

PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

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PSNC meeting – March 2008

PSNC met on 4th and 5th of March 2008.

NHS IT Update

Guidance for pharmacy contractors on EPS Release 2 has been sent out with this month's issue of CPN. PSNC is still in discussion with the Department of Health on a number of policy issues linked to Release 2. In some cases, proposed solutions will be tested during initial implementation, for example the way in which supplementary clinical information is passed to patients in future.

It is a priority to ensure that the system supports pharmacies and meets the needs of pharmacy staff, as once the EPS system is fully operational it will substantially change dispensing processes within pharmacies. PSNC is working to ensure that all costs and other resource implications are identified and assessed.

Pharmacy system suppliers have a degree of flexibility in how their systems will support the dispensing process in future. PSNC is therefore encouraging pharmacy contractors to take time now to learn about EPS Release 2 and make suggestions for the further development of software to ensure that pharmacy systems continue to support the efficient delivery of the NHS community pharmacy service.

Contract Funding Issues

The committee considered the severe impact on contractors of the reduced funding levels. Full explanatory guidance is being prepared to help contractors understand the implications for income in the forthcoming months. Measures are being taken to address the system problems revealed by this year's experience.

PSNC Research

PSNC has agreed to commission research to support the evidence base for community pharmacy development after the positive reception given to the joint paper published recently by the PAGB and PSNC on minor ailments. The new research will help support the development of robust cases for community pharmacy involvement in public health focused services and will help facilitate both local and national negotiations.

LPC Support

PSNC will be highlighting to LPCs the need to evaluate the likely impact of changes in local GP opening times and to examine the effect that the change will have on local pharmacy networks.

This follows a recent agreement with the government and the BMA for general practices to open for longer periods of time.

Sustainable Development

The service development sub-committee debated the impact of sustainable development policies on health care. The issue will grow in importance in future years and will inevitably impact on the future development of community pharmacy services. PSNC agreed to take sustainable development into account in future negotiations of the pharmacy contract.

Capacity Improvement Programme (CIP)

The Committee were fully briefed on the implementation issues that have been identified with the NHSBSA Prescription Pricing Division's Capacity Improvement Programme. The work being undertaken to correct errors and the support available to contractors on particular issues such as prescription switching and the unnecessary return of prescription forms for clarification was reviewed. Detailed guidance was issued to pharmacy contractors as a supplement to this month's Community Pharmacy News. The latest guidance can be found on the PSNC website (www.psn.org.uk/CIP).

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Notes for editors:

1. The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) is the body that represents community pharmacy on NHS matters and seeks to secure the best possible NHS services provided by pharmacy contractors in England and Wales.

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