

NORTH OF TYNE LOCAL PHARMACEUTICAL COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

– COMPLETED BY KEITH KENDALL

The twelve months to the end of March 2019 have once again been very difficult for community pharmacy and our contractors. The continued impact of the funding cuts, medicines supply issues not improving, and the uncertainty around Brexit, and closer to home, the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework. (CPCF) have all been felt by contractors and their teams.

On 5th September 2018 the LPC held a successful AGM and Community Pharmacy Awards. This was the third year of recognising the teams and individuals working locally in Community Pharmacy who continue to deliver great patient centred care and high quality pharmacy services despite the uncertainty. Our keynote speaker was Simon Dukes , Chief Executive Officer of the national negotiating body for community pharmacy PSNC (Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee). Simon talked inspiringly of his vision for community pharmacy, much of which has been reflected in the recently announced new Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework.

During the year the LPC has concentrated on supporting contractors with maximising the funding that has been available to them. The Quality Payments Scheme (QPS) has remained an important area, and support for Healthy Living Pharmacies has continued not least through the Locality HLP meetings. The LPC also carried out an engagement evening to support contractors to maximise their income and profitability from existing services.

The LPC has also worked on influencing commissioners to help prevent the loss of existing vital services such as Think Pharmacy First. The LPC has been proactive in encouraging commissioners not to follow the early lead in other parts of the country to stop similar services in response to the guidance for CCGs (Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care). The LPC has been building stronger links with stakeholders and representing community pharmacy with emerging structures such as the STPs and more recently the ICS. The aim being to help them to better understand what the network of community pharmacies and your teams actually do, and the value you can bring to the system leaders that do not always fully understand community pharmacy.

Early in the financial year the LPC committee carried out elections and a new committee was formed and after a review of the role descriptions and responsibilities the officers requiring election were duly elected. I was delighted to continue as Chair of North of Tyne LPC, and would like to thank Andy Watson for his time as Vice-Chair and to welcome Debbie Baird-Palmer to the role of Vice-Chair of the new committee. This LPC continues to have strong representation from committee members who welcome feedback on any issues that contractors would like to be raised with the committee. Contractors may also wish to attend the meeting as a non-voting observer, as has occurred over the last year. It is vital that the LPC hears from contractors, and not only those directly on the committee so that our actions meet the needs of the majority of contractors. We intend to improve the two-way communication between pharmacies and the committee through training and engagement events and Healthy Living Champion meetings as well points of contact for feedback with the LPC via committee members.

NoT LPC along with Gateshead and South Tyneside and Durham LPC's have continued to work on maintaining and growing services for our contractors through the separate provider arm company, Pharmacy Services North East (PSNE). The company tenders for contracts for pharmacy services both at a local level, and across a wider footprint. All income above running costs are returned to the respective LPCs. This income supplies additional funds to support contractors.

The committee reviews and plans how it can effectively make best use of the funding provided through the levy to contractors. The costs, including the salary costs for the LPC for the last year were less than the previous financial year.

The uncertainty and lack of movement last year over the contractual framework has made longer term planning difficult, and the LPC has been careful to have sufficient funding available to support contractors when there was a clear path ahead. The NHS Long Term Plan, the GP contract announcement, and more recently the announcement of the 5 year Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework agreement all help give that clarity over the future direction for community pharmacy. The LPC can now put its plans into action to actively support contractors with PCNs and make clear plans to support community pharmacies to embrace the changes that come with our new contractual framework.

The LPC has recognised the direction of travel for community pharmacy to play a greater role in supporting urgent care, and has actively worked as a key part of the steering group of what was called CPRS, and then DMIRS (Digital Minor Illness Referral Service). The LPC input to the project steering group along with a colleague from another North East LPC, on behalf of the LPCs in Cumbria and the North East has been invaluable to the success of this pilot service. The success of this pilot service across our LPC and the North East as a whole has resulted in the new Community Pharmacy Consultation Service (CPCS) from October 2019. This would not have been achieved without the willingness and desire of our North of Tyne pharmacies to deliver the pilot successfully.

The LPC has also actively worked with the local NHS England team to maximise the referrals for urgent repeat medicines through NUMSAS, and to try and overcome some of the frustrations with the service that have been felt by pharmacy teams. This service has been announced as finally moving from pilot to fully fledged Advanced Service as part of the new CPCS.

The future is becoming clearer now that we have a new contractual framework due to commence and there is still much that needs to be clarified at this time, and still to be negotiated over the next 5 years by PSNC. We remain committed to supporting our community pharmacy contractors and their teams to adapt to the changes that are coming. The collaborative working relationship that is now in place nationally needs to be built locally through Primary Care Networks (PCNs), across the healthcare sectors and at system level. The LPC will be representing you, leading and supporting in all these areas locally and we look forward to working with you to achieve what will be significant transformational change for community pharmacy.

My thanks must go to Stephen Blackman our former Chief Officer who left us in February 2019, Paul Conroy who joined us as Chief Officer in March, Ann Gunning (Head of Services and Support), our treasurer Christine Wardlaw and Vice Chair Debbie Baird-Palmer, along with all the members of the LPC committee.

Keith Kendall MRPharmS

Chairman North of Tyne LPC