

PHARMACY REPRESENTATION

REVIEW STEERING GROUP



August 2021

The Pharmacy Review Steering Group (RSG) is working to bring about change to LPCs and national negotiator PSNC so that community pharmacy contractors get the best service possible from their local and national representatives.

You can read all about the Review Steering Group in our **At a Glance Guide** which was produced in May.

This update summarises some of the thinking that we have been talking to focus groups about: we will update it following their feedback.



Recap

As a quick recap for anyone not familiar with the Group, the RSG was set up following the PSNC-instigated independent review of the community pharmacy contractor representation and support offered by PSNC and the LPCs. The review led to 33 recommendations and the RSG has been tasked with assessing these ideas then coming up with options for future representation models to address the issues identified.

More information and lots of FAQs are available on our website: pharmacy-review.org

Why does this matter to pharmacy contractors?

A. Pharmacy owners receive a wide range of important services and support from LPCs and PSNC. Given their critical roles, and the monies that contractors pay for them, it is important that local and national organisations are both working as effectively as possible: this will mean the best possible support for contractors, as well as the best outcomes on funding and services.

Update: What is the RSG working on now?

Since adopting its terms of reference and launching a website at the start of 2021, the RSG has been focused on initial engagement with the sector – it has held a number of events for both contractors and LPCs, set up regular channels of communication with the contractor trade associations AIM, CCA and NPA, as well as a Contractor Forum (email review@pharmacy-review.org to join), and had initial discussions with other stakeholders such as the professional body. **The Berkeley Partnership** have been appointed as the RSG's programme management advisors and they have worked up a set of principles to govern the RSG's work, a workplan and a high-level timeline: these have been consulted on.



Having set the overarching principles and agreed on a timeline of activity with the sector, the RSG is now developing options for models of future contractor representation and support, focussing initially on two topics:

1. New models of contractor representation and support. This means looking at the functions followed by the structure of LPCs and PSNC, exploring the issues with those (as identified in the independent review), and finding ways to improve. This is complex work, and the RSG is first examining what the functions of the national and local representative bodies should be: it is only once we are clear on what jobs need to be done (the 'what'), that we can work out what the best structures will be to deliver that work (the 'how').

2. The Contractor Vote. Any changes that are proposed by the RSG will eventually need to be accepted (or rejected) by community pharmacy contractors. The approval of the sector will be sought via a vote to be held in late 2021 or early 2022, and we are looking at how the contractor voting system will work, and how contractors will receive the information they need to vote.

New Representation Models: What will national and local representatives do?

As part of the independent review, contractors and LPCs completed surveys answering questions on what they think of LPCs and PSNC, and on what those organisations should do better in the future. The RSG has reflected on this.

National: What should the national representative body be doing?

We want to see a strengthened national representative body for community pharmacy contractors. As well as negotiating and managing the national contractual arrangements (including provision of centralised guidance) and representing pharmacies at a national level, we believe a strong national body could:

Set a direction for community pharmacy – a fully-supported and multi-skilled executive, to include a new policy unit, could carry out more research, analysis and advocacy for the sector based on a clear vision for community pharmacy.

Improve its negotiation outcomes – a highly skilled and trained Negotiating Team, with access to external experts and policy units, could deliver improved and less reactive negotiation outcomes based on a well-developed negotiating strategy.

Have a stronger voice – a strengthened communications function could focus on two-way dialogue and improve pharmacy's representation in the media.

Provide better support to local organisations – a well-resourced national organisation can better support local pharmacy representatives, and give them improved access to resources and expertise.

The national body will need to do all of this while also reporting on its performance and KPIs to a governance board.

Local: What should the local representative bodies be doing?

We want to see strong local representative bodies who can represent community pharmacies locally, develop and influence local relationships, negotiate local contracts and services with local healthcare systems, and provide guidance and support to contractors.

Key functions for local representative bodies will be to:

- Support the local implementation of nationally specified services, through established relationships with other local NHS bodies.
- Represent the community pharmacy voice locally within relevant healthcare and local authority systems
- Inform the national negotiation through provision of local insight to national body



FAQ

What will the benefits for contractors be?

A. If we can find a way to implement these changes then they should lead to representative organisations at both a national and local level operating more effectively. It should also mean that we reduce duplication between local and national organisations and that everyone's focus is directed onto high-value activities that best support contractors. The changes should also lead to more standardisation meaning consistency of representation and support services for contractors across the country.

How will the new structures be financed?

A. An overriding principle of the RSG is to deliver best value to contractors: this was at the heart of the Wright Review. One of the design principles guiding the RSG's work as it puts 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.' Another principle states that the ongoing annual costs to contractors across the entire network should not increase as a result of this programme. These principles will continue to be taken into account as we work collaboratively over the summer to design the new models for local and national representation and support.

What about the centralised support that the Wright Review talked about?

A. We believe a centralised support function should provide a range of functions for both national and local representative organisations, including on Human Resources; communications; core training (such as on governance); finance and budgeting; service development and evaluations; and provider company functions.

- Provide information and briefings to contractors on matters relating to the local commissioning of NHS services and the local NHS environment
- Provide support and facilitate integration at a PCN level
- Engage with local media to support pharmacy's local voice
- Respond to local consultations by NHS ICS and HWBs on behalf of local contractors

The Contractor Vote

RSG Members, who are drawn from all parts of the community pharmacy sector, are working up a proposal for a contractor vote. The timing of this will avoid the busy Christmas period, in line with feedback from contractors and LPCs. The RSG will consult on this but is still in discussion on a number of principles including:

- The number of times contractors will be asked to vote
- Whether contractors will be given a binary question to answer
- All contractor votes will be equally weighted ie one vote per contractor

How can I have my say, and what happens next?

As well as having meetings with the three contractor trade bodies to talk through its initial ideas, the RSG has held a series of online focus groups with contractors and LPCs to hear their views on what LPCs and PSNC should do (the 'what'). This update summarises some of the thinking we presented to the focus groups. Over the summer, the RSG will reflect on feedback from those sessions and any further feedback emailed to us, and then start to refine new models for representation and support – setting out the 'how'. Further engagement with all groups will follow in September.

In the meantime you can get involved as follows:

Visit our website: The RSG website has a wealth of information about the work of the RSG including [minutes of our meetings](#), [FAQs](#) and [updates](#). See pharmacy-review.org for more.

Join our Contractor Forum: The RSG has set up a forum of contractors with whom it will more regularly engage. We want to hear your views on the future of contractor support and get feedback on our draft proposals. Email review@pharmacy-review.org to join.

Share your feedback: This is an open consultative process, so please continue to send feedback to review@pharmacy-review.org