



Chief Officer Report 23/24

During this period, we have seen much change both within the LPC, now Community Pharmacy Somerset, within the CCG now ICB and within Public Health and NHS England.

As I take up the role of Chief Officer, I am privileged to be surrounded by a dedicated committee and officers who remain strong and focused on supporting our contractors and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for everything they do.

Looking back at what's gone before is really what the AGM Chief Officer report is about, but looking back further over the last few years, certain words and phrases are repeated: *increasing operational pressures, financial impact, national contract underfunding, workforce shortages*, this will sound familiar to all of you. Indeed in 21/22 here in Somerset we were discussing how we remain trapped in a national contract delivering lower returns & limited financial sustainability. Here now in 2024 we still await a new contract.

Community Pharmacy Somerset acknowledges that little has changed relating to those pressures over the last 12 months but also what hasn't changed is how community pharmacy works relentlessly to support local communities despite those huge financial challenges. Workforce shortages and the ongoing medicines supply issues have become, and remain, a daily headache.

Reflecting over this year, the team have concentrated on representing community pharmacy in every interaction, discussions and meetings held by our commissioners.

We have kept pharmacies up to date on requirements and opportunities via the bulletin, WhatsApp groups and through email. We have reminded contractors in the lead up to any mandatory deadline and supported those that may have missed any deadlines.

This year saw The launch of Pharmacy First services which was a huge success in Somerset with 95% of our pharmacies ready to go on 'go live' day. This was something to be immensely proud of and the support was seen within not only pharmacy teams but within PCN groups, including our colleagues in General Practice. We woke to 'HAPPY PHARMACY FIRST DAY' from some of our GP colleagues in the WhatsApp groups who wished us well as we embarked on these new services.

Activity by Somerset contractors by March 2024 saw 51 practices had made minor ailment referrals resulting in over 2000 consultations completed. By June this year we saw 9

489 referrals from practices for minor ailments/pharmacy first to community pharmacy.



100% of Somerset pharmacies returned their CPAF audit questions before the deadline, possibly only one of a few LPC areas nationally to reach maximum returns.

This year also saw our contractors provide 40% of all covid vaccinations delivered in the county.

The attendance at our Otoscope/Throat training in February was 100% attended and 120 employed pharmacists and locums engaged and attended the sessions.

Our position remains to represent you in everything we do and on a daily basis the team continues to handle a wide range of local queries including operational and contractual issues, payments and claims guidance and offering advice and support for services such as Pharmacy First, Hypertension, Contraception and Smoking Cessation.

With over 98% of pharmacies nationally signed up to provide the pharmacy first service we continue to use both national and local data to identify and support pharmacies with service delivery. We also continue to monitor national data to enable us to highlight to contractors missing opportunities and to inform discussions with the ICB and other commissioners.

The support given to us by our NHS Somerset system with funding opportunities to grow and make existing core services easier to deploy and manage is invaluable. During this financial period, we have received support to make our Pharmacy First, Hypertension and Oral Contraception services flow in a timely manner and this has resulted in reduced paperwork for our pharmacies. Support was also provided for the IP Pathfinder sites. We have 4 across Somerset who are ready to start once everything is in place.

Our future includes the need for Independent Prescribers within our workforce and we had another 12 IP pharmacists trained within Somerset. We are working closely with HUC to offer DPP options for future cohorts of IP pharmacists undergoing training.

I know pharmacy always 'talks about the light at the end of the tunnel' and 'change is transformational' and for those who have worked in the industry for many years will have seen and heard these quotes many times before. I can't promise those things, but I can report that change is happening and that we are being invited to the table on many new and existing projects locally. Our close working relationship continues despite the recent changes both within Community Pharmacy Somerset and the ICB structures. Nationally with the released Darzi report and the impact that Community Pharmacy England is making representing contractors on the political stage we will start to see the positive change in what has been a very negative period for community pharmacy.

Myself and the CPS Team are looking forward to representing you for the next 12 months when hopefully some of the changes we have seen on the horizon start to come to fruition.