February 2023

Dear Contractors,

Community Pharmacy is facing unprecedented challenges that you are dealing with every day. It has therefore never been more important that our sector has a strong voice both nationally and locally to ensure we not only survive, but also thrive, and can contribute strongly to the health needs of our communities. I am writing to you today to detail changes and gather your support for our proposals about local representation in Devon.

Last year the Pharmacy Representation Review Steering Group (RSG) published plans for changes to national and local representation that built on the 2020 Wright review proposals. The RSG proposals were put to a national vote and 88.6% of contractors nationally voted in favour in June 2022. Since then, both the PSNC and LPCs have been working hard to implement the proposals with a programme of activities known as the Transforming Pharmacy Representation programme (TAPR).

While the PSNC (to be known as Community Pharmacy England) implements the national changes included in the RSG proposals, we in Devon have completed a thorough review of local representation, keeping the mandated RSG proposals as our guide. Our committee used the resources resources provided by the PSNC to analyse our position. Based around the 5 key questions that we as an LPC needed to answer we reviewed our current operation and also looked forward to what we believed the RSG recommendations wanted local pharmacy representation to look like for the future. We worked with other LPCs around the Southwest to understand how we compared and operated against other similar LPC’s in the geographic area and using this information challenged our decisions and options, including merging or federating with neighbouring LPCs as well as retaining our current footprint. A key part of the proposals is an increase in funding to the national body, with a corresponding decrease for LPCs phased in over 2 years,  therefore we looked at budgets for both 23/24 and 24/25 to assess our financial viability in light of these increased contributions and we are confident we will meet these challenges within the current income projections.

Throughout this process there have been some key principles we have adopted: local representation must be better, or as good for contractors as our current model; the representative body must be sustainable financially whilst ensuring contractor support is not diminished; we must ensure our excellent working relationships with our system partners can be maintained to foster collaborative working and create future opportunities for contractors; and contractors should not be asked to contribute more to compensate for the increase in contributions to the national body. I would like to thank the committee for their hard work and diligence in scrutinising the proposals and navigating a path to our local proposals.

Following this process, we have concluded that local representation in Devon will be best served by maintaining a representative body that covers the Devon area without merging or federating with another LPC at this time. Meeting the increased financial contributions will require efficiency gains but we have already started this work and are confident that this will be met. We will continue to review this and to also have closer collaboration with neighbouring LPCs in the future.

In order to implement the changes recommended by the RSG proposals we need your support. Our Constitution needs to change to reflect some of the proposals. We also need to have a minor extension of the current committee cycle for three months to allow time for a new committee to be voted in. Both of these changes require a contractor vote to support them and in this information pack you will find further details about the changes proposed. You can vote in one of two ways: we recommend you vote in advance using the attached voting form; or you can attend our special general meeting on Zoom on the evening of 6th March 2023

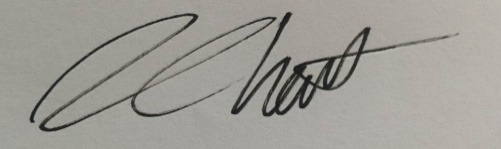
A vote in favour of the proposals will mean we can continue our work representing you and supporting you. A vote against the proposals will mean a further phase of options appraisal where we will need to understand what other viable options contractors would view as more acceptable.

Attached are documents which will support your voting decision:

* A letter outlining proposed changes to the LPC constitution
* A copy of the proposed new LPC constitution with highlighted changes
* Notice of the Special General Meeting planned for 6th March 2023 at 7pm.
* Agenda for Special General meeting including registration details to attend.
* An email/postal voting form

I strongly urge you to vote on these proposals as it is vital that we move forward with the clear backing of you, our hard-working contractors.

Best wishes



Andrew Howitt

Chair, Devon LPC