

April 2023

PSNC Briefing 11/23: Summary of April 2023 PSNC Committee Meeting

PSNC met in London on Wednesday 19th April and Thursday 20th April 2023. This briefing summarises some of the key topics discussed for pharmacy contractors and LPCs. This was the first meeting of the smaller [new Committee](#) (soon to be known as Community Pharmacy England) and included inductions and briefings on key issues and projects. All Committee members are pharmacists, appointed or elected from the various parts of the sector.

Overview of the April Committee Meeting

PSNC members were largely focused on their ongoing deep concerns about the funding crisis affecting pharmacy owners, as the sector's finances and capacity are in a critical state, and the fact that the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England have run out of money for new pharmacy services and other new contractual requirements. Work to persuade Government and the NHS to take action is ongoing and we are also looking at longer-term work to lay the ground positively for the next Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF), including through the work to develop a new vision for community pharmacy.

The Committee also considered:

PSNC Workplan and objectives: The Committee considered the workplan and progress against the following seven strategic objectives for 2023/24:

1. Negotiating with Government and NHS England to secure the best possible contractual terms and remuneration for NHS services;
2. Laying the groundwork for the next CPCF;
3. Developing PSNC's Vision and Strategy and the infrastructure of plans, budgets and KPIs to support it;
4. Delivering the Transforming Pharmacy Representation (TAPR) programme, implementing the Review Steering Group recommendations to strengthen representation, governance, transparency and accountability;
5. Providing ongoing review and negotiation of purchase margin, pricing audits, reimbursement and medicines supply in the interests of contractors;
6. Representing community pharmacy's interests with Government and the NHS; and
7. Supporting the effective governance of PSNC and its support to contractors and LPCs on a broad range of issues from the development of services to regulatory and legislative issues.

This also included an update for all Committee members on the key workstreams.

Influencing work and the political climate: The Committee discussed plans through our public and behind the scenes influencing to ensure that the Primary Care Recovery Plan (PCRP) includes a funding lifeline for the sector – this work has been ongoing since we bid for a fully-funded Pharmacy First service and for a funding uplift in March 2022. We are continuing to argue that a fully-funded Pharmacy First service would be a good route to get additional funding into the sector, quickly reflecting work we are already doing, while also supporting patients and delivering on the

NHS and Government's ambitions. Any progress on this proposal would provide a good foundation to promote the value of community pharmacy in primary care service delivery for the next CCPF.

Year 5 CCPF and Regulatory easements: The Committee's position remains that contractors do not have the capacity to take on additional services or work and the regulatory easements proposed by DHSC and NHS England are insufficient to address contractors' workforce and cost pressures, which are demonstrated by significant evidence, including the results of PSNC's 2023 [Pressures Survey](#).

Drug Tariff: The Committee considered proposals for on-going reimbursement reform including proposed changes to Category A. The Committee was concerned about introducing further instability for contractors, given the ongoing volatility of the drugs market and the fact that contractors are taking all the risks without being reimbursed sufficiently in all cases.

Vision and Strategy: The Committee heard from Nigel Edwards (Chief Executive of the Nuffield Trust) and Richard Murray (Chief Executive of the King's Fund) on progress on the project PSNC has commissioned them to undertake on the development of a vision and strategic options for community pharmacy. This included their analysis and initial findings from extensive interviews with key stakeholders within pharmacy and beyond, literature reviews, consultations and working groups. Work is being planned to further engage with the sector and input into the draft report in the coming months.

Transforming Pharmacy Representation (TAPR): The latest updates and [progress reports](#) were presented and the Committee considered the significant progress that has been made on this programme of work, noting the work being done to support LPCs through local changes; the imminent rebranding of PSNC as Community Pharmacy England, to strengthen our influence with policy-makers; and proposals for work to strengthen governance at PSNC.

The Committee considered the objectives for the governance review to be led by the Chair and CEO and Victoria Finney, an independent governance professional who has been appointed to lead the implementation of the Review Steering Group proposals around governance. Work has been initiated on the project, with the target to complete it late in 2023. The overall aim is a framework for strong and independent governance that enables PSNC and LPCs to achieve their purposes, starting with values, culture and governance principles.

Next Steps

High-level influencing and media work is continuing, including continuing to use the results of the Pharmacy Pressures Survey. We have been clear that without a funding lifeline, the Government and NHS will be watching over the collapse of the sector and we are continuing to focus on this in our ongoing discussions with DHSC and NHS England.

We expect DHSC and NHS England to make decisions on the Year 5 CCPF, PQS and the regulatory changes shortly and to communicate these to the sector. PSNC put forward over 30 proposals for measures of support that would help all pharmacies and we have repeatedly warned Ministers and officials that no new or expanded services should be rolled out in 2023/24 without additional funding.

The Committee look forward to seeing the Primary Care Recovery Plan which is being considered by Government separately to the CCPF.

If you have queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information, please contact commsteam@psnc.org.uk.