

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee
Communications and Public Affairs Subcommittee Minutes
Wednesday 6th February 2019 at 15:30
Aylesbury Room, PSNC, 14 Hosier Lane, London EC1A 9LQ

Minutes of a meeting of the PSNC CPA Subcommittee held in the Aylesbury Room at PSNC on Wednesday 6th February 2019, commencing at 15:30.

Members of CPA present: David Broome, Jas Heer, Tricia Kennerley (Chair), Clare Kerr, Fin McCaul, Jay Patel, Prakash Patel, Stephen Thomas

In Attendance: Mark Burdon, Marc Donovan, Simon Dukes, Alice Hare, Jessica Ferguson, Zoe Long, Melinda Mabbutt, Has Modi, Janice Perkins

Welcome: The Chair welcomed everyone to what is the first meeting of the CPA Subcommittee.

Apologies: No apologies were received.

Conflicts of interest: No conflicts of interest were declared.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising as this was the first meeting of the subcommittee.

Item 1 – Subcommittee Remit and workplan (Appendix CPA 01/02/2019)

1.1 The subcommittee approved the draft remit.

1.2 The subcommittee approved the workplan for 2019, with the following adjustments to be made:

- Ensure that contractors understand the work that PSNC does and the value of it. This will **be an ongoing process and will** include work to ensure that all PSNC subcommittees are communicating effectively.
- Improve contractor understanding of the **wider** environment in which they are working.
- **Improve contractor understanding of** how pharmacy funding works at a macro level.
- Build the media profiles of both PSNC and community pharmacy to help promote the sector.
- Carry out a strategic influencing programme, **including the development of advocates**, to improve policy makers' perceptions and ambitions for the sector.
- Improve understanding and coverage of our core messages about the need to **protect the pharmacy network**, and **to promote pharmacy's** potential and value **to the NHS**.
- Enhance collaborative working arrangements – both with the national pharmacy organisations and LPCs – to ensure that community pharmacy is unified wherever possible **and to help promote the sector**.

Action 1: PSNC will be asked to approve the remit of the CPA subcommittee

Item 2 – PSNC position statements (Appendix CPA 02/02/2019)

2.1 It was agreed that the tone of PSNC's messages on medicines supply problems are about right, but that work needs to be done to use more consumer-friendly language in materials for the public and patients. It was suggested that PSNC could approach charities and patient groups such as Healthwatch and the Patients Association for help get these messages across.

2.2 Zoe Long reported that DHSC are working on some new public comms which we may be able to draw from in our own messaging, or at least direct people to.

2.3 There is a risk that pharmacies will be blamed for supply problems and we must continue to highlight the good work that pharmacies are doing. It was noted that perhaps we could say more about what the reasons are for the supply problems eg low medicines prices in the UK, and sometimes manufacturing plants are closed to ensure the quality of medicines for patients. As well as recognising the generics market is a global market.

2.4 A potential risk, if shortages mean that pharmacies can only dispense prescriptions in part, is that people who pay for prescriptions may have to pay more prescription fees. PSNC should aim to have communications prepared in case this scenario should arise.

2.5 The office has continued to brief and work with MPs who have expressed an interest in the topic.

2.6 The subcommittee agreed that new briefings and infographics that explain how we want community pharmacy to fit in with the NHS Long Term Plan, and particularly with the emerging Primary Care Networks, would be helpful, and messaging for these may come out of the plenary discussion on the Long Term Plan on Thursday 7th February.

2.7 Showing how pharmacies can improve patient safety, and in particular medicines safety, should be a priority in our messaging.

2.8 The subcommittee noted the pharmacy press coverage of PSNC's discussion on the sustainability of community pharmacy funding levels. The need to balance optimism and maintaining a strong negotiations line with giving contractors realistic expectations about the future was noted, and this is a real challenge for PSNC. The subcommittee had a confidential discussion about messaging.

2.9 The subcommittee noted that while we do need Government to give us a clearer vision for what it wants from community pharmacy, we should also be clear that we want to work with them on that vision.

Action 2: The Communications Team will update and share the position statements considered by the subcommittee on the Committee Members Area of the website.

Item 3 – Communications priorities (Appendix CPA 03/02/2019)

3.1 Positive feedback was given on the content surrounding Quality Payments on the website and it was suggested that more could be done to promote all of the resources that PSNC provides.

3.2 It was suggested that the office could make it easier for contractors to report medicine supply and pricing issues, and that an auto response to confirm receipt of their submissions to PSNC would be helpful. A more mobile-friendly website and/or a more effective reporting form could resolve these issues without the need to create an app.

