

Review Steering Group: Frequently Asked Questions May 2021

This document answers some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Review Steering Group (RSG) and its work to date. It has been produced following an engagement event with the RSG's Contractor Forum and it should be read alongside the At A Glance Guide to the RSG's work which is available from: <https://pharmacy-review.org/>

About the RSG and its work

Are RSG Members representing themselves or wider contractors?

The RSG is working together on behalf of all community pharmacy contractors to ensure that their local and national representative bodies are as effective as they can be and are fit for the future. RSG members may each have been appointed by a particular part of the sector but their work on the RSG is for the benefit of the whole sector. Ultimately it will be for all contractors to vote on any eventual proposals put forward by the RSG.

The RSG has now set out some principles for the transformation process and its approach to stakeholder engagement. The RSG has thought about this carefully and is committed to working to ensure the best value for all contractors and to following a structured, transparent process with continuous engagement. Any proposals brought forward by the RSG will be for contractors to vote on, giving the people who matter most the ultimate say over any changes: this is a critical step, and ensures the RSG is accountable to all contractors.

What does the RSG think about David Wright's recommendations?

We are looking at the recommendations from the perspective of community pharmacy representation as a whole. We will be taking a collective view on the report as we work through the issues that it raises, the recommendations made and any other possible solutions. We will also be interested to hear the views of wider contractors, via our Contractor Forum, and other key stakeholders as we go through the process.

The RSG has no intention of repeating work done on the Wright Review. But the 33 recommendations from the review need to be carefully scrutinised to ensure that any changes being proposed to the sector are feasible, will be cost-effective, and will lead to the benefits in representation and support that we are seeking. The role of the RSG is to steer this assessment work, also being mindful of other ideas and proposals that the sector may like to put forward. We will set out our high-level plan and timeline for that work in June.

Will the RSG be increasing its communications during the next phases of the work?

The RSG's high-level plan includes a requirement for ongoing communications and engagement with key stakeholders. Delivering this will necessarily require more regular communications from the RSG. The key channel for communications remains the RSG website, but we also want to work with trade associations and LPCs to seek their input and expertise into our work, and to increase the number of ways that contractors can find out about our work and hear our messages. The RSG will use a number of channels to engage with key stakeholders on an ongoing basis including its website and emails, dedicated briefings and updates at existing meetings, and online events/webinars.

How can LPCs or contractors feed in ideas and will the RSG look at those?

LPCs and contractors (particularly via the Contractor Forum) are critical stakeholders for the RSG. The RSG held events this month and these were an opportunity for the RSG to hear from both groups, and the RSG will consider whether to hold similar events at key points during the next phase of work. The RSG is keen to listen to both groups and to hear their ideas for the future – as well as through any formal RSG events and engagement plans, these can be fed in at any time to review@pharmacy-review.org or by contacting individual RSG Members.

How will the RSG go about designing the future network of local representative & support organisations and considering funding?

The new model design will be a complex phase of the RSG's work. The group is also conscious of how sensitive this work will be and of the need to do it collaboratively and transparently. In June we will share the high-level timeline developed by The Berkeley Partnership which sets out a number of steps that will need to happen both before and during the model development phase, including analysis of data from PSNC and the LPCs (the data requirements are yet to be determined) and exploration of potential legislative change to underpin the changes.

The RSG will undoubtedly need to commission work from experts to support this work. The Group will also look at models of best practice for centrally and locally provided support services. And the Group wants to carry out a significant engagement exercise to inform this work – seeking early views from stakeholders on draft 'strawman' future models, and then later views once more detailed options have been developed.

The Contractor Vote

What will contractors be voting on?

The role of the RSG is to commission and oversee work to develop proposals for a new model of contractor representation and support. This new model may include changes to both the national (PSNC) and local (LPCs) representative structures, as necessary, mindful of relevant legislation, regulations and constitutional requirements. Only contractors can

decide whether to support change from their current model to whatever model is ultimately proposed by the RSG, and this is what contractors will be voting on.

What is the process for contractors to vote?

The principles and mechanisms for decision-making are things that The Berkeley Partnership has been looking at very carefully. The RSG will share its principles for the programme and its approach to decision-making in June which gives some insight into how decisions will be made and governed. All key stakeholders will help to shape proposals, and all contractors will have the chance to vote on any final proposals from the RSG. Over the summer the RSG will oversee work to develop the contractor voting process: we do not yet know exactly how any voting system will apply, but it is clear that this process must be fair and transparent.

Will it be a simple yes/no vote or will there be a number of proposals?

The ambition of the RSG is to work with stakeholders to develop proposals that have wide support and consensus across the sector so that contractors can choose to approve or reject them. However, it is too early to say for certain whether that will be achieved or whether contractors will need to consider a range of options, as there is still much work to be done to develop proposals for a new model of contractor support and representation. Whatever the voting system and options, contractors will need clear, concise information about any decisions to be made, well in advance, and the RSG will ensure that this happens.

