

## **Review Steering Group: Frequently Asked Questions July 2021**

This document answers questions raised at the 14<sup>th</sup> June pharmacy sector webinar and at the LPC Conference on 23<sup>rd</sup> June. It includes some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Review Steering Group (RSG) and its work to date.

### **About the RSG and its work**

#### **How will the RSG maintain equity of influence from across the sector? Is there equal representation to all trade bodies?**

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. Their work is guided by a set of [personal specification and values](#), that all members have signed-up to.

The RSG is and will continue to be meeting with all trade bodies, pharmacy related organisations to ensure that the voice of the sector is heard and everyone has their say on the future national and local representation and support of contractors.

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 have been consulted upon and ultimately 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.

#### **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 are also working 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, vlogs 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. If you would like to join the online Contractor Forum which will act as a source of expertise and a sounding board for ideas and proposals for the RSG, please email [review@pharmacy-review.org](mailto:review@pharmacy-review.org). The RSG events in May were an opportunity for the RSG to hear from both groups and use this feedback to shape the detail of the programme

plans presented at the pharmacy sector event on 14<sup>th</sup> June. The RSG will 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 via email to [review@pharmacy-review.org](mailto: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 shared the [high-level timeline](#) developed by the RSG programme team which set 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. 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.

### **How will the review group engage with stakeholders such as RPS, employee organisations, employee unions and patient groups?**

The RSG's communications plan includes engaging with the whole range of stakeholder groups in the pharmacy sector, including employee organisations such as The PDA and profession wide via the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. It also includes speaking to, for example, the NHS who formally recognise contractor representative bodies. Some of the engagement with organisations outside the pharmacy sector will take place after the contractor vote so that the RSG can communicate what has been proposed and voted on. We will engage with employee organisations, unions and relevant patient group organisations ahead of any changes that are implemented.

### **How do we define that LPCs & PSNC are 'working effectively', what is value for money? Did Wright not identify that the key issue was the value of the CPCF? If the contractor levy was higher, but the new national body delivered a significantly better CPCF would that be value for money?**

The RSG is working on a model to improve contractor representation and support including the levy, which will be put to contractors to vote on. This proposed model is being produced in accordance with the RSG's [design principles](#), which were designed with stakeholder groups to help the RSG guide its thoughts to help decision-making as it examines new ways of working for local and national representative bodies. An overriding principle is to deliver best value to contractors, which was at the heart of the Wright Review.

**In the original spirit of the Wright Review - will there be such a thing as a model LPC? Will each contractor across England pay the same levy - no matter where they are based?**

There have been no decisions taken on the proposed model to improve contractor representation and support which contractors will vote on. One of the design principles guiding the RSG's work on putting together a proposed model for contractors to vote upon is that 'Contractors across the network should pay an **equitable levy** for the same level of representation and support.' To view the other design principles that are helping the RSG guide its decisions please visit the [RSG website](#).

**What has happened to Wright's key recommendation 13: replace the current PSNC with a CPE Council (CPEC) constituted by Chairs from CPLs each representing an agreed minimum number of contractors?**

The RSG is in the process of examining options to determine the approach of national and local representation. There have been no decisions taken on this yet. There will be focus groups with LPCs and the Contractor Forum in July to obtain views on early thinking around representation and then proposals will be developed further with the aim of sharing RSG's proposal on options with the pharmacy sector at the end of September/beginning of October. Feedback from the pharmacy sector will be taken on board from this engagement event and throughout the design process before any options are finalised and details of the final model is shared before the final vote.

**With regards to future changes around who holds the pharmacy contract and Global Sum, we need to ensure that our negotiating body and representation is ready and up and running in a very short space of time. Will this review lead to any potential issues where we could foresee that we might not be in the best position in line with the NHS timescale of change, and is there anything that we can do to mitigate this? How does better representation in the sector actually lead to improved outcomes for contractors?**

The RSG is working as quickly as it can to produce a proposed model of improved contractor representation and support for the sector to vote on. The implementation of this proposed model is dependent on the outcome of the contractor vote. The RSG would like to bring about changes so that contractors' national representative body is in the best position to negotiate funding with the Department of Health and NHS, and an improved structure is in place to enable LPCs to be in the best position to negotiate local service provision. It is expected this will be in place in time for negotiations on what happens after the current five-year contractual framework.

**Are you able to update us on the recruitment of a project manager as this seems like a key appointment?**

PSNC is seeking to recruit an experienced Project Manager, to join the PSNC secretariat supporting the RSG for an immediate start. The successful candidate will drive the programme of work identified, prepare options for contractor consideration, and implement solutions to the issues identified in the Wright Review. This is a key appointment and a second round of recruitment is underway. In the meantime, the RSG has continued to

commission programme support from management consultants to drive the programme forward.

## **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 shared its principles for the programme and its approach to decision-making at the pharmacy sector webinar on 14<sup>th</sup> June, which gave 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 there be a 'triple lock' vote to ensure all sectors voting in favour?**

This 'triple lock' refers to a set of three requirements that must be met to approve a new structure. It has been proposed by the National Pharmacy Association (NPA), who argue that reforms to LPCs and the PSNC must be agreed by a majority of independents, a majority of multiples and win the support of contractors as a whole. The RSG is currently examining all the options for a contractor voting process and parameters, which include timing, format, eligibility and acceptability. These will be discussed with the LPC focus groups and Contractor Forum focus groups, as well as PSNC and the trade body events that we are planning to hold in July. Feedback from these focus groups and from discussions with stakeholders will help to shape the final voting process. The RSG will communicate the voting process and criteria to the sector well in advance of the vote.

### **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.

### **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 [here](#).

#### **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?**

The Berkeley Partnership's original role was to help define and set up the programme. There are now several key activities ahead that need to be progressed beyond the high level plan to begin the process of transformation. The critical pieces of work are ongoing

stakeholder engagement, operating model options design, using the Wright Review issues and principles, and the design of the contractor voting process.

The RSG has considered how this might be best supported, beyond using the limited support from the PSNC secretariat. Given the criticality and complexity of this work and the desire by most in the sector to maintain the pace and momentum established, the RSG is continuing to engage programme management support. This will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure value for money and will complement the work of the RSG project manager.

## **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 has been provided to LPCs and this is available on the PSNC website.