

2014-15: the year in summary

Healthcare landscape

Following on from the reconfiguration of the healthcare system during 2013, and our focus on understanding the system, navigating our way through it and developing new relationships, 2014-15 priorities have been to build on this earlier work of developing with the aim to further integrate community pharmacy into emerging pathways.

Future Fit is a local initiative transforming service delivery across Shropshire and Telford, also including Powys as local NHS secondary care services, are provided to many residents living just over the border. The LPC has had discussions with the Clinical Chair of Transformational Change around networked urgent care – a priority within Future Fit clinical design remit. The initial exploration from the clinician / patient perspective is now moving onto more detailed discussions about changing systems and pathways. With a key focus on keeping people out of A & E, we have continued to emphasise the role community pharmacy has within this agenda.

The LPC has worked collaboratively with the Pharmacy Local Professional Network across Staffordshire and Shropshire, which has had great success with harnessing extra Winter Pressures funding to provide the Common Ailments scheme from December through to end March. Unfortunately, the Emergency Supply scheme of 2013/14 wasn't recommissioned, but we continue to use both these as excellent examples of how community pharmacy can contribute to the Future Fit Urgent Care agenda.

The LPC has regularly attended public CCG board meetings and Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) open meetings, to continuously lobby for community pharmacy engagement.

At an Area level, change has continued apace as midway through 2014, announcements were made of yet more NHS restructuring, with Shropshire and Staffordshire Local Area Team to merge with Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Local Area Team to become NHS North Midlands.

Undeterred, the excellent collaborative work across the three local LPC's and the LPN has continued, with the successful commissioning of a winter flu service across the Area footprint. With real obstacles and challenges on the way, and a less than satisfactory delayed start date of 1st November, we are delighted that Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin contractors embraced the new service, with 53 local pharmacies signing up to the SLA.

The reconfigured NHS North Midlands entered shadow Board format in January 2014, with the new organisation to be fully operational from April 2015. So, for the second year in a row, we approach a year end uncertain of what happens next.

Services and commissioning

Lynne Deavin has continued her work with the LPC, supporting service development and stakeholder engagement both locally and at Area level. The divergence of Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin has not only doubled the workload but identified key differences in local approaches and perspectives, which makes the work of the LPC all the more complex.

With SLA's for locally commissioned pharmacy services having on the whole, rolled over for 12 months, it was no surprise when commissioners started the renegotiation of services and the formalisation of contracts to national templates. The LPC has engaged in vigorous discussions with commissioners and the concept of one contractual template for all service providers, whether nurses, community teams or pharmacies. We have continuously lobbied on points of difference in core NHS contracts, within an environment of pressure on NHS costs and commissioner expectations of reducing or static service fee structures. This has inevitably led to delays in some new contractual arrangements being put into place but we have remained resolute in getting the best for the contractor with those commissioners who have engaged with us. We have always endeavoured to point out to contractors the key elements for consideration in making the individual commercial decisions on whether to provide the service or not. The new core public health and NHS contracts are robust, legally binding documents which can appear very threatening. Where feasible, the LPC has tried to reach agreement with commissioners that several different service specifications can all be covered within one legal framework document, and continue to lobby for those contractors with multiple sites to have just one contractual document covering all their pharmacies.

As we approach year end at March 2015, eight months of discussion on a revised EHC contract for Shropshire have concluded with a new EHC service contract commencing April 2015. Following organisational restructure within Shropshire Council, changes within the Community NHS Trust, and a smoking cessation tender awarded to the GP federation, discussions are ongoing with Help2Change around the current pharmacy stop smoking provision within Shropshire HWB area. Following a local tender process, Telford & Wrekin pharmacy contractors have been informed of the new Stop Smoking provider for their HWB locality, which now offers these contractors the opportunity to once again engage with providing smoking cessation services.

Regulatory

Lindsey Fairbrother continues to support the LPC as Secretary and lead for regulatory issues, including responding to contract applications and relocations, and communicating with national and local bodies on matters that continue to affect contractors.

In 2014/15 there were seven contract applications, two for distance selling and five (three in the same location) for routine applications under the 2013 NHS Regulations. In addition, there were 4 relocations. Of the routine applications, all were granted at a local level, but two were subsequently dismissed upon appeal nationally. The LPC remain concerned at the discrepancy between local and national decision making and scrutinize all applications carefully in order to represent local contractors.

By 1st April 2015, Health and Wellbeing Boards have had a statutory responsibility to produce a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment. This is primarily used by NHS England as the basis for making decisions in support of pharmacy applications through Market Entry Regulations, and when commissioning services to meet local health needs. PNA's are vital publications that can have real impact on community pharmacy, so as you would expect, the LPC has input significant time and resource throughout the year to meetings with HWB Directors of Public Health and other key stakeholders, representing pharmacy contractors on steering groups, negotiating on design and content of community pharmacy questionnaires, commenting on draft PNA's and engaging with other interested parties such as local Healthwatch organisations. As we finish the year, Telford and

Wrekin PNA has been consulted on and published. Shropshire has had some challenges but is on line to publish by early May.

Governance and contractor engagement

LPC governance has also been high on the agenda, with a new LPC model constitution proposed by PSNC, to come into effect April 2015. Shropshire LPC commented robustly on various draft proposals, but were supportive of the new finalised constitution, which was voted on by contractors and at an EGM in January 2015. Early 2015 also saw nominations and voting for LPC membership as the 4-yearly committee cycle ended March 2015. Committee member attendance details are given in the attached appendix.

The annual AGM was this year an evening event, followed by a very informative talk on the new GPhC standards and inspection process. This was so successful, that the same format was adopted for the EGM, with a talk on EPS2 by HSCIC (Health and Social Care Information Centre). As we reach year end, the first EPS2 pilot site has gone “live” in Telford and Wrekin, with a Shrewsbury practice identified for early May. The LPC is planning further contractor engagement events throughout 2014/15. We continue to publish quarterly newsletters. Ideally we would like to see the new upgraded LPC website becoming the primary source of information for local contractors and encourage everyone to visit it

(<http://psnc.org.uk/shropshire-lpc>)

We encourage all pharmacists and contractors to engage with the LPC and feedback to us about concerns and issues. Any contractor is welcome to attend a LPC meeting as an observer. Please contact the LPC Secretary in advance if you would like to come along.

Throughout 2015/16, the LPC will continue to work tirelessly for local contractors. I thank the committee members and Lindsey and Lynne for their hard work throughout this last year, and approach the forthcoming year with enthusiasm and commitment.

Nicola Bowen

Chair, Shropshire LPC