**July 2021**

**An update from Community Pharmacy Liverpool**

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**AnnualReport  
2020 - 2021**

**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**

11 members sat on the committee over the course of the year. Ten 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)

Gemma Whitehead (Cohens)

Peter Beeley (Boots)

James Moir (Independent)

David Sanchez (Asda)

Dane Stratton Powell (Lloyds) also sat on the committee until August 2020. At that point the committee agreed to reduce membership from eleven to ten members, to better reflect the contractor make-up in Liverpool. Gemma Whitehead was Chair, Anna Mir was Vice-Chair and James Forshaw Treasurer.

**OFFICERS**

Matt Harvey was the Chief Officer for the year in question. David Barker was the Engagement Officer. Joe Clarke was Business Support Officer, but resigned in July. Thomas Wareing was welcomed as Business Support Officer from August.

**INTRODUCTION**

This report sets out the achievements of Liverpool LPC during the 2020/21 financial year. We negotiated and managed community pharmacy service contracts with numerous commissioners worth £1.775 million of income during the year in question.

**SUPPORTING OUR CONTRACTORS**

**COVID-19**

This year was overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The LPC changed its way of working rapidly; moving to virtual meetings as opposed to face-to-face. The committee met weekly for the first couple of months due to the ever-changing landscape our pharmacies found themselves in, to ensure expedient decision making occurred, and to plan how to support and communicate with our pharmacies. Decision making was enhanced through weekly meetings with NHS England, and PSNC. Pertinent information was then discussed and then communicated with pharmacies.

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.

At the outset of the pandemic, before the National Pandemic Delivery Service was commissioned, the Chief Officer worked on a regional level to set up Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service to deliver medicines for shielding and self-isolating patients. This support went on to be heavily utilised by Liverpool patients and pharmacies.

**PHARMACY COMMUNICATIONS**

The way in which the LPC team supported pharmacies changed. We stopped face-to-face visits and meetings and relied on telephone communications whilst still offering support where needed; being increasingly mindful of the immense pressure our pharmacies were under. As the year progressed, we ‘visited’ pharmacies virtually via Microsoft Teams. We saw an increase in support requests from pharmacies over PPE issues, staff shortages, support with how to continue pharmacy services, GP-Practice issues, and several problems whereby COVID-infected patients had entered the pharmacy. The LPC team sent regular communications to pharmacies and updated the website with useful links to the most up to date information.

In March The LPC created our first physical newsletter magazine that was distributed to all pharmacies.

**PHARMACY TRAINING**

Due to the lack of face-to-face training, we held our first virtual pharmacy events on subjects such as drug user services, Discharge Medicines Service, GP referrals into CPCS and the new Pharmacy First service. These have been successful, and attendees have told us that in future they would like a blended approach to events, with a mixture of face-to-face and virtual. Recordings of the events have been placed on YouTube, with links available for pharmacy team members to watch the event post-event.

**COMMUNITY PHARMACIST CONSULTATION SERVICE**

In November 2020 the GP Community Pharmacist Consultation service was launched nationally, in Liverpool we adopted a ‘soft launch’ for this service as we wanted to focus on implementing the new Pharmacy First service as a hook to engage the surgeries. We held a joint meeting with our Cheshire and Merseyside colleagues that enabled pharmacies to claim their set-up payments for this. For those unable to join this was recorded, and we also created guides that contained all of the required information.

**PHARMACY QUALITY SCHEME**

The Pharmacy Quality Scheme 2020-21 details were released in September, this round included criteria and key objectives for PCN Pharmacy Leads to engage with their PCN colleagues and liaise over flu and business continuity. The LPC team held meetings with the Pharmacy Leads to discuss their requirements, then helped to facilitate work between the leads and their respective pharmacies. We facilitated evening Zoom meetings and contacted pharmacies who did not appear to be engaging with their leads to enable pharmacies to maximise their quality criteria points.

The overall declaration for PQS was 128 contractors with 2 non declaring.

