

Community Pharmacy Lancashire
(Lancashire Local Pharmaceutical Committee)

Chair's Statement 2019-20

I am sure I can speak on behalf of the entire pharmacy community when I say that life prior to Covid seems a lifetime ago, however it is my responsibility and obligation as your chair to reflect back on our year in 2019/20. All of our lives changed forever towards the end of that financial year when Covid hit the UK, and it only seems right that I start by briefly reiterating some of the words from the Covid letter that I sent to all of you, before I resume with my statement to summarise the activity of 2019/20.

Words like pride, bravery, resilience, compassion and dedication do not go far enough to describe how remarkable our pharmacy family across the footprint stepped up during the pandemic. You have all behaved inspirationally throughout, with our teams taking it as an honour and privilege to often being the only wholly accessible provider of primary care services within their communities. We are even more critical in supporting our communities through this period of time, and so the decision makers will simply have no choice but to accept, applaud, respect and value that community pharmacy was at the very heart of NHS services throughout the traumatic period, as it always has been before, and always will be in the future.

Now to the formalities of this statement, and to review what has once again been another busy year for community pharmacy contractors, and for Community Pharmacy Lancashire (CPL), as your Board of committee members and supported by our executive team, in representing your best interests and supporting your work, right across our footprint. I would like to start by giving thanks to all my board colleagues and executive on the committee. I am an incredibly fortunate chair to have a very dynamic board of committee members, amongst us there are great skills and supportive challenge, combined with a strong team spirit, which extends into our brilliant executive team in whom we are fortunate to have, a team filled with experience and vibrancy. In particular, I would like to thank Richard Wood, our Vice- Chair, not only for supporting my role but also with his expertise on market entry, our Treasurer Ben Fell, Martin Smart who leads our Governance Committee and finally Kath Gulson our superb Chief Executive Officer, who has been instrumental in delivering on the ambitions of the board and getting CPL its rightful position at the table of the relevant discussions.

During the year, we were sorry to see Thorrun Govind leave, but we keep in touch and we are delighted to see her continue to champion community pharmacy. In order to ensure the correct composition of contractor types across our footprint, we were delighted to welcome Riaz Hinglotwala to replace Thorrun as an independent representative on our board. My remaining thanks go to Fin Mc Caul, who as the Regional Representative for the PSNC, has continued to remain incredibly accessible for us, always happy to attend our committee meetings, and give us the insights and updates we require from national conversations.

The beginning of the 2019/20 financial year brought in another big change for contractors, in the announcement of a five-year funding settlement, and it presented a headline structure for a paradigm shift in how the NHS sees community pharmacy operating over that period of time.

For the 2019/20 Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF), the headline elements included:

- Integration of Community Pharmacy within the NHS Long-term Plan through Primary Care Network (PCN) involvement
- Enhancement of the previous national advanced service NUMSAS into the Community Pharmacy Consultation Service (CPCS) to include both referrals from out of hours for the urgent supply of medicines and support for minor illness presentation
- Evolution of the quality scheme from the Quality Payment Scheme (PQS) to the Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS)
- Phase out of the establishment payment
- Reduction in the number of Medicines Usage Reviews (MURS) that could be performed

CPL has worked incredibly hard throughout 2019/20 to support contractors, both proactively and reactively to CPCF, as well as represent their interests locally to drive further opportunity for commissioning and recognition. In June 2019, we published our 'Plan on a Page', which articulated our approach over the short, medium, and long term in facilitating the best possible outcomes for community pharmacy contractors. Our promise to contractors is that we will persistently:

- Provide them with the **practical** support that they need
- Be **representative** of their best interests
- Support them to be **visionary** in creating an exciting future for community pharmacy

Despite the many challenges that community pharmacy faces, none more so than the financial difficulties that the current contractual framework has created, there is also much to be positive about, and I am delighted with how CPL has supported this. Across the year we have hosted no less than twenty-one contractor events, ranging from training events for newly commissioned local services to our massive PCN contractor events right across the footprint. We have seen new services commissioned or piloted which include:

- Morecambe Bay Paediatric Minor Ailments Service
- GP Digital Minor Illness Referrals (DMIRS) including PGDs in Darwen
- BHF BP Checks in Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool

We are proud of our communications approach with contractors and continue to review and develop this. We have a great website that I very much encourage you all to keep a regular check on, our weekly newsletters are read by over 820 people, and regularly gets positive feedback.

I am also really pleased with how both CPL facilitated, and contractors engaged with, the approach to community pharmacy involvement in PCNs. Our main contractor event attracted our largest ever gathering, and the subsequent locality events ensured we were able to appoint and mobilise the 36 PCN pharmacy leads. A great deal of time and effort went into the planning of this to allow all contractors to claim appropriately for the relevant elements of PQS. Our approach involved sending out a physical information pack to every contractor via Royal Mail to getting attendance from Clinical Directors at the local events. We have since also provided further support for the nominated PCN leads through a training event and networking facilitation amongst them.

We relentlessly champion the importance and value that community pharmacy brings to the table by engagement with all local commissioners, stakeholders and our Members of Parliament to name a few, and this continues to be collaborative and constructive. We are now regularly requested to contribute to health and social care strategy development, and so this gives us the opportunity to always ensure community pharmacy contractors are not only fully represented but positioned to be actively involved where appropriate.

At CPL we welcomed the decision to commission the review into how community pharmacy representation works at both local and national level by Professor David Wright and his team. At this critical stage of change for our sector, it is absolutely right that we ensure we have the right structures in place, resourced appropriately to ensure community pharmacy contractors get absolutely the right deal for a successful future.

Writing this from my pharmacy, this all seems like a generation ago. We have faced into Covid and the challenges that came along with it and these have accelerated us into our future, establishing new ways of working, and consolidating community pharmacy as being the first port of call with both our patients and our peers.

We do not know what the future holds, yet I am confident I will be reporting back this time next year with more pride and admiration in the resourcefulness and resilience of the pharmacy workforce.

As I bring this statement to a close I would like to leave you with three things. Firstly, I wish all your families health and happiness, secondly I wish to see our workforce working at the top of their licence and lastly that we have a thriving network of community pharmacies.