



April 2016

PSNC Briefing 022/16: Guide to the Regional Representative Election for the South East Coast Region

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 2018. PSNC is making initial preparations for the election process which began shortly after 1 April 2016 as Mr Ian Hunter who served as Regional Representative for the South East Coast Region (which covers East Sussex LPC, Kent LPC, Surrey LPC and West Sussex LPC areas) ceased to be a PSNC member.

This briefing details the regional representative 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. The corporate governance principles and Code of Conduct (which PSNC members must also adhere to) are available [here](#).

Eligibility

Independent Chemist means a chemist that operates retail pharmacy businesses from no more than nine (9) premises in England from which NHS Pharmaceutical Services or Local Pharmaceutical Services are provided.

The independent chemist must either be a pharmacist conducting a retail 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 will have a substantial interest in the retail pharmacy business. This will be because the registration of the pharmacy is in the pharmacist's own name (as sole proprietor) or the pharmacist will be one of the partners in a pharmacy registered by the GPhC as a partnership; or, in the case of a pharmacy owned by a body corporate, the pharmacist must be a director of the body corporate (so that the pharmacist can exercise control over the direction taken by the body corporate) and the pharmacist must also own a substantial proportion of the shares in the body corporate (either personally or through shares held by the pharmacist's immediate family – i.e. parents, spouse or children).

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

See Rule 12.4 of the PSNC [Rules](#), available at www.psn.org.uk

The successful candidate must also agree to be bound by PSNC's [Code of Conduct](#).

Timescale

On 1 April 2016, the election process started and PSNC have been preparing a database of all pharmacy contractors, and of LPC members and officers. LPC Chief Officers were sent a list of members and officers identified by PSNC so that these could be verified. Potential candidates should ensure that their LPC Chief Officer has their correct email contact details.

Thursday 7 April 2016 – expressions of interest

On 7 April 2016, an email inviting expressions of interest was sent to all identified officers and members of LPCs in the South East Coast Region. Responses are required by 18 April 2016.

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.

On or around *Monday 18 April 2016 – formal nominations*

A notice is to be issued by email to members or officers of LPCs in the region 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 18 April 2016.

Wednesday 4 May 2016 – deadline for receipt of written nominations

Written nominations must be received by midday on 4 May 2016. As the nominations must be signed by the six nominating pharmacies, hard copy originals are required and email / fax is not acceptable.

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. Late or incomplete nominations will not be accepted.

On receipt, the nomination forms are checked for eligibility (including checks of the eligibility of the six nominators).

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 Wednesday 4 May.

Wednesday 4 May 2016 – invitation for nominated candidates to submit a policy statement

If 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 avoid any direct reference to other candidates and 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 Wednesday 18 May 2016.

By Friday 20 May – ballot forms sent out with deadline for casting the electronic vote

The ballot forms will be issued by post to all independent contractors in the region during the week ending 20 May. The ballot form will include a website address for the elector to access, together with a password and unique identifier which an elector must use when casting their vote electronically. Votes must be cast no later than midday on Monday 6 June 2016. If the elector cannot vote electronically, the ballot form can be sent by post to the Returning Officer (by the closing date).

Next Steps

As can be seen, the timescale is challenging. There is very little flexibility in timing, and deadlines will 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. 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 [William Goh, Returning Officer](#).