

Somerset LPC AGM – CEO's Report

Michael Lennox

Dear Chair, Committee and Contractor colleagues, my thanks for your time and for the opportunity to share some key reflections on 2021-22

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the commitment and hard work of our Chair, Vice-Chair, Executive and full committee, you are all true ambassadors for community pharmacy and committed servants to our contractors in Somerset.

Of course an AGM is mainly about reflecting backwards, and 2021-22 was another difficult year at times, as we saw a reduction in the Covid impact, we have had to live with the increasing operational, financial, and indeed existential impacts of our national contract under-funding, affecting ALL community pharmacy contractors as businesses and as teams.

We remain trapped in our current national contract construct, delivering lower returns and limited financial sustainability for us all. More on that in the look ahead following this AGM review.

The LPC acknowledges the extent of the current financial pressures on our contractors and would like to thank our contractor teams for their resilience in such circumstances.

It is important and even in these truly torrid times, not impossible to believe that better days will come, certainly the recent few years could not have been much more challenging.

Your LPC has been working relentlessly on your collective behalf to enable better days, faster.

We are firmly committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure that you get the support you need to survive and thrive.

We constantly push hard to get our pharmacy healthcare teams equitable treatment as key primary care health teams. Let's not forget that justifiable sense of pride you rightly deserve to have! You stand up, deliver care and save lives, day in day out?

Building on our strong and trusting relationships in Somerset as a health system, we generally get the local support you need, and we continue to relentlessly lobby as required on all our behalf. Last year we saw the end stage of the old CCG regime, and the emergence of the new ICS, Integrated Care System or NHS Somerset. Your LPC has used the transition to ensure we are better positioned to make the strong case for community pharmacy locally.

I would like to share some thoughts on actual LPC service delivery highlights for last year.

Last year was another challenging Flu season with Covid-care-compliance issues sharpening operational delivery difficulties. Yet our numbers vaccinated grew to make it our biggest year ever. I said this the year before too, and yet every year we DO MORE, and this is true of the start to this current season too.

Your LPC has been actively involved in all aspects of the strategic development of healthcare in Somerset. We are included in, influencing it and beginning to have positive impact on the new models of care and ways of working being created for this next phase of health delivery. We have cemented our bonds to the new system, and we invest in that to ensure we can make the best case for community pharmacy to be supported and developed locally.

The national pharmacy contract has been further renegotiated to align on how we are rewarded with this new more integrated NHS model. We can maybe see our future in what is already happening to change the role and revenue reward for pharmacy contractors in Wales and Scotland.

I predicted 4 years ago that we would see this increasing emphasis on being rewarded for service rather than standalone supply. It is our contract destiny, and with GPCPCS, DMS, Blood Pressure Case Finding now landed, and another set of service enhancements, eg further NMS expansion and Contraception Service in the latest agreement being revealed right now, we must be service orientated and get more service ready.

We will support you in any way that we can, we believe that only an effective local LPC can truly represent and influence on your behalf. Taking the national basic specs for services and making it work brilliantly locally is where we can make the difference.

That requires us to have strong stakeholder impact, and we have and we are driving these service implementations on your behalf. For instance our uptake and run-rate on GPCPCS has been near the best in the whole country to date, but we know there is much more to be generated from that, both from Gps and in the new soon to be included in CPCS settings ie A+Es and MIUs.

Our destiny lies with integrated Primary Care, collaborating with our General Practice colleagues and in the maturation of the Primary Care Networks (PCN).

Your LPC continued to work during 21-22 to ensure each PCN had a live and active Community Pharmacy Lead PCN and we look forward to strengthening this important aspect of local integration with the much appreciated support of our ICS and NHSE colleagues locally. The Leads are currently going through a development programme, helping them to be stronger local leaders for you.

We had been granted community pharmacy support funding for both digital integration and for local service development in 21-22 and again as we move through 22-23. This support will enable you as contractors to part-take more effectively in new services for new monies, making it clear we are in the business of integrated clinical care.

I will close with another expression of thanks. Myself and my LPC officer colleagues are eternally grateful for the professionalism and the positive LPC participation you exhibit in your day-to-day practice.

Everything we worked on together last year generated a class leading outcome, our collective PQS completion was fast and first-class.

Anything reasonable that is asked of us, we get right together.

At the risk of being provocatively optimistic, I believe we are well-placed to move from what is a difficult present to a soon to be more rewarding future position.

Michael Lennox

CEO Community Pharmacy Somerset

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