**CONTRACTUAL REPORTING**

Due to the pandemic routine contractual reporting was suspended.

**CONTRACT MONITORING**

During this year, contract monitoring was paused. We are still able and willing to support pharmacies as this resumes in 21/22. 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 2020/21, we maintained all commissioned services within the city, as well as achieving the commissioning of new services, and expanding the current offering of others. 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 at the outset of the pandemic to involve nine new pharmacies, and the formulary was extended considerably. Pharmacies were paid upfront to stock the new items required. by two pharmacies to allow for greater access across key bank holiday times such as Easter and Christmas. Alongside this expansion, a one-hour delivery service was commissioned in case of urgent need for palliative medicines as well as a Care Home at the Chemist service. This allowed care homes access to homely remedy items that are required in case of need in COVID patients. Both were commissioned in case of need due to COVID, but both had little activity.

The biggest success was gaining the agreement to commission the Pharmacy First Service. This will launch in April 21 and will see pharmacists being able to supply POMs to patients for urinary tract infections, bacterial sore throats, and conjunctivitis.

**LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL**

The LPC has been worked tirelessly to ensure pharmacies did not lose out on income due to lower levels of activity due to the pandemic. We reached an agreement with Liverpool City Council for pharmacies to be £249,040of funding. This was to ensure pharmacies did not lose out on income in Q1 due to lower patient contacts given the pandemic. Any service provision the pharmacies did complete will be clawed back and we continue to liaise with the council on how this will happen. However without this put in place, pharmacies would have lost over £55,000 in lost service revenue.

The Chief Officer proactively worked with the Smoking commissioner and SmokeFree Liverpool to move from paper based NRT vouchers to an electronic solution through PharmOutcomes. This was implemented in the Summer of 2020 and helped to ensure voucher numbers did not decrease.

The Chief Officer continued to work alongside the sexual health commissioner as the tender was produced and bids invited for the new sexual health service in Liverpool. Uplifts in pharmacy expenditure were achieved and included in the tender requirements, as were an increase of sexual health service provision within community pharmacies. A key task for 21/22 will be to work with the tender winner to ensure this becomes a reality.

The LPC gained representation on the council’s Health Protection Board. Member John Davey attends this on the LPC’s behalf and reports back regularly. This has allowed the LPC to submit proposals to the council for a raft of different services, such as the supply of Vitamin D to those at risk of deficiency. At the time of writing these are still being considered.

On the topic of proposals, reacting to the massive reduction of supervised consumption of opiate substitute therapies, the Chief Officer also submitted proposals on a fundamental shift in how pharmacies can support patients on drug treatments. He also worked alongside PSNC to produce a positioning statement as this is a national issue. Work with the council on this continues.

In response to outbreaks of pockets of abuse towards pharmacy staff during the pandemic as the teams struggled to cope with increased workloads and stressed patients the LPC worked in collaboration with the council communications team. The output was two videos launched on twitter and other social media platforms, sending a very strong clear message to the public around being kind and courteous to pharmacy staff. This demonstrated how the LPC can work with new stakeholders and have an effective reach using social media.

**NHS ENGLAND & NHS IMPROVEMENT**

Communications stepped up throughout the year due to the pandemic, and weekly meetings were held. Commissioned cardiovascular services were stopped, and towards the end of the year the Chief Officer began to work with colleagues to see how these could be re-started; recognising the new healthcare landscape and local system needs.

At the start of the year, the Chief Officer secured enhanced payments for Care at the Chemist products when prices shot up. Agreement was made to apply these changes prospectively. Agreement was also secured to increase the Care at the Chemist dispensing fee to reflect the new single activity fee.

Given reduced patient demand, Care at the Chemist spend was significantly lower in 20/21 than in previous years. The Chief Officer turned this issue into an opportunity and initiated discussions around the shortfall being used on a Pharmacy First PGD service. NHSE&I would not commission this due to their inability to create and sign-off PGDs. However, they agreed to move funding to Liverpool CCG to achieve this. After many meetings and negotiations, this was finally agreed between all parties.

