

Welcome to the October 2020 CPWY Committee Blog!

Covid has changed everything. Last year no-one would have predicted the 2020 we are experiencing, it has been very challenging for all, particularly so for those providing NHS services and the most for those who have lost loved ones to this terrible illness.

For all its horror, Covid has revealed some other truths that were self-evident (although overlooked by many); community pharmacy is and always has been a core part of primary care. Whilst other parts of the NHS went into their own lockdown, community pharmacy remained open, we were the front door to the NHS, true to our values of open to all, access to a healthcare professional without an appointment. To borrow a phrase community pharmacy is often the place where “everyone knows your name”, providing accessible care to those who need it.

You may have heard [PSNC talking about pharmacy not providing free services anymore](#). This is a hard message but one we need to listen to carefully. The message is not as harsh or blunt as it may first appear. It is clear that pharmacy has been responding to unmet demand from other parts of the NHS, in some cases this has meant increased requests for blood pressure checks, blood glucose tests, ordering of repeat prescriptions and acting as care navigators for services pharmacy is not otherwise able to refer into. There is also the ongoing issue of home delivery, some pharmacies offer this service free of charge, some for a small fee, and for some they are delivery by design, for example the online pharmacies. These extra services all absorb scarce pharmacy resources and as they act as touchpoints with the public, they also increase potential Covid risks.

You may have heard PSNC talking about pharmacy not providing free services anymore. This is a hard message but one we need to listen to carefully.

The PSNC position is not that pharmacies should refuse all services they are not paid for, rather that pharmacies should be contracted to provide these services as part of a comprehensive contract. It is clearly down to each pharmacy and pharmacist to determine what is in the best interests of the patient, pharmacy survivability and a sustainable service on an individual basis. It is also clear that as long as pharmacy continues to offer unfunded services for free, there is no lever for anyone to fund these services.

General Practice is not that dissimilar from community pharmacy; both are independent contractors to the NHS, and both must have a sustainable balance sheet to survive. Indeed, the main difference is that General Practice does not charge the patient directly and pharmacies do. We need a fairer and more equitable contract for both providers.

Covid has also been a catalyst for change. The digital adoption by the NHS and patients has been supercharged through the crucible of Covid and will not now be reversed. Pharmacy has embraced this change with the highest volume of EPS than ever before, Electronic Repeat Dispensing, Summary Care Records, NHSmail and Microsoft Teams all used to improve workflow and efficiency.

The LPC has also embraced digital technology with a Telegram group ([CPWY Connect](#)) and [committee meetings](#) are now on Zoom. This is a great way for those interested to see how the LPC functions. You can contact CPWY to attend as an observer. I hope this digital revamping will also encourage new faces to join the LPC, bringing fresh ideas and perspectives that will benefit community pharmacy representation.

Mohammed Hussain

[Committee member](#) of Community Pharmacy West Yorkshire

CPWY Tribute and Thanks to West Yorkshire Community Pharmacy Teams

Community pharmacies in West Yorkshire have been working tirelessly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure patients and the public can continue to access their medicines. Community Pharmacy West Yorkshire has created this tribute and thank you for all community pharmacy teams. You are all amazing! Thank you. The tribute can be found [here](#) and on twitter [here](#).

Sign up to the PSNC mailing list to ensure you receive the weekly newsletters, alerts and updates [here](#). Sign up to our mailing list [here](#). Join [CPWY Connect](#) on the social media site Telegram and connect with pharmacy teams across West Yorkshire. Join by [clicking here](#).

Details of the CPWY Connect Zoom Events are on our website in the [training section here](#).

Community Pharmacy West Yorkshire's Role: We recognise and understand how much you and your teams are having to cope with right now. Please remember, you are not alone at this time. We're here to support you, providing advice and information on COVID-19, as well as pushing to make sure your work is properly recognised and fully supported throughout this pandemic. You are our eyes and ears - please let us know of any problems and we will do our best to help.

For COVID-19 related issues email: covid-19@cpwy.org / For non-COVID-19 issues email: info@cpwy.org