



October 2013

PSNC Briefing 099/13: Guide to the Regional Representative Elections

Thirteen of PSNC's members are independent chemists elected by regions in England. The term of office is four years, with the current members holding office until 31 March 2014. PSNC is making initial preparations for the election, which will begin shortly after 1 January 2014.

This briefing details the election process and actions required for those seeking to stand for election.

Role of the PSNC Regional Representative

The thirteen regional representatives, who are all independent contractors in their region, together with the other members of PSNC, represent the interests of NHS pharmacy contractors and ensure that PSNC undertakes the functions set out in its [Constitution](#). In addition they provide an important conduit between the independent contractors in their region and PSNC. They will be a member or officer of at least one LPC in the region when they are nominated, and so have some experience of local NHS issues. They can be consulted about matters relevant to PSNC's role, and take issues raised at LPC meetings for discussion at the PSNC meetings. They may be invited to attend LPC meetings across their regions. PSNC meeting agendas and minutes are published on the website, and the regional representatives can be asked to provide more detail or explanation where needed or to direct requests to the relevant member of staff.

There are six main meetings a year which take place over two days. Occasionally there are extra plenary meetings of PSNC, and members may be nominated to attend extra sub-committees, working groups or panels – and may be asked to represent PSNC at external meetings. PSNC Regional Representatives will therefore need to be confident that they can make arrangements for their pharmacy to run by another pharmacist on a number of occasions during the year.

As an independent contractor (or a director and substantial shareholder of a body corporate that is a contractor) the decisions made at PSNC as a regional representative could have a significant effect on their own businesses. For example, agreeing the terms of the contractual framework or funding for pharmacy will have a direct impact on their own business. So the pharmacy contractors who elect them can be assured that they will do their best for the whole network of pharmacies – and that they will enjoy the same benefits or suffer the same hardships caused by their decisions as other independent contractors.

PSNC has a rigorous governance policy which ensures that members of PSNC adhere to the highest standards, comparable to the Nolan Principles.

Eligibility

“Independent Chemist” means a chemist that operates retail pharmacy businesses from no more than 9 premises in England from which NHS pharmaceutical services are provided, and is not a member of the Association of Independent Multiple pharmacies.

The independent chemist must either be a pharmacist conducting a pharmacy business in his own name (a sole trader), or must be a pharmacist partner or body corporate (e.g. a limited company). If the independent chemist is a limited company, a pharmacist director of the limited company can be nominated for election.

The pharmacist must also have a substantial interest in the business – for example, a sole proprietor, or in the case of a company the pharmacist must have a substantial shareholding (either personally or through their immediate family) in the pharmacy business.

Finally, the pharmacist must be a member or officer of an LPC in the region at the time of nomination.

See Rule 11.4 of the PSNC [Rules](#), available at www.psn.org.uk

Timescale

The election process starts on 1 January 2014.

During the run up to the elections, PSNC has been preparing a database of all pharmacy contractors, and of LPC members and officers. LPC Chief Officers will be sent a list of members and officers identified by PSNC during November / December, so that these can be verified. Potential candidates should ensure that their LPC Chief Officer has their correct email contact details in time for this verification exercise.

Thursday 2 January 2014

On or about 2 January 2014, an email inviting expressions of interest will be sent to all identified officers and members of LPCs. The PSNC Rules do not specify a time period for responses, but two weeks will be allowed for the return of expressions of interest.

Expressions of interest are not binding – a person who has completed an expression of interest is under no obligation to complete a nomination, and candidates completing nominations are not required to have submitted an expression of interest. However, it is hoped that expressions of interest will be submitted by all those who intend to seek nomination, because the persons who have expressed an interest are identified to all LPCs in the region, so that co-ordination can take place, with ‘preferred’ candidates ultimately putting themselves forward if there is widespread support.

Monday 20 January 2014

A notice is issued by email seeking formal nominations.

Persons seeking nomination must return a completed nomination form not later than midday on the 15th day after the invitation to nominate is issued. Any candidates expecting to be away during this time can complete and submit a nomination earlier, and a nomination form will be available on the PSNC website from 2 January 2014.

Tuesday 4 February 2014

Written nominations must be received by midday on 4 February 2014. As the nominations must be signed by the six nominating pharmacies, hard copies are required.

PSNC's office is in a shared office block, and as no guarantee can be given that post received in the building will be transferred up to PSNC office by midday, candidates should avoid leaving the nominations until the last minute. The Constitution is explicit – and late or incomplete nominations cannot be accepted.

There have been cases where nominations have been invalid, and potential candidates are invited to discuss their nomination forms with Steve Lutener, the returning officer, before submitting them.

On receipt, the directorships / shareholdings are checked with Companies House – and this includes checking with Companies House whether the six nominators signing the form are directors or an officer of a company conducting a pharmacy business in the region.

If there is more than one valid nomination received a ballot will be held. Otherwise, a single valid nomination in a region will be held to have been elected and notice given by Friday 7 February.

Friday 7 February 2014

In areas where a ballot is to be held, candidates will be invited to submit a policy statement of up to 500 words, to be circulated with the ballot papers. The policy statement must be returned within 14 days of the request. These are preferably to be sent by email in Microsoft Word or as a text file, so that the returning officer can collate these for printing. They must be received by 5pm on Friday 21 February 2014.

Week commencing 24 February 2014

Depending on the number of ballots to be held, the ballot forms will be issued by post to all independent contractors in the region during the week commencing 24 February. The completed ballot forms must be returned in hard copy format only (emails and faxes are not permitted). The date of return is not less than 14 days after the expected date of delivery of the ballot papers, and so the closing date will depend on the actual date of despatch, so will be expected to be sometime towards the end of the week ending Friday 14 March 2014.

Next Steps

As can be seen, the timescale is challenging due to the requirement in the Constitution to begin after 1 January and to be completed by 31 March 2014. There is very little flexibility in timing, and deadlines will have to be rigorously applied. Potential candidates should therefore consider the different steps involved, particularly in getting nominations signed and returned.

As the election process depends on the returning officer being able to communicate with members and officers of LPCs it is essential that the contact details held by PSNC are accurate. Therefore, LPC members must ensure that Chief Officers of LPCs have the correct contact details, and are able to respond to the request made by PSNC in November / December. Chief Officers should inform PSNC of any changes to contact details by using the form at psnc.org.uk/lpcchanges.

If you have queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information please contact [Steve Lutener, Head of Regulation](#).