**NATIONAL SERVICE DEVELOPMENT**

The Chief Officer was part of a national steering group developing the service specification and toolkit for the Discharge Medicines Service, as well as being involved in work involving drug user services as aforementioned.

**OTHER PARTNERS**

The LPC has continued to work with other partners to explore innovative services within Liverpool pharmacies. As already mentioned, we have worked with the SmokeFree Liverpool and local drug and alcohol services on new approaches to commissioned pharmacy services.

**PHARMACY HEROES AWARDS**

In 2020 we launched a Pharmacy Heroes Award to recognise our Pharmacy Teams who had gone that extra mile to support patients and colleagues in the most stressful period in modern community pharmacy history.

This was advertised in our regular communications, and we received over 30 entries all with heart-warming stories. All the nominations received a signed certificate from Matt Ashton, Director of Public Health Liverpool, to recognise their valuable contribution.

Two candidates stood out demonstrating compassion and kindness towards others, Paula Hansard from Melwood Pharmacy and Rishi Bhatia from Clear Pharmacy. Our thanks go to Boots and John Lewis for the welcome donation of gifts.



**FINANCES**

During 2020/2021, we took £95000 in levies from Liverpool pharmacies. This was a 16.67% decrease from 19/20 levels. Of this, we paid the PSNC £37,098 leaving the LPC to work from £57,902 of income generated from the pharmacies that we represent. We also generated some income from our PharmOutcomes license. Our aim has been to reduce our reserves, and we achieved this spending £12,000 more than we received in income. Members reviewed this at year-end and have decided to maintain current levy levels to reduce reserves further, and whilst we await the outcome of the national representation review.

The pharmacy representation review looked at the rates of income of each LPC. This demonstrated that Liverpool has one of the lowest contractor levy incomes in the country.

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

In February 2021, the LPC Engagement Officer called pharmacies that had not yet claimed their entitlement for COVID-19 PPE expenses. All were unaware that they were able to do so and therefore were not planning on claiming. Following his intervention all subsequently claimed and the value was an estimated £35,000. This, added to the £55,000 in council provider relief payments; over £18,000 secured for additional palliative care service provision, and over £21,000 secured through the uplift in Care at the Chemist fee meant that these four acts alone brought in £129,939.65 in additional income for our pharmacies in 2020/21. This is more than double that pharmacies spent on their LPC in Liverpool, and does not take into consideration the rest of the services being offered by community pharmacies in Liverpool that are negotiated and maintained through the LPC’s strong relationships with local commissioners. Nor does it quantify the priceless support and advice given to our pharmacies through these unprecedented times. Liverpool pharmacies get a valuable return for their investment.

**COMMUNITY PHARMACY REPRESENTATION**

PSNC and LPCs nationally commissioned a review into community pharmacy representation. In June of 2020, the review was published. The committee spent time reading and reflecting on the recommendations. Further views were provided and focus groups attended on the next steps over the year. We still await the final outcome of the what the proposed changes will be, and contractor vote is planned for 21/22. On following one of the recommendations, Liverpool LPC changed its name to Community Pharmacy Liverpool in March 21. We await the outcome of the Review Steering Group’s work and any subsequent contractor vote to see whether Community Pharmacy Liverpool will continue to exist in its current form for much longer. Whilst we wait, we have plenty to be getting on with to ensure the best support for our pharmacies, and to ensure new planned services are landed well.

**PLAN FOR 2021/2022**

The upcoming financial year will hopefully see business return to some form of new normal. Contractual and service elements that had been paused during this financial year will undoubtedly resume, and we will need to ensure our pharmacies are aware of what they need to do when. A key objective of ours is to ensure the new sexual health services are well remunerated and available in as many pharmacies as possible. We will also work hard to roll-out GP referrals into the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service, and maximise Pharmacy First through appropriate promotion, and attempt to increase the ailments and treatments covered by the service.

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 just as we always have.