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PSNC Meeting November 2019: Summary Report for Contractors and LPCs

PSNC met in London on Wednesday 27th and Thursday 28th November 2019. This briefing summarises some of the key topics discussed for pharmacy contractors and LPCs.

CPCF 2019/20: Services

Since the launch of the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) PSNC has been monitoring the implementation of the service, including through the cross-sector Urgent Care Delivery and Implementation Group (UCDIG). Two new briefings based on early feedback and learnings on the service were published this week and are available on the [PSNC website](#). PSNC's Service Development Subcommittee considered the progress to date and was pleased to note the very positive uptake of the service from the sector. PSNC will continue to provide as much support for contractors as possible to help with the CPCS, and please continue to send feedback on the service to services.team@psnc.org.uk

The subcommittee also considered the Hepatitis C testing service. Subject to Ministerial views from the new Government, further information will be shared as soon as possible. A potential audit to be undertaken by contractors in 2019/20 was also considered by the subcommittee, linked to antimicrobial stewardship – details of this will also be announced as soon as is possible.

Current funding issues and margin

PSNC's Funding and Contract Subcommittee considered estimates of the current margin run rate for 2019/20 and whether the October Category M prices had fed through to contractors as intended. The subcommittee also considered the Margin Survey and work being done by the office to explore whether a move to a quarterly (rather than an annual) survey might bring benefits for contractors in allowing for more frequent adjustments and overall smoother delivery of margin.

CPCF 2020/21: Services

PSNC's Service Development Subcommittee considered the Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS) for 2020/21. Subject to the views of the new Government, there is likely to be considerable negotiation needed to ensure that the scheme meets NHS objectives but is also manageable for contractors. Similarly, the subcommittee considered the public health campaigns which contractors will need to undertake next year. PSNC is keen to ensure that whatever topics are eventually agreed, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) ensures that suitable campaign materials are made available to all pharmacies.

CPCF: Funding and capacity pressures

PSNC is very concerned about the financial and capacity pressures currently facing many community pharmacies and about the need for the sector to find new ways of working to release capacity. This will be essential if the sector is to deliver all of the services set out in the five-year deal on the CPCF. PSNC will continue support and explore the efficiencies that might be unlocked through the transformation and reform of dispensing – automation, online and supervision.

The Committee spent a considerable amount of time analysing the impact of the expected efficiency squeeze and discussing the merits and issues with the different ways in which the sector might adapt to cope with this. Alongside this, exploratory discussions were held looking at models of delivery and possible future legislation changes, thinking about

how change can be implemented without adversely impacting on patient safety or threatening the position of pharmacies as the place at which people get their medicines.

Changes to Reimbursement

As part of the five-year CPCF deal, PSNC has agreed to explore with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) possible changes to the way in which pharmacies are reimbursed for medicines, and DHSC held a [consultation](#) on its proposed reforms. PSNC has [published its response](#) to the consultation and the Committee had a detailed discussion on what one element – splitting the discount scale – might look like. This is a change which PSNC has sought to try to smooth delivery of margin to all contractors, but there are many factors, including how we might balance margin delivery between brands and generics and how the market might respond, which need to be very carefully considered before we can recommend any changes.

Medicine supply and shortages

PSNC remains concerned about the ongoing impact that medicines supply problems are having on contractors. Price concessions are holding steady at around 40 per month (far less than their peak earlier this year) but some shortages remain and the Communications and Public Affairs subcommittee considered possible policy asks which PSNC could look to press for next year to help to reduce the burden on community pharmacies. Some Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) were introduced this autumn (one remains in place at the time of writing) and contractors are reminded that they must ensure that they are endorsing prescriptions and EPS messages where they have used an SSP correctly. See guidance on [PSNC's website](#).

Pharmacy consolidations

The current qualified statutory protection for consolidations is until the end of the current Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) (this prevents other pharmacies from opening where two have consolidated into one, until the end of the PNA). PSNC's Legal and Regulatory Affairs Subcommittee considered this and also noted that there are other ways to effect consolidations (such as through a relocation by one owner into the site of another pharmacy of a different owner) currently being tested in the market.

