

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND  
MILTON KEYNES  
LOCAL PHARMACEUTICAL  
COMMITTEE



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – AUGUST 2021

**A**s I wrote my report last year I had just been voted into the role of Chair, and now 12 months later I can reflect on yet another challenging year, with community pharmacy feeling the continued pressures due to the Covid Pandemic. As a sector we have continued to deliver an outstanding service to our patients despite coping with difficulties such as staff shortages, wearing PPE and social distancing. On top of this, some of our contractors have set up vaccination centres which in itself has been hugely challenging and also very rewarding.

Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes LPC have continued to support our contractors, and have met virtually, gradually becoming more proficient and even having guests at our meetings. This has reduced costs, and we may look at how we work as a committee going forward perhaps holding some of our meetings virtually and some face to face.

Again, I could not have fulfilled the role of chair if it was not for the support I have had from the committee. We are fortunate to have members with a great experience in community pharmacy including those with specialist skills in the pharmacy contract and pharmacy services.

In the spring, BLMK was chosen to be part of a national pilot to explore how Covid Vaccinations could be delivered in a community pharmacy setting. Some of our contractors took part in this successful pilot and as a result, pharmacies nationally have been invited into Phase 3 of the vaccination programme, with the autumn booster service due to start in the next few weeks.

Despite the restrictions in place during the year we have still managed to support our contractors well, and our Chief Officer Anne-Marie King has worked tirelessly to ensure we are communicating effectively with our pharmacists, and also our stakeholders such as those in Public Health, CCGs, Secondary Care and NHSE. She has made great progress with GPCPCS and we hope to have this service up and running properly soon. Our strategy subgroup committee ensure that our work streams are current and relevant for the contractors. During the autumn we are looking forward to offering our support with the PQS scheme, GPCPCS and DMS.

Our treasurer, Amrit Minhas, keeps a tight control on our budget, and by reducing the contractors' levy we have reduced surplus funds in the account to a sensible level. As a committee we regularly look at this and will continue to ensure that any cost savings due to virtual meetings are passed onto the contractor.

I would like to thank all the committee members including Anne-Marie King and Amrit Minhas for their support over the year, and I would like to welcome Aimee Mulhern into the role as Vice Chair. Aimee has a wealth of experience with services and has already contributed to discussions with our Public Health teams. I look forward to another successful year and hope that we can return to some kind of normality in the near future.

Best wishes, Carolynne Freeman, Chairperson



## CHIEF OFFICER'S OVERVIEW

In June 2020, David Ashton, from Abington Pharmacy, was responding to the Chronicle & Echo's Big Thank You campaign and said pharmacies had remained open throughout lockdown while some GP surgeries and dentists had had to close.

"Pharmacies have continued to provide a consistent service, which the nation depends on to protect their wellbeing. Significant additional work has been undertaken to ensure the vulnerable get what they need on time, and at considerable risk to those providing that care," he said.

David went on to thank his valued team and customers for their unfaltering support in the most challenging of times.

David accurately summed up the services available to patients from all of you when almost no other healthcare providers could open their doors. You have adapted to new ways of working. You have maintained vital supplies of medication to patients when they were initially experiencing shortages of many other vital commodities. You have been there to advise, face-to-face, to inform, to reassure. In the early days, without adequate supplies of PPE, you put yourselves at risk.

Your commitment has been outstanding.

So, what has the LPC been doing?

On behalf of contractors your LPC continues to develop trusted representational work. I have been in post for six years and my job is about building relationships, about compromise while standing firm when the time is right and about diplomacy . Developmental work can take months and years to bring tangible outcomes in terms of new commissioned services.

The Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS), new national services such as the Discharge Medicines Service (DMS) and the GP Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (GPCPCS) were introduced during this financial year. Their rollouts are immensely challenging. “Soft Rollout” was used to denote a deficiency in adequate commissioning development in terms of digital interoperability or pre-secured support for true integration. The LPC role then, as always, was to fill the gaps in support and drive progress whatever the challenges via strong and effective local representation thus turning directionless services into something tangible and suitable for local development.

Local relationships, nurtured and provided by the LPC, will become even more important as community pharmacy commissioning moves to “Direct Commissioning” under our Integrated Care Systems (ICS).

Thankfully challenges bring opportunities for better local integration and development of our services. I am encouraged that community pharmacy is already included in the developing “Integrating Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Programme” (IPMO) strategy. Locally at least, there is scope for some optimism.

Recognising GP-CPCS was in the IPMO strategy, we swiftly formed formal GP-CPCS implementation groups with the CCGs investing senior Medicines Optimisation Pharmacist and technician time on an ongoing basis. Granted, rollout is slow, but it is embedded and resourced, meaning we will “get there”.

Last but not least when highlighting relationships, I must thank my contacts who made arrangements for the early and rapid vaccination of pharmacy staff. I could have achieved little without their willingness.

Unfortunately, activity levels for many local services was badly hit by the pandemic. The LPC liaised with commissioners to seek to protect vital income, at least for a while at the peak of the pandemic, and we are now working with those same commissioners to help pharmacies return to delivery of services.

The Pharmacy Representation Steering Group (RSG) is working on representational changes required to enable our sector to negotiate more effectively and secure the national investment and truly constructive and sustainable development our pharmacies absolutely deserve. This will likely mean some changes ahead for LPCs.

Rest assured, community pharmacy is represented on so many work streams- Workforce, Education, Digital including Local Health and Care Records, CPCS, DMS not to mention the many Covid-related groups. Inclusion in strategy and planning is fundamental to securing material support from the system and I must thank committee member Matt Armstrong for all his support in this particular area.

The work of the LPC is a constant challenge, balancing local and national representation to ensure service integration and innovation along with practical and ongoing contractor support for existing and as well as new services.

None of my work would be possible without the commitment, dedication and knowledge of the entire Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes committee members . Special mention must be given to our Chair, Carolynne Freeman who patiently listens and advises when I am a little exasperated.

Anne-Marie King, Chief Officer



# TREASURER'S REPORT

**T**he Northamptonshire & Milton Keynes LPC accounts (please see document attached) were independently examined and drawn up by ES IT & Accounts Services LTD. Once again, we are grateful for their support.

The current assets for Northamptonshire & Milton Keynes LPC as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 were £135,177 and closing March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021 were £136,349.

We received £133,000 from our contractors. This was achieved through the statutory levy, which was a fixed income of £7,000 pcm across our 177 contractors.

This year the committee decided to reduce the levy to £7,000 pcm from £14,000. This was based on the budget that it set out at the beginning of the year, taking into account the excess of income over expenditure from the previous year. We were able to benefit our contractors by way of a reduced levy, and as shown by the accounts, this excess of income over expenditure has now been reduced to a suitable level. The committee is now keen to continue to operate at this level, by re-initiating a zero-based budget for the upcoming year. In this way, it can continue to operate effectively, whilst providing maximum benefit to its contractors.

The committee continues to hold the Pharmacy Integration Fund sum, some of which has been utilised this year for Primary Care Network activities, such as the piloting and initiation of GP CPCS in the local area. In addition, it continues to hold the ring-fenced HLP funds from both Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes councils. The committee is actively exploring options to recruit for a services engagement officer, in the hope that it can benefit contractors in areas such as PQS and other service delivery.

Amrit Minhas, Treasurer

Northamptonshire & Milton Keynes LPC