



t 0844 381 4180
e info@psnc.org.uk
w psnc.org.uk

The Local Pharmaceutical Committee

A guide for prospective LPC members

What is an LPC?

The LPC is a committee of pharmacy contractors in the area covered by the LPC that has been approved (often referred to as “recognised”) by NHS England under the NHS Act 2006 as the body representing the owners of the community pharmacies in the LPC area. The area of an LPC is defined by one or more local authority boundaries which are specified in the LPC Constitution (see below).

There is only one LPC in each area along with similar committees for doctors, dentists and opticians.

Typically an LPC would have between 11- 13 members with a membership mix depending on the proportionality of independents and multiples across the area.

More detailed authority comes from the LPC Constitution – this is a document specific to each LPC that is approved by the contractors represented by the LPC and accepted by NHS England as part of the LPC recognition process. LPCs can only act within the powers given by the constitution.

Prospective LPC members should read the constitution for the LPC they wish to join and the constitution should be on the LPC website. A list of all LPCs can be found at:

<http://lpc-online.org.uk>

What is the role of LPCs?

Regulations under the NHS Act require NHS England to consult LPCs on matters such as market entry and local enhanced services so giving certain powers to LPCs.

The Act also provides that NHS England may deduct money (the LPC levy) from the remuneration of contractors represented by the LPC to defray the committees’ administrative expenses.

The LPC constitution sets out the duties of the LPC that include representing their contractors in local and national consultations relevant to pharmacy contractors; making representations to NHS England, Health and WellBeing Boards and PSNC; providing support, resources and guidance to pharmacy contractors; and ensuring committee business is carried out effectively and efficiently.

LPCs may also provide support to contractors on contract compliance and monitoring, market entry and support local enhanced services and where appropriate other locally commissioned services; promote local pharmacy through local public relations and lobbying to create an environment for community pharmacy to flourish.

LPCs are therefore committees with statutory powers and are highly influential. They are a local leadership body representing, promoting and supporting the community pharmacies that they serve.

What is the role of the LPC member?

Essentially to make sure that the role of the LPC is discharged. In practice this means that the LPC member should make sure the LPC:

- has a business plan
- has a budget linked to the business plan
- manages the money contractors provide to fund the LPC and its work
- manages those employed by or who provide services to the LPC and ensures that staff have the necessary skills and expertise
- members have the skills and expertise to carry out their work with training provided if necessary
- adheres to the principles of good governance
- has effective communications
- acts equitably and in the best interests of all the contractors it serves

Members should keep up to date, prepare for LPC meetings and contribute to discussions.

Importantly when making decisions at an LPC meeting you are there to decide the best course of action to benefit contractors as a whole not yourself or a particular group of contractors.

Are there any particular qualities that make a good LPC member?

A good knowledge of community pharmacy business and wider NHS issues, a team player, good interpersonal and communication skills, ability to act strategically and enthusiasm.

How much time is involved?

Typically LPCs meet one day every couple of months (but check about your LPC). Most LPCs now meet during the day. Sometimes members are called on to volunteer to attend other meetings for example with the Area Teams or Local Authority.

There may be an AGM or other evening contractor meeting that LPC members are asked to attend.

See below regarding expenses.

What sorts of things are discussed at LPC meetings?

Have a look on your LPC website – their agendas and minutes should be there. Take it up with the LPC if not.

Typically it would be reviewing progress with local commissioning, receiving guests from Area Teams and other NHS and Local Authority personnel, considering new local services opportunities, dealing with contract applications, discussing the progress of work carried out by the LPC Chief Officer, reviewing the budget and management accounts, reviewing the business plan, dealing with local issues affecting contractors or matters referred to the LPC by contractors.

The LPC meeting is usually an informative and enjoyable day with the chance to discuss a range of things with other local contractors.

Do I get paid?

There is not a salary but expenses are paid and allowances provided so that you are not out of pocket. Each LPC has an expenses policy which you can ask to see for more details.

What are the benefits of being an LPC member?

Although there is no financial benefit, as a member of a local leadership body you will be at the heart of local community pharmacy planning and in a position to make policies and decisions to benefit contractors. There will also be opportunities to make representations at a national level on behalf of your contractors.

As an LPC member you will also have access to PSNC LPC Training - in a recent survey of LPCs PSNC training was the most used PSNC LPC support service with many thousands of LPC delegates attending training events over the past few years. Training such as negotiation, presentation, influencing, networking, selling and media skills; NHS regulations and market entry, procurement and commissioning, strategic planning and finance to name but a few.

The Company Chemist Association (CCA) and Association of Independent Multiple Pharmacies (AIMp) also provide additional support to their members on LPCs to help enhance their contributions to the work of the LPC.

What other material would it be useful to read?

In addition to the LPC constitution and committee minutes and agendas mentioned above ask the committee for its self-evaluation document which will give you a good idea of the state of health of the LPC; look on the LPC website to see the LPC strategy and annual report. Look on the PSNC website for the Local Pharmacy Organisation Support Services Prospectus which is a central hub for support to LPCs from PSNC.

If you feel that you could make a valuable contribution and ensure that contractors in the area have the best possible representation and support from their LPC why not get involved. Elections are every four years and invitations for nominations will be sent by the LPC to eligible independent contractors and multiples will arrange to nominate representatives to fill available places. Between elections if a vacancy arises due to a resignation or other reason then the LPC will let eligible candidates know and will be able to express an interest.

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