3.3 Feedback from the subcommittee suggested that contractors are receiving lots of communications, and it was agreed that a communications review with LPCs would be helpful to ensure that PSNC and LPCs are not duplicating work and are maximising the impact of their communications efforts. The upcoming National Meeting of LPCs next month might provide an opportunity to do this, agenda allowing.

3.4 The subcommittee considered the need to find and make best use of positive community pharmacy stories. There are a number of options that we could explore including:

- Capturing submissions to pharmacy awards
- Organising social media campaigns to encourage pharmacists to share stories
- Making use of local media (via the LPCs)

This work could be a joint piece of work with other pharmacy organisations, but we must be careful to ensure that the messages are reaching a wider audience rather than just pharmacy.

3.5 The subcommittee were pleased with PSNC's recent national media work but would like to see more of this. Zoe Long flagged the workload involved, particularly in arranging broadcast appearances, but that this could be another area in which we could work alongside other pharmacy organisations to ensure that pharmacy is getting more consistent coverage throughout the year. Subcommittee Members agreed to share suggestions for national media spokespeople.

Action 3: The Communications Team will consider how best to review communications with LPCs and put together a plan for this.

Action 4: The Communications Team will work with the Dispensing and Supply Team to consider how the supply problems reporting process could be improved for contractors.

Action 5: As part of the joint pharmacy communications work, the Communications Team will consider how we can best capture and promote positive stories about community pharmacy, including through the national media. All to share ideas for this work.

Action 6: All to share ideas for media spokespeople with Zoe Long.

Item 4 – Pharmacy collaborative working (Appendix CPA 04/02/2019)

4.1 The subcommittee welcomed the commitment to joint working, noting the challenges of collaborative working. It was suggested that this may need further pushing from the top, i.e. the chief executives, and Simon Dukes said that the CEOs were already looking at a shared KPI on this.

4.2 Joint work could focus on Primary Care Networks and our vision for community pharmacies as being a hub for local healthcare. It was agreed that while the office will consider the messages that we should be giving to MPs, members of the subcommittee could also contribute ideas for this to the team.

4.3 Zoe Long reported on the work that has begun with Pfizer, which is still at an early stage. It was suggested that messages for this public facing work could be tied in with the agreed national public health campaigns for community pharmacy.

4.4 It was felt that it would be useful to provide pharmacies with a template guide to help them to host MP visits. A guide is available on the PSNC website and the communications team will ensure that this is up to date and well promoted.

Action 7: All to input ideas to shape our messaging to MPs and to support the Pfizer work.

Item 5 – Parliamentary work: APPG and party conferences (Appendix CPA 05/02/2019)

5.1 Zoe Long explained that the APPG's workplan is put together by the MPs on the group, taking into consideration ideas from the sponsors. It was agreed that giving PSNC Members as much notice of meetings as possible could help to drive MP attendance at meetings.

5.2 The APPG could work to support pharmacy's contribution to the Long Term Plan and also to help press for the Government to set out what it wants from the sector.

5.3 Party conference work should focus on similar messages.

Action 8: Zoe Long will report back to the subcommittee in May on the APPG review process and party conference plans, and will ask Luther Pendragon to provide as much notice of APPG meetings as possible.

Item 6 – Pharmacy communications (Appendix CPA 06/02/2019)

6.1 The report in the agenda was noted and the subcommittee suggested that more could be done to promote all the activity that goes on 'behind the scenes' and the popularity of the website.

Item 7 – Parliamentary work (Appendix CPA 07/02/2019)

7.1 The report in the agenda was noted.

Item 8 – Wider public affairs work (Appendix CPA 08/02/2019)

8.1 The report in the agenda was noted and Zoe Long circulated copies of the British Heart Foundation article featuring Sunil Kochhar. It was noted that this was helpful work in terms of building pharmacy advocates.

Item 9 – Any other business

9.1 Zoe Long highlighted two additional actions that the communications team are currently working on:

- An annual report for PSNC. This will be a digital report highlighting key areas of our work and explaining the value of PSNC to pharmacy contractors and their teams. Content is currently being drafted, and we expect to publish in March.

- PSNC animation. The communications team are trialling a new way to engage with pharmacy owners, working on an animation with Senate Media. The aim of the animation will be to explain to pharmacists, very simply, what the Government wants from pharmacy and how pharmacies will likely need to change in the coming years.

9.2 Fin McCaul reporting something that had come up in SDS: pharmacies being asked to send Bank Holiday opening hours out to local NHS England Teams despite this information already being available elsewhere.

9.3 Janice Perkins reported that EMIS have activated the Controlled Drug status for gabapentin and pregabalin early. We will need to help disseminate messages to pharmacies once we understand the implications of this.