Brexit

Existing guidance on the possibility of a no-deal Brexit in 2020 remains and community pharmacy has been supporting no-deal planning. PSNC continues to host the Brexit Forum to ensure messages are being shared across the community pharmacy sector and updates will be shared as and when we have them.

PCSE Web Portal

Primary Care Support England (PCSE) is preparing for a managed go-live of its new web portal. The initial roll out will be to test the portal with a limited number of contractors and applications that can be made online. PCSE will review progress in January/February to decide whether to go fully live with the online portal. PSNC's Legal and Regulatory Affairs subcommittee supports the portal in principle, subject to successful testing, but is working to ensure that its introduction will not adversely impact contractors in any way.

Contractor Support and Representation

PSNC has agreed to fund, along with the LPCs, an independent review of community pharmacy support and representation. Professor David Wright, Professor of Pharmacy Practice at the University of East Anglia, is leading the review which will look to find ways for PSNC and the LPCs to work together more effectively to ensure contractors are getting best value from their representative organisations. The review comes at a critical time as community pharmacy undergoes significant change through the five-year CPCF deal, and PSNC hopes as many LPCs and contractors as possible will take part in it to help ensure that PSNC and the LPCs are giving contractors the best possible support through the changes ahead. Find out more about the review: pharmacy-review.org

PSNC's LPC and Contractor Support Subcommittee considered the vast amount of support produced for contractors to support the implementation of the Pharmacy Quality Scheme, flu vaccinations and the CPCS. All resources are available on our website: psnc.org.uk and thank you to all LPCs who have helped us to highlight the resources available to contractors.

LPC Support and Resources

PSNC'S LPC and Contractor Support Subcommittee considered feedback following this autumn's annual conference of LPCs – they were pleased to note that 69 out of 71 LPCs had been represented. In future years LPCs would like more break-out sessions to allow them to feed ideas into PSNC and this and all feedback will be considered in the planning of the 2020 conference which will take place on September 16th 2020.

The subcommittee will revisit the potential LPC Dashboard (which was being developed to help LPCs to demonstrate their value to contractors) following the independent review of contractor support and representation. A template Memorandum of Understanding between LPCs and PCN leads is now available on the [PSNC website](https://psnc.org.uk) and guidance on competition and conflict is in development. Full guidance on the PCN domain of the Pharmacy Quality Scheme for [contractors](https://psnc.org.uk) and [LPCs](https://psnc.org.uk) is also now available. PSNC is also working on a draft expenses policy for LPC Members. PSNC has now set up a new email for LPCs needing support: lpcsupport@psnc.org.uk

PSNC communications and website

PSNC has recently launched its annual report for 2018/19, outlining the work it did on behalf of contractors and LPCs during that financial year. You can view the report at: psncannualreport.com. Work to communicate the details of the five-year CCPF agreement to contractors and to support them with various elements has continued, and PSNC has produced resources to help explain the changes to GPs and to encourage them to engage with community pharmacy via the Primary Care Networks (PCNs). See psnc.org.uk/5yearccpf

In 2020, PSNC's Communications and Public Affairs Subcommittee will prioritise further animations, including one to encourage GPs to work with pharmacy. The subcommittee is also working on PSNC's website to ensure that information is as easy to find as possible and the website best serves the needs of pharmacy teams and LPCs.

Parliamentary work

In the lead up to the election the focus is on engaging with Parliamentary Candidates. PSNC has worked with the National Pharmacy Association (NPA) and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) on a 'Pharmacy Manifesto' and resources which are all available at: votepharmacy.uk. Following the election the focus will be on informing MPs about the value of community pharmacy and gaining their support for the sector; reconstituting the APPG; and preparing for a Parliamentary reception event.

For any queries about this PSNC Briefing please contact Zoe Long, PSNC Director of Communications and Public Affairs, on zoe.long@psnc.org.uk