July 2020

An update from Liverpool Local Pharmaceutical Committee



Annual Report  
2019 - 2020

**Our Mission Statement**

We will be the key advocate of community pharmacy and support the delivery of quality services that benefit contractors, patients, and wider stakeholders.

**Membership**

14 members sat on the committee over the course of the year. Eight members sat on the committee for the full term:

John Davey (Independent)

Leah Davies (Rowlands)

James Forshaw (Independent)

David Jones (Independent)

Anna Mir (Boots)

David Porter (Independent)

Dane Stratton-Powell (Lloyds)

Gemma Whitehead (Cohens

Three members resigned mid-year:

Eric Goodwin (Independent)

Kathy McCarthy (Boots)

Jonathan Tabiner-Shaw (Lloyds)

Two members were nominated mid-year:

Peter Beeley (Boots)

James Moir (Independent)

David Sanchez (Asda)

Kathy McCarthy was Chair, whist Lead Davies was Vice-Chair and Dane Stratton-Powell Treasurer. Subsequent to Kathy McCarthy’s resignation, Leah Davies assumed the Chair for the last meeting of the year.

**Officers**

Matt Harvey was the chief officer for the year in question. David Barker was the Engagement Officer, and Joe Clarke was Business Support Officer.

**Introduction**

This report sets out the achievements of Liverpool LPC during the 2019/20 financial year. We negotiated and managed community pharmacy service contracts with numerous commissioners worth £1.725 million of income during the year in question.

**Supporting our Contractors**

2019/20 saw the introduction of the new Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework. This presented a paradigm shift in how the NHS sees community pharmacy working over the next five years. Much effort was employed to understand the changes that were being implemented, and we spent time ensuring our pharmacies understood these through newsletters, pharmacy visits and roadshows.

Alongside this the team aided pharmacies with contractual issues, engaged with all pharmacies to deliver more pharmacy services. This section sets out more on how we achieved this.

COVID-19

At the extreme tail end of the year, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The LPC changed its way of working rapidly; scrapping any face to face meetings or pharmacy visits whilst still offering support where needed being increasingly mindful of the immense pressure our pharmacies were under. In the last few weeks of the year, the committee met weekly via virtual means to discuss the latest developments and to plan how to support and communicate with our pharmacies. The LPC team sent regular communications to pharmacies and updated the website with useful links to the most up to date information. The Engagement Officer was inundated with phone calls from pharmacies; particularly around PPE and GP practices changing to three-monthly prescriptions. As a result, we worked closely with NHS England and Improvement, Liverpool CCG and Liverpool Local Medical Committee on a range of issues that developed at the time.

Pharmacy Communications

A joint newsletter between Liverpool, Sefton, and Halton, St Helens & Knowsley LPCs was issued bi-weekly by our Business Support Officer. This helped to reduce duplication of messaging and helped get Liverpool messages out to a wider audience. He also took time to increase social media output and ensuring our communications were timely and effective, whilst also ensuring our website was kept up to date. During the early stages of the pandemic, we produced twice-weekly updates to pharmacies detailing information on the rapidly developing and changing landscape we all found ourselves in.

Our Engagement Officer identified via reports that NHS Mail was not being used by pharmacies as widely as expected and focussed his efforts to turn this around in Liverpool. As a result, NHS Mail is now used by 99% of pharmacies and the preferred method for communications.

Pharmacy Training

We have seen significant growth in Virtual Outcomes training module sign ups from 54.5% to 75% during the year due to increased championing by the Engagement Officer.

The LPC also worked collaboratively with Mersey Care NHS Trust and Liverpool CCG to deliver blended CCG-funded training for pharmacy staff from all cohorts of pharmacy on anticholinergic burden and high risk medicines. Other events were planned, but put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pharmacy engagement at our CPCF/PCN roadshow events held during the autumn was high, with over 85% of pharmacies attending. Pharmacies took away key important messages around CPCS, Primary Care Networks and the Pharmacy Quality Scheme. The events were well received with delegates scoring the usefulness of the event at over 90%, with most delegates stating they had increased knowledge of the event content as a result. We were successful in obtaining sponsorship to cover most of the costs of these events. For those pharmacies that did not attend, the LPC supported them to engage in the PCN process to ensure they fulfilled their Pharmacy Quality Scheme criteria.

