

## **The working plan for the contractor vote: FAQs**

### **October 2021**

#### **Why are contractors not being given a choice of options for the future to choose from?**

- Contractors and the sector will be actively engaged throughout the process of developing the preferred option and there will be ample opportunity to discuss various scenarios.
- Providing a single proposal for contractors to vote on enables the sector to come together with a single voice and agree the way forward. This will provide a clear mandate for change.

#### **How does this compare with other PSNC and LPC voting approaches?**

- It aligns with the current practice used by the PSNC and LPC in seeking a 2/3 majority of the vote.
- It enhances the requirements with the addition of a high target turnout of 2/3 to recognise the need for high degree of engagement across the sector.

#### **Why have we not set a higher turnout target?**

- The RSG is aiming for as high a turnout rate as possible.
- However, it is important to acknowledge that not all contractors will choose to participate in determining what and how their representation and support functions operate.
- The target 66% turnout can only be achieved with good turnout of contractors both large and small.
- By way of comparison, General Elections usually have a turnout out of around two thirds; in 2019 turnout was reported as being 67.3%.
- We want to ensure that the non-participation of a minority does not prevent the majority from determining the way forward.

#### **What will happen leading up to the vote?**

- All contractors will be asked to help shape the proposal for the future, through engagement events starting this month (October).
- It's crucial that we hear from the pharmacy sector as a whole, so we can best represent their views.
- There will be lots of chances to feed into the process as the proposals are developed.
- Please sign up to join our Contractor Forum if you have not already done so.

#### **How do I vote?**

- The vote will be held in early 2022.
- Contractors will be given time to engage with and reflect on the proposals.

- The formal proposal will be communicated to contractors at least a month in advance of the vote.
- Contractors will have a three-week period in which to vote online.
- Full instructions on how to vote will be given in due course.

#### How can I give feedback on the voting process?

- Please take part in our focus groups this month.
- Visit [www.pharmacy-review.org](http://www.pharmacy-review.org) to be alerted to future engagement events.
- You can also email [review@pharmacy-review.org](mailto:review@pharmacy-review.org)

#### Why are we not seeking a majority across the different groups within the sector?

- This would reinforce division across the sector and does not align with the desire to move towards operating cohesively and with one voice.
- Our ambition is to develop proposals collaboratively with the sector so that they have consensus across a wide spectrum of contractors.
- We do not believe that dividing the sector up for a vote would be a good starting point from which to launch change, the very purpose of which is to unify and strengthen the sector's voice.
- The turnout and pass rate targets are sufficiently high to ensure that both CCA and non CCA groups can influence the outcome should they have a different view to the others.
- We want to encourage **all** contractors to give feedback and vote as it's important that the voice of contractors is heard and properly represented.

#### With a pass rate of 66%, only a small number of non CCA contractors are required to support the proposal if the CCA all vote in favour. How is this fair?

- There are an infinite number of scenarios that could result from this vote, so it's important to focus on achieving the highest level of support.
- On balance the RSG felt that including an additional non-CCA pass rate target introduced the risk of non-participation in the vote driving the outcome as opposed to encouraging each contractor to play an active role in the decision making.
- Even with a 90% turnout from CCA members, to achieve a 66% turnout rate will involve over 50% of non CCA contractors voting, which is a very high bar to set.
- In comparison to a first-past-the-post election, where one vote can decide the result – this proposal, for the right reasons, is a considerable distance from that.
- After much consideration, we believe our proposal hits the right balance, and we have received no negative feedback on it during our focus groups, including from the independent contractors present.

*Supplementary details* – the above scenario would require support from 23% of the voting non CCA members to pass. While on the surface that appears low, it's important to focus on

the fact that it would also mean 66% of all voting contractors support the proposal – a significant majority. Similar challenges exist if non CCA members are supportive and the CCA members are not.

### **Why are we not basing the result on the % of eligible votes as opposed to votes cast?**

- If a majority of all eligible votes was required, it increases the risk of non-participation becoming a more powerful influence than voting.
- The RSG want to focus on supporting and encouraging contractors to make a well informed, conscious choice for their future rather than to maintain the status quo by default/apathy in the process.

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### **What happens if the vote does not lead to the acceptance of the proposal?**

- The RSG will need to rapidly re-engage with the sector to determine what changes would be acceptable.
- In any event, it is understood from the discussions with the sector that the significance of the changes to the NHS structures, as well as the continuing pressures of the pandemic, ensures that “doing nothing” is not an option for the pharmacy sector.
- In meetings with contractor groups, there has been general consensus that pharmacy needs a step change at both local and national levels, in the quality of representation with the NHS as much as the services provided to contractors.

This question is out of date and has been updated to reflect the views of the RSG at the end of its work. Updated FAQs are available <https://pharmacy-review.org/your-questions-answered/>

### **Have you sought/will you seek feedback from anyone other than contractors (i.e. Trade bodies, NHS)?**

- We have engaged with stakeholders from across the sector to help inform our decision making process and there will be further opportunities over the autumn as plans continue to develop.
- However only individual contractors will be eligible to vote on the final proposals.

### **What if I am unhappy with the process/isn't this already a done deal?**

- It's crucial that we hear from the pharmacy sector as a whole, so we can best represent their views.
- Although we recognise that it is unlikely that we will come up with a model/process that receives unanimous agreement, the aim of our engagement programme is to harness as many views as possible in order to create a proposal that has broad support.
- It is therefore crucial that we hear from as many contractors as possible, as we shape these proposals.

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- Only contractors will be able to vote on the final proposal, and we encourage as high a turnout as possible in order that everyone has the opportunity to have their say.