



## PSNC's Work

October 2017

### PSNC Briefing 082/17: Guide to the Regional Representative Elections

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) represents and supports community pharmacy contractors in England. Its membership consists of a Chairman (who may or may not be a registered pharmacist) together with 31 registered pharmacists. Thirteen of PSNC's members are Independent Chemists elected by regions in England.

This briefing sets out the Regional Representative election process and actions required for those seeking to stand for or vote in the elections.

Routine regional elections are 4-yearly and were last held in 2014. The current term of office expires on 31 March 2018. PSNC is making initial preparations for the election process which will begin early in the New Year. For more details of timings, please see the [provisional election timetable](#).

#### 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, Regional Representatives 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 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 PSNC staff.

There are six main PSNC meetings a year which take place over two days. Occasionally, there are extra plenary meetings 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 arrangements can be made for their pharmacy to run by another pharmacist on several occasions during the year.

As independent contractors (or as directors and substantial shareholders of bodies corporate that are independent contractors) decisions made at PSNC as a Regional Representatives 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 businesses. Therefore, the pharmacy contractors who elect them must 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.

In addition, 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 **and** is **not** a member of the Association of Independent Multiple pharmacies (AIM).

### The candidate must be:

- **A pharmacist** registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC).
- **A member or officer of an LPC** in the region at the time of nomination.
- **An Independent Chemist** (see above) (either individually or in partnership), or is a director and a substantial shareholder (either personally, or through shares owned by members of their immediate family, i.e. parents, spouse or children) in a body corporate which is an Independent Chemist.

A person shall **not** be eligible for election as regional representative if he has substantial ownership (either personally, in partnership or through shares owned by members of his immediate family, i.e. parents, spouse or children) in more than nine pharmacies in England.

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

## Timescale

PSNC will confirm/update its database of all independent contractors, and of LPC members and officers. LPC Chief Officers will shortly be sent a list of members and officers identified by PSNC so that these can be verified and asked to confirm all independent contractors in their area.

### *Thursday 4 January 2018 – expressions of interest*

Communications inviting expressions of interest to be sent to all identified officers and members of LPCs in all thirteen LPC Regions.

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.

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 members in the region, so that co-ordination can take place, with 'preferred' candidates ultimately putting themselves forward if there is widespread support.

### *Monday 15 January 2018 – formal nominations*

A notice is to be sent seeking formal nominations.

Persons seeking nomination must return a completed nomination form **not later than midday on the 15<sup>th</sup> day** after the invitation to nominate is sent i.e. midday (12noon) on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

*Tuesday 30 January 2018 – deadline for receipt of written nominations*

Written nominations must be received by midday. Nomination forms must be signed by the six nominating pharmacies.

Candidates should avoid leaving the nominations until the last minute. The Rules are explicit – and late or incomplete nominations cannot be accepted. Therefore, there is no discretion for the Returning Officers to accept late or incomplete nominations.

On receipt, any 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. If there is a single valid nomination in a region, the pharmacist nominated will be held to have been elected and notice given as soon practicable.

*Friday 2 February 2018 – invitation for nominated candidates to submit a policy statement*

In regions 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 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, so that the Returning Officers can collate these for printing. They must be received by 5pm on Friday 16 February 2018.

*Week commencing 26 February 2018 – ballot forms sent out with deadline for return*

Depending on the number of ballots to be held, it is intended that ballot forms will be issued by post to all known independent contractors in the applicable PSNC regions during this week. Completed ballot forms may be returned hard copy in the post to PSNC, 14 Hosier Lane, West Smithfield, London, EC1A 9LQ or scanned as an attachment to an email for the attention of the Returning Officer, before the closing date for receipt of completed ballot forms (which will be stated on the ballot form), which will be not be less than 14 clear days from the date ballots are despatched.

## Next Steps

Potential candidates should consider the different steps involved, particularly the practicalities of getting nominations signed and returned.

As the election process depends on the Returning Officers 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 (including potential candidates) must ensure that Chief Officers of LPCs have the correct contact details.

If you have queries on this PSNC Briefing please contact [Gordon Hockey](#) or [William Goh](#), Returning Officers.