Community Pharmacy Consultation Service

From September onwards it was all systems go with the national launch of CPCS with high levels of LPC support during its implementation. A 96% sign up rate was seen in Liverpool. The Engagement Officer worked hard to ensure that pharmacies had appropriate information on hand during its transition from NUMSAS, and to ensure pharmacies knew how to process referrals for the minor ailment aspect.

Primary Care Networks

GP surgeries organised themselves into Primary Care Networks (PCN) during 19/20. As part of the new community pharmacy contractual framework pharmacies had to align with a network. The LPC team spent a substantial amount of time matching pharmacies to PCNs based on prescription flow as opposed to geography. All pharmacies were notified and issued with a pack that we produced to provide more information on PCNs. The LPC also organised elections for PCN leads as per the Pharmacy Quality Scheme. Leads were elected in all eleven PCNs. Finally, the LPC helped organise training with NHS England & NHS Improvement for the leads, as well as giving each PCN a designated pharmacy email address to aid communication between pharmacies of the same PCN. The Chief Officer has met with the Clinical Directors of the networks to showcase what pharmacy can do for each network. During the year, the LPC has been working behind the scenes to produce guides for the networks to promote local pharmacy services. We are trying to tackle things from the top down, whilst the leads work from the bottom up.

Pharmacy Quality Scheme

The Engagement Officer provided regular high-quality communications, including a useful ‘What to do When’ document; alongside face to face visits and telephone support for pharmacies to enable them to meet the required Pharmacy Quality Scheme reporting activities in line with the timescales for declaration.

He has also been helping those pharmacies that were not Healthy Living Pharmacy ready to meet the new terms of service requirement. All but one pharmacy declared during the declaration period. This pharmacy did not have a consultation room.

Contractual Reporting

Contractors were aided at each point there was a deadline for a contractual requirement. These included: Public Health Campaign returns, CPAF Lite, DSP Toolkit, MUR/NMS reporting. Again, we have seen a continued increase in the number of Liverpool pharmacies completing these requirements prior to deadlines. For instance, our Public Health reporting has gone from 80% to 97.44% vs 2018/19.

Branded Generics

Despite threats from the CCG, the LPC was successful in lobbying against any further cost-saving switches during 2019/20 and no further switches were agreed during this time. Branded generic prescribing is an ongoing threat to community pharmacies across the city and we will continue to state the case against this at every opportunity.

Contract Monitoring

During the year, we supported several pharmacies on NHS England contract monitoring visits and local resolution meetings both in preparing for these and being present during the visit. The LPC can only be involved in this at the contractor’s request, and we cannot be told by NHS England who they will be visiting. As such, if you receive notification from NHS England that you are to be visited and wish LPC input, please contact the LPC before confirming a time with NHS England so we can ensure we can support.

PharmOutcomes

We have continued to work hard with all commissioners to ensure the PharmOutcomes platform is used for reporting service provision. PharmOutcomes has a host of benefits such as: correct reimbursement for items provided as part of a service; automatic invoicing; automatic GP notifications for those services that require it; LPC oversight on activity so we can help support pharmacies that may be struggling with service activity.

Let us Help You

We stand ready to help and support contractors through any challenges they face and will always aim to provide as much help and support as possible. The only way we can help is if we know there is a problem. Indeed, we were able to intervene in the above situations due to pharmacies contacting the LPC. We encourage all pharmacies to get in touch if they are having any issues as we can only help if we know there is a problem.

**Commissioning Landscape**

During 2019/20, we maintained all commissioned services within the city, and were able to pilot some small-scale services. There is a lot of promise for increased locally commissioned services into 20/21, and much groundwork was completed to allow this to happen during 19/20. The Chief officer has persisted to develop and maintain relationships with commissioners, and this continues to bear fruit with new services in the pipeline.

