

Transforming the Future of NHS Community Pharmacy Representation

Background

PSNC (the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee) represents the owners of the 11,400 NHS community (high-street) pharmacies in England, known as pharmacy contractors. PSNC's role includes negotiating funding and pharmacy services with HM Government and the NHS; championing pharmacies including in Parliament; and providing information and guidance for pharmacy owners and teams. PSNC is recognised by the Secretary of State for Health as the representative of all community pharmacy contractors in England. They work very closely with the 70 committees who represent pharmacies locally – the Local Pharmaceutical Committees (LPCs).

PSNC and the LPCs are funded through a statutory levy taken from pharmacy contractors, and divided approximately 70% / 30% between LPCs and PSNC respectively, with the PSNC funding channelled through the LPCs. Circa £11m is collected annually through LPCs (with 30% going to PSNC) to fund NHS community pharmacy representation.

Review & opportunities for improvement

An independent review into the national (PSNC) and local (LPCs) community pharmacy representation took place in 2020 and highlighted opportunities for improvement. The review was triggered by LPC's feeling under increasing pressure to respond to growing demands from contractors, along with a desire from across the sector to deliver better value for contractors both at a local and national level. This work was led by David Wright, Professor of Pharmacy Practice from the School of Pharmacy at the University of East Anglia and examined roles and structures underpinning PSNC and the LPCs. Both comprise of elected or nominated pharmacy contractor representatives, with executive functions working to them.

The review's purpose was to find ways to optimise PSNC and LPC contractor representation and support to ensure that the national network structure is working as efficiently for contractors as it can and is fit for the future.

The findings and recommendations of the review were published in June 2020; 33 recommendations were put forward. Overall there are very high levels of support across the sector for the issues the Wright review identified, but far less support for many of the recommended solutions. **The review highlighted significant opportunities for improvement and these now need to be turned into practical actions.**

There is a great deal of value at stake – the annual community pharmacy funding package (negotiated by PSNC) is worth £2.6bn to community pharmacies in England. There is significant attention on transforming the representation landscape with a growing sense of urgency. It is widely accepted that there is insufficient funding to enable PSNC to secure better negotiation outcomes. Currently there is a five year NHS settlement running until 2023/4.

Delivering change

A Review Steering Group (RSG) has been established with a role to look at the report recommendations from the perspectives of feasibility of delivery, cost, benefits to pharmacy

contractors and timelines. The RSG will provide oversight of any commissioned work and is expected to engage with and put proposals to the sector.

The RSG is being supported by PSNC with the allocation of a budget and provision of in-kind human-resources to provide the group with a convenor, secretariat and basic infrastructure needs.

Next steps

This is a major transformation programme involving the whole of the community pharmacy sector, with multiple and complex stakeholders. There are numerous challenges ahead to gain sector wide support for change.

Previous attempts to streamline and restructure NHS community pharmacy representation and introduce clearer governance did not progress. Key to success this time will be wide ownership of the solutions across all elements of the sector. Stakeholder engagement and management will be essential to success.

We are looking to engage an experienced programme manager or consultant on an immediate basis to work with the RSG to support steering forward this change programme. They will be contracted through PSNC and managed by the Director of Contractor Support and LPC to:

1. Further refine and describe the project scope, building on the outputs from the RSG assessment of recommendations, issues and defining principles
2. Build a critical path, timetable and programme plan for agreement with RSG
3. Refine the programme structure, including resource requirements and the detailed funding requirements from PSNC, LPCs, or (although unlikely) any other sources
4. Facilitation, engagement and alignment of stakeholders on steps 1-3 above, working with RSG communications consultant (who has already been appointed)
5. Develop a delivery plan and outline milestones to track progress
6. Describe how programme oversight, accountability and assurance will be provided

A range of specialist expertise will be needed to take forward the work on the programme. This will need to be scoped and defined as part of developing the programme plan

Further information

- Independent Review of Community Pharmacy Contractor Representation and Support – [Report Overview](#)
- Review Steering Group [Proposal](#) and [Terms of Reference](#)
- Review Steering Group website <https://pharmacy-review.org/>

For an informal discussion please contact

James Wood
Director of Contractor & LPC Support
Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee
14 Hosier Lane | London | EC1A 9LQ
Direct 0203 1220 835
Mobile 07796 957988
Email james.wood@psnc.org.uk

February 2021