

Issue 1
December 2009

Welcome to the first of my bulletins which I intend to issue following meetings of the CPW Board to keep contractors informed about the important work we do on behalf of the contractor network across Wales. I hope that you will find it useful. Please get in touch if you have any questions or comments.

Community Pharmacy Day at the National Assembly

CPW organised an extremely successful Community Pharmacy Day event at the National Assembly on 18 November. The day, sponsored by Jonathan Morgan AM and Jenny Randerson AM, provided us with an opportunity to demonstrate to decision makers and opinion formers the important services community pharmacists deliver to patients every day. It also allowed us the chance to talk to Assembly Members and their advisors, Government Officials and advisors and representatives of the new Local Health Boards who attended during the day.

The highlight of the day was the attendance of Health Minister, Edwina Hart, AM who delivered the keynote address which was extremely positive and supportive of community pharmacy and outlined an ambitious agenda for the future of community pharmacy led services. She emphasised the urgent need to get to grips with medicines waste and signalled a willingness to explore a move towards 28 day prescribing and repeat dispensing as a mechanism for addressing the problem. CPW will be following up these discussions as a matter of urgency.

All in all it was a very successful event. My thanks to all those who contributed towards it.

Not Dispensed Schemes

Colleagues will be aware that the Board issued a statement in relation to not-dispensed schemes following the September meeting after which I received a small number of queries from contractors concerning schemes already being operated by some LHBs in Wales. I promised to raise their concerns with the Board and ask Board members to clarify their position. Attached to this bulletin is a further statement that the Board has issued following its last meeting for your information.



Notes from The Chairman's Desk



MUR Fraud Measurement Exercises

PSNC has recently issued guidance to contractors in England following approaches from PCTs requesting copies of MUR forms, using post-payment verification as the justification for the request. In response, PSNC stated that they have doubts that the disclosure of patient sensitive information, in this particular exercise, complies with the NHS Code on Confidentiality. The Board decided to issue similar guidance to colleagues in Wales following advice that some LHBs had started to make similar approaches to Wales based contractors. The advice is attached to this bulletin.

Changes to the CPW Constitution

The Board has recently decided to move to a calendar of quarterly meetings and has agreed to encourage regional committees to follow suit. This will lead to a reduction in the costs of staging Board and Committee meetings and will hopefully open up opportunities for us to stage other events for us to meet with contractors and other stakeholders.

PSNC has recently changed its constitution and has charged the CPW Board with the task of electing the PSNC representative for Wales. The Board needs to agree a mechanism for future elections and the matter will be on the agenda of the January meeting.

Shortages & Supply Chain Issues

The Board has been aware for some time about the concerns of contractors about shortages and supply chain issues and the need to find an urgent solution. CPW continues to make representations to Government and to manufacturers and wholesalers in connection with the problems being experienced by contractors across Wales.

The Board received details of the key legal and ethical obligations on wholesalers and registered pharmacies in relation to the supply and trading of medicines. The details are attached to this bulletin for your information.

Essential Small Pharmacy Scheme

The Board has agreed to apply to the Welsh Assembly Government for 3.9% uplift in the target payment to ESPS contractors for 2010/11.



LHB Directed Audits & Matters of Interpretation

I have received a number of complaints recently from contractors regarding LHB interpretation of contract provisions and regulations which are adding to the already serious administrative burden on community pharmacy contractors. There appears to be a number of areas and issues which had given rise to disputes between contractors and LHBs as a result of confusion about the meaning of various provisions. I am keen to ensure that CPW explores how we can best support the contractor network when such disputes arise with LHBs.

The Board felt that CPW needs to assert its role as the final arbiter in relation to matters of definition and interpretation on behalf of contractors and that CPW should not be afraid to intervene in such disputes by seeking to find agreement and a way forward. The Board agreed to write to the Chief Executive of NHS Wales underlining the status of CPW and its relationship with pharmacy contractors and seeking agreement on the appropriate engagement of CPW with LHBs in dispute with pharmacy contractors. I trust that this will alleviate some of the pressures on contractors in the future.

Naloxone Support Service

The Board has agreed to assist with the delivery of a Welsh Assembly Government pilot in relation to a Take Home Naloxone Support Service. CPW are currently working on a service specification and costings which we hope will facilitate the roll out of the scheme should the pilot prove to be a success.

North Wales colleagues informed the Board that they were aware of approaches being made to contractors in their region seeking participants in Naloxone Support schemes. CPW has not been approached regarding these schemes nor is CPW aware of who is behind them. Contractors who are approached are asked to notify CPW immediately with as much information as possible and not to agree to participate without the service specification and the fee being agreed by CPW.

Incorporation

The Board has agreed to explore the possibility of incorporating CPW as a limited company in order to limit the exposure of contractors and Board members. I'll provide more information as soon as it is available.



Future Management & Organisational Structure

Colleagues will be aware that CPW's new Chief Executive took up his post in September and was immediately charged with undertaking a series of reviews into the organisation and operations of CPW and to report to the Board within two months both his findings and his recommendations of how best to take the organisation forward.

The Board has been impressed with the progress that has been made in a short period. The Board received a detailed presentation on the outcome of the review into various specific aspects of the workings of the organisation, including the current management and organisational structure. The presentation set out an assessment of CPW's ability to deliver the organisation's agenda and to deal with future challenges.

The presentation concluded that the current arrangements are dysfunctional and incapable of addressing current and future challenges. There is a need for fundamental change at the heart of the organisation with the two main drivers of policy and contractor services and communication replacing the current arrangements which appear to centre on a reactive approach to discrete project areas and with little focus on contractor needs.

The presentation included a number of options for change including a preferred option. The Board unanimously supported the Chief Executive's review and gave him the authority to make any changes that he considers necessary to create a "fit-for-purpose" organisation capable of addressing the key challenges facing CPW.

Season's Greetings

May I take this opportunity to extend the Board's good wishes to you all for Christmas and for the New Year.

Ian Cowan
Chair