Liverpool CCG

All existing services commissioned by Liverpool CCG were maintained during the year. The palliative care medicines service was expanded by two pharmacies to allow for greater access across key bank holiday times such as Easter and Christmas. Pharmacies were also asked to stock Keppra injections as part of the service and the LPC negotiated that the stockist pharmacies be reimbursed for this. After much deliberation, the CCG went out to consultation on changes to be made to the self-care prescribing formulary with a view to remove certain items from this. It is likely that if any such items are on the Care at the Chemist formulary then these will be discontinued from here too. The LPC communicated this consultation to pharmacies, and submitted a response. We await the results during the next financial year.

To safeguard any loss of income through formulary cuts in Care at the Chemist, the Chief Officer worked up solutions to expand Care at the Chemist into PGD-treated conditions such as urinary tract infections and impetigo. The aim was to reduce pressures on GP workload and through urgent and emergency care settings. It would also aid an increase in CPCS referrals as community pharmacies would be able to treat an expanded array of conditions. This unfortunately did not get approved by the CCG, however conversations continued between Liverpool CCG, NHS England & NHS Improvement and the LPC over this. It is hoped a workaround can be found in the next financial year.

Liverpool City Council

The LPC has been working alongside commissioners to drive community pharmacy public health commissioning.

The Chief Officer continued to work up proposals with the sexual health commissioner around expanded sexual health services in community pharmacy. He attended various sexual health strategy meetings where key stakeholders inputted into the proposed re-design of sexual health services. Costings were submitted to the council on this and we now await councillor’s decision on whether a redesign will be approved.

Time was also spent working up a bowel screening service to be implemented in Liverpool. This is still in early discussions.

NHS England & NHS Improvement

We continued to work alongside NHS England and the other LPC’s across Cheshire and Merseyside to develop cardiovascular services. The British Heart Foundation scheme was expanded to allow a further cohort of pharmacies to participate. Participation allows pharmacies to migrate onto the new NHS England and NHS Improvement commissioned blood pressure service. A pilot service whereby pharmacies test whether a cough is a bacterial or viral infection was also agreed and started at the end of the financial year in a small number of pharmacies.

National Service Development

The Chief Officer is part of a national group developing the service specification and associated documents for the new discharge medicines essential service.

Other Partners

The LPC has continued to work with other partners to explore innovative services within Liverpool pharmacies. HealthWatch conducted a survey of patient attitudes to Care at the Chemist following discussions between them and the LPC. The results were extremely positive. We also continued to work up the PAMAN service with Protelhealth Ltd. PAMAN will remove the need for pharmacies to blister pack for patients. Instead the pharmacy will send a MAR chart to a monitoring centre, where they will watch the patient take the medicine using a remote video device. During 19/20, the service specification was completed and signed off and the service piloted. We now await the green light from the council for expansion.

**Finances**

Budget

During the year, the LPC provided a levy holiday to contractors to reduce cash reserves. Despite this and budgeting at a loss, the LPC continued to accrue reserves. Our aim is to reduce our reserves to a level of six months as per PSNC guidance. To aid this, members unanimously agreed to cut the levy we take from pharmacies by 16.67%. Deducting money that we must pay to PSNC, we will run the LPC on £57,900 for 20/21.

**Wright Review**

PSNC and LPCs nationally commissioned a review into community pharmacy representation. During Quarter 4 of the year, the Chief Officer attended a focus group in Leeds to put his perspective of how the various representative bodies work. The committee also produced a response to the questionnaire sent out to all LPCs by Professor Wright of UEA. The results were due to be reported at a meeting in March, however this got cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of the review and what this means for the future of the LPC will be decided no doubt during 2020/21.

**Plan for 2020/2021**

At the end of the financial year in question, the city was gripped by the COVID-19 pandemic. This will no doubt change the expected course of 20/21, and we will have to see how the pandemic shifts some of the expected national and local service implementations. The LPC will continue to regularly brief pharmacies of developments and changes to any ways of working that occur as a result, and be here to help in any way we can.

We will push to re-start the re-engagement and collaboration with PCNs and work with commissioners to progress with planned new pharmacy service offerings that were put on hold due to the pandemic.

We will be here to support and engage pharmacies in Liverpool to the new world we find ourselves in – whatever that new world looks like.