Will LPCs and PSNC be forced to adopt the changes agreed by the RSG and contractors?

The RSG hopes that through ongoing key stakeholder input throughout the process, including input from LPCs and PSNC, it will come up with proposals that have wide support and consensus across the community pharmacy sector. Ahead of any contractor vote, the RSG Terms of Reference require that proposals be put to LPCs and PSNC for consideration and concurrence. Ultimately it must be for the contractors who both LPCs and PSNC serve to decide what they want for their future representation and support. LPCs and PSNC will then need to consider this mandate from their contractors and feed into the implementation planning phase of this change programme.

Timescales

How realistic is it to suggest there will be a contractor vote at the end of the year?

The RSG is aiming to hold a contractor vote at the end of the year on proposals for a future model of national and local representative and support organisations. We know this is ambitious given the scale of work to be done by that time: significant resources and expertise will be needed, and this is why the RSG is now seeking project management support as well as exploring options for ongoing support from The Berkeley Partnership. With the right resources in place, and support and enthusiasm from key stakeholders with a

clear focus on reaching consensus, we believe the timeline set out is achievable, but will continue to assess feasibility, but will continue to assess feasibility.

Funding of the RSG

How is the Review programme being financed?

In 2020 PSNC provided the RSG with £90,000 of funding (from savings made on travel expenses and meetings during the pandemic that year) to get work underway. LPCs have been asked to plan to match this funding in September 2021: this amounts to around £1,300 for each LPC. The size and scope of this project should not be underestimated: there are many months of work ahead to deliver effective contractor support and representation. It is therefore vital that the RSG has sufficient funding for the programme of work that will be commissioned. Information on RSG finances, including an accounts summary for 2020-21, is available at <https://pharmacy-review.org/>

Who is monitoring and managing RSG spending?

The RSG is collectively ensuring that work is commissioned within budget and that accounts are shared with LPCs and contractors. The accounts are open to scrutiny from the sector. The Terms of Reference for the RSG provide for it to have control over the budget. The RSG will ensure that PSNC, LPCs and contractors are kept informed on a regular basis about spending on this project. The RSG is working as efficiently as possible and as a further check on expense claims the Resource Development and Finance subcommittee of PSNC may review expenses claims by individual RSG Members.

Working with LPCs

Will local commissioning structures/localities be considered by the RSG?

The RSG is aware that many factors will influence the effectiveness of contractor representation and support in the future, including any changes on the NHS side, and in particular the growing importance of the ICS structure. The RSG will consider the impact these factors may have when exploring the feasibility, cost, and benefits to contractors of any proposals. This will form part of the work on developing proposals for the sector that will begin in the coming months.

Why is the review looking only at the LPCs and not PSNC?

It is wrong to suggest that the programme is no longer looking at PSNC. The Wright review remains the starting point for the RSG's work, and the RSG remains committed to recommending changes across the whole infrastructure of community pharmacy representation and support including PSNC and LPCs. In its programme design principles the RSG has stressed that all current organisations are in scope for change, and explicitly committed to making necessary changes across the whole infrastructure of PSNC and LPCs.

The Berkeley Partnership and External Expertise

What role has The Berkeley Partnership played to date?

The RSG appointed The Berkeley Partnership mid-March to steer the change programme. They have:

- Further refined the project scope, building on the outputs from the RSG assessment of recommendations, issues and defining principles
- Built a critical path, timetable and programme plan for agreement with RSG
- Started to refine the programme structure, including resource requirements
- Supported the facilitation, engagement and alignment of stakeholders
- Developed a delivery plan and outlined milestones to track progress
- Looked at how programme oversight, accountability and assurance will be provided

In addition, a range of specialist expertise will be needed to take forward the work on the programme.

Are they leaving at this point? What might their role be going forwards?

Berkeley support will change at the end of this month (their original role was to help define and set up the programme). We are in discussion about how they can continue to support at certain critical parts of the year and compliment the work of an RSG project manager.

When will a new Project Manager be appointed?

Recruitment for a full-time project manager is underway by PSNC, to join the secretariat supporting the RSG. A copy of the role profile can be found on the RSG websites.

PSNC and LPC Elections

Will there still be PSNC and LPC elections in April 2022?

The term of office for PSNC and most LPC members expires on 31st March 2022 and for the LPC to continue, elections must be held to form a new committee to take effect from 1st April 2022. The process of preparing for elections normally spans several months and would begin in October 2021, potentially when RSG has indicated there will be a contractor vote on the future of community pharmacy representation and support.

PSNC recently agreed to postpone PSNC elections, so that the current committee continues until 31st March 2023 and recommends to LPCs that they also delay elections using the same timing. Like PSNC, LPCs may wish to delay the elections because of the timeline indicated by the Review Steering Group (RSG) about the programme to deliver the future vision of contractor representation and support.

Further advice and guidance have been provided to LPCs and this is available on the PSNC website.