

PSNC Minutes

For the meeting held on 8th January 2014

At the Crowne Plaza Hotel, St Nicholas Place, Liverpool, L3 1QW

Present: Stephen Banks, Dhiren Bhatt, David Broome, Christine Burbage, Mark Burdon, Peter Cattee, Liz Colling, Mark Collins, David Evans, John Evans, Samantha Fisher, Mark Griffiths, Clive Jolliffe, Tricia Kennerley, Clare Kerr, Andrew Lane, Margaret MacRury, Rajesh Morjaria, Garry Myers, Bharat Patel, Indrajit Patel, Kirit Patel, Rajesh Patel, Umesh Patel, Janice Perkins, Adrian Price, Gary Warner

In the Chair: Sir Peter Dixon

In Attendance: Alastair Buxton, Shiné Daley, Mike King, Barbara Parsons, Komal Patel, Sue Sharpe, Zoe Smeaton

Congratulations were given to Sue Sharpe on her OBE which is a richly deserved honour. John Evans, Umesh Patel and Gary Warner were also elected as fellows of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society which is a considerable distinction and the Committee gave their congratulations to all of them.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Ian Cubbin, Elisabeth Hopkins, Chris Perrington and Alan Robinson.

2. Resignation from the Committee

It was noted that Andy Murdock has resigned as a member of the Committee. The Chairman welcomed Clive Jolliffe and Clare Kerr who were nominated as CCA representatives to PSNC.

3. Minutes of the last meeting of PSNC

The minutes of the PSNC meeting held on Tuesday and Wednesday 12th and 13th November 2013 were approved.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

None.

5. Update on the Health and Care Landscape

Alastair Buxton highlighted a number of key points in his report in the agenda.

6. Chairman's Report

It had been suggested that the Committee review the frequency of its meetings. It is important that the Committee ensures it uses Committee members' time efficiently and we need to consider whether to manage some meetings virtually or in a single day rather than with an overnight stay. Any suggestions from the Committee are welcome and the CEO and Chairman will work with the Review and Audit Panel and the policy team to review options.

It was reported that until Simon Stevens, the newly appointed Chief Executive of NHS England, arrives, nothing major will happen. Mr Stevens might also be inhibited by the general election; politicians have already begun positioning themselves ready for the election.

Chief Executive's Report

Funding

There is still no update on a funding settlement. This appears to be administrative rather than policy-driven.

The practical implication of the delay has been to determine 2013-14 funding by default: the January Drug Tariff was the last effective opportunity to make substantial adjustments to funding delivery for the year.

When will we get a response? We do not underestimate the work that is to be done, even after an acceptable headline sum, to determine the detail.

Margins Survey

When the NAO investigated the allegations that pharmacies were retaining excess margin in 2009, its recommendations included that PSNC should not undertake the MS. DH is exploring alternatives for the future. If an external provider takes over the work, PSNC will insist on undertaking comprehensive audit of their work.

EPS

We are seeking to explore whether there are short and/or long term additional costs associated with EPS dispensing. This could affect funding delivery.

IG Toolkit

Barbara Parsons is trying to secure an exemption after discussions with DH.

Call to Action

We are providing a range of support to seek to ensure that we get the best possible response to the community pharmacy Call to Action at both local and national level; the group discussion session will assist in this.

Pharmacy Voice meeting

Kirit Patel arranged a meeting between the PSNC and PV chairs and Sue Sharpe on 10 December. The day before we received a response to the proposal for an MOU we had sent following the May 2013 PSNC meeting, with a description of PV's role. PV now has both a budget and a plan, so is able to move forward as an organisation. In a constructive meeting we recognised that the overlap of interest was immense.

Kirit Patel commented that prior to the meeting there had been a build-up of friction between the two organisations; this was unnecessary. What is coming out of it is better for pharmacy as a whole, as both organisations have to work in the interests of contractors.

Rebalancing medicines legislation

Keith Ridge is involving PSNC in discussions on rebalancing medicines legislation, seeking to ensure that removal of some kinds of criminal liability for dispensing errors in early 2014 will be accompanied by increased error reporting and learning. A meeting was held in December and another is planned. Among other issues, the CEO raised the need to identify what burden rests with the contractor and what with the individual pharmacist. As the CCA has a group that meets to explore errors and risks, which has identified some problems common to different companies, this led to the CEO raising the consideration that some of the best learning outcomes may be achieved without reporting to an external authority.

PPRS

The full PPRS was published in early December. It does not provide any further detail on issues of most relevance to contractors, such as how changes in supply terms will be measured, and what will be done to prevent other rebate schemes such as those adopted by branded generic manufacturers.

Novo Nordisk + recall issues – MHRA/DH

We received several complaints following the level 2 recall issued for NovoMix 30, and raised these with DH and MHRA. Harpreet Chana and Sue Sharpe had a constructive meeting with them and agreed to use this example to ensure greater clarity in recalls in future, and also to ensure that problems around payment for re-issued prescriptions etc were resolved.

Judicial Review threat regarding non-payment for lost bundle

An August pharmacy bundle was lost in transit in early September. Historically when bundles have been lost in transit or in the BSA the contractor is paid on the number of declared items x average item value for the pharmacy; with PCT consent for bundles lost in transit as a formality. The Area Team cavilled about authorising payment, to the great anger and distress of the contractor. We worked with the contractor and contacts in NHS England and the DH, threatening judicial review, and instructed solicitors. NHS England then agreed to pay, but we are insisting that provision is made in the Drug Tariff or Directions to clarify contractors' right to payment in these situations.

ACTION

7. The PSNC Plan 2014

The Committee reviewed the draft Plan and approved it.

8. Budget and 2014-15 Levy

The Committee reviewed the draft budget and approved it.

The budget is based on a 3% levy increase. The budget includes an increase in employment costs, within which is pensions, increased costs of insurance and staff training. There is an increase in conference costs which reflected the Pharmintercom meeting taking place in New Zealand. The reduction in income from Wales is £65k per annum.

PSNC's policy to build reserves was highlighted and Mark Burdon stressed the need for increased expenditure on service development. It was also noted that the format of meetings will be considered along with staff resources.

9. PSNC Elections

Mike King gave a presentation on the election process which has recently started. The election is carried out every four years, and coincides with the LPC elections. For PSNC elections, the eligibility is set out in the Constitution and Rules, and these are available on the PSNC website.

Closing dates will be the second week in March, depending on the date of posting the ballot forms out – so the office will be able to inform candidates, LPCs and the Committee before the end of March, just in time for the successful candidates to take their seats from 1 April.

RATIFICATION

10. Resource Development & Finance Subcommittee

The minutes of the subcommittee meeting were presented by Mark Burdon.

The budget was approved by the Committee. A letter will be sent to LPCs to explain the rationale behind the levy increase.

It was noted that new members to the Committee should be better supported. The amendment to part 3b in the expenses policy was approved which encourages the Committee to take advantage of advance tickets or travel second class which would be a significant saving. It was also noted that Kirit Patel has joined the HIE Board.

11. Funding & Contract Subcommittee

The minutes of the subcommittee meeting were presented by Peter Cattee.

12. LPC & Implementation Support Subcommittee

The minutes of the subcommittee meeting were presented by Mark Collins.

13. Service Development Subcommittee

The minutes of the subcommittee meeting were presented by Gary Warner.

REPORT

14. Other matters of report and any other business

The dates for the next PSNC meeting are 11th and 12th March 2014 at Hilton Bath City Hotel, Walcot Street, Bath, BA1 5BJ.