pharmacy owners with local commissioning of services was also provided to the subcommittee.

Funding and Contract (FunCon) Subcommittee

The subcommittee considered a series of potential improvements to medicines reimbursement and retained margin, to help inform continuing discussions with DHSC. Members reviewed how the current arrangements affect pharmacy owners in practice, including the timing and distribution of margin, cashflow pressures created by system lag, and options for making the system more responsive.

Members also discussed the impact that differences in prescription duration and pack use can have on funding distribution. Wider reimbursement reform themes, including resilience of medicines supply and the operation of existing payment mechanisms were also considered.



The subcommittee reviewed routine funding and reimbursement updates, and considered principles for a consistent and proportionate approach to exceptional service claims. The office will continue development and testing of potential options in collaboration with DHSC and revert back to the subcommittee in due course.

Legislation and Regulatory Subcommittee (LRS)

The subcommittee considered the Pharmacy Access Scheme and the need for this to be updated from the current 2022 scheme, indicating that it was a longstanding matter of concern that this additional support for some pharmacy owners was funded from the CPCF sum and not separate Government funding. Also considered were the General Pharmaceutical Council's proposals for replacing a superintendent pharmacist, noting the need for a pragmatic approach that recognised finding such a key person can take time.

Members also discussed remote provision (i.e. to patients not at the pharmacy) of Advanced services when the pharmacist providing the service is offsite (i.e. also not at the pharmacy). This is permitted for the New Medicine Service (NMS), provided that the pharmacist is employed by the pharmacy owner, and has access to the records of the patient that are held by or are accessible by the pharmacy, which are required to provide the service safely and effectively. It was agreed that the current rules should remain, and more evidence, including its impact on the network, was needed before any other services are considered for similar such exemption.

Members also noted the [new amendment NHS pharmaceutical regulations recently laid before Parliament](#), including the key provisions on:

- Independent prescribing conditions: arrangements for [prescribing within NHS pharmacy services](#) (which should be considered with other relevant information on provision of the Pharmacy First and the Pharmacy Contraception Service);
- Closures for learning and development;
- Explicit patient consent for nomination and other changes to the NHS Personal Demographics Service (PDS);
- Updates to local dispute resolution processes and minor market entry changes; and
- Enhanced DBS certificate requirement (from 1st January 2027).



LPC and Contractor Support (LCS) Subcommittee

The subcommittee reviewed the adoption of the revised LPC model constitution and the LPC elections process, along with the support being provided to the LPC network on both topics. Most LPC are in the process of adopting the revisions to the model constitution as part of their Annual General Meetings of pharmacy owners.

LCS discussed the current plans for the Conference of LPC Representatives 2026. The Working Group is progressing well, a section of the agenda will be dedicated to LPC-led topics, and a conference app has been introduced to this year's event to explore interactivity.

Following a three-year period of providing Regional Events in a similar roadshow format, LCS considered a review with options to continue, or explore alternative formats, for future engagement with pharmacy owners and LPC representatives. Options will be explored further as part of the 2027 planning process.

Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) Subcommittee

The subcommittee met shortly after the full Committee Meeting. They considered the approach to public affairs work under the new Prime Minister, noting the work already done to [engage with newly appointed Ministers](#). Ongoing Parliamentary work includes influencing at the political party conferences and working closely with LPCs on a number of MP pharmacy visits for front-bench MPs – thanks to all LPCs and pharmacy owners who are supporting these visits.

The subcommittee also discussed progress and next steps for the ongoing review of communications with the sector. The [2025/26 Annual Report](#) has now been published, and we are continuing to make improvements to newsletters and the website, and to explore possible new communications channels.

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