

Somerset LPC AGM – CEO's Report

Michael Lennox

Dear Chair, Committee and Contractor colleagues, my thanks for your time and for the opportunity to share some key reflections on 2020-21

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the commitment and hard work of our Chair, Vice-Chair, Executive and full committee, you are all true ambassadors for community pharmacy and committed servants to our contractors in Somerset.

Of course, an AGM is mainly about reflecting backwards, and 2020-21 has seemed like the never-ending year at times, with the ongoing hanging operational, financial, and psychological impacts of covid affecting community pharmacy contractors as businesses and as teams.

We also remain trapped in our current national contract construct, delivering lower returns and limited financial sustainability for us all.

The LPC acknowledges the extent of the current financial pressures on our contractors and would like to thank our contractor teams for their resilience in such circumstances. We hope that the recent opportunity to reclaim your legitimate and extensive operational impact costs will provide equitable recompense.

It is important to believe that better days will come, certainly the recent year could not have been much more challenging.

Your LPC has been working relentlessly on your collective behalf to enable better days, faster.

We were firmly committed to doing whatever it took to ensure that you got the support you needed to survive the early-stage ravages of Covid.

We pushed hard to get our pharmacy healthcare teams equitable access to testing, PPE supply, and vaccinations in those early uncertain times, so that together our front of mind duty of care to our people was delivered upon. Building on our strong and trusting relationships in Somerset as a health system, we generally got the support you needed, and we continue to relentlessly lobby as required on all our behalf.

Let's not forget that justifiable sense of pride you rightly deserve to have!

You stood up, kept open, delivered care, and saved lives.

I would like to share some thoughts on actual service delivery highlights.

Last year was a challenging Flu season with Covid-care-compliance issues sharpening operational delivery difficulties. Yet our numbers of vaccinated patients grew to make it our biggest year ever.

This coming season we are working with the system stakeholders such as LMC and PCNs to further develop an integrated approach that will pave the way for collaborative work, driving more activity our way, more revenue and better system health outcomes.

You have been made aware of the changes in the structures of the NHS both nationally and within Somerset. The landing of the NHSE Long Term Plan and the new GP contract has triggered a wave of change, and we are now seeing a new Health Bill land soon to be passed.

Your LPC has been actively involved in all aspects of the strategic development of this in Somerset. We are included, influencing it, and beginning to have positive impact on the new models of care and ways of working being created for this next phase of health delivery.

This LPC delivered aspect of support is critical to paving a way ahead.

The constant supportive work delivered by your LPC during Covid cemented our bonds to the system, and we invest in those bonds to ensure that we can make the best case for community pharmacy to be supported and developed locally.

Our Somerset CCG Commissioners are outlining their thoughts about the way ahead for the pharmacy network in our county.

After a period of Covid-caused hiatus, the national pharmacy contract has been further renegotiated to advance how we are rewarded with this new more integrated NHS model.

I predicted 3 years ago that we would see an increasing emphasis on being rewarded for service rather than standalone supply.

It is our contract destiny, and with GPCPCS, DMS now landed, and a raft of new services in the 21-22 agreement being revealed right now, we must be service orientated and service ready.

We will support you in any way that we can, we believe that only the LPC can truly represent and influence on your behalf locally.

We must enable CPCS via the Practices and PCNs and do the same for DMS from the 2 hospital trusts. That requires us to have stakeholder impact, and we have, and we are driving these service implementations on your behalf.

Our destiny lies with integrated Primary Care, collaborating with our General Practice colleagues and in the maturation of the Primary Care Networks (PCN).

Your LPC continued to work during 20-21 to ensure each PCN had a live and active Community Pharmacy Lead PCN, and we look forward to strengthening this important aspect of local integration with the much-appreciated support of our CCG and NHSE colleagues locally.

We had been granted support funding for PCN engagement, digital and service development in 20-21 and again as we move through 21-22. This support will enable you as

contractors to part-take more effectively in new services for new monies, making it clear we are in the business of clinical care.

I will close with another expression of thanks. Myself and my LPC officer colleagues are eternally grateful for the professionalism and the positive LPC participation you exhibit in your day-to-day practice.

Everything we worked on together last year generated a class leading outcome, our collective PQS completion was fast and first-class. Landing the new Naloxone Take-Home pack service and getting palliative-care ready in case of the worst impacts of Covid, showed our system how agile, expert and committed we are to care.

Anything reasonable that is asked of us, we get right together.

At the risk of being provocatively optimistic, I believe we are well-placed to move from what is a difficult present to a soon to be more rewarding future position.

Michael Lennox

CEO Community Pharmacy Somerset