We have campaigned hard against the proposed financial cuts as we endeavour to secure Community Pharmacy for now and in the future. This work has dominated the year. We have continued to raise the profile of our sector amongst all our stakeholders and are constantly looking for ways in which we can demonstrate the value of your skills. We have set out to achieve this is many ways.

Other work still goes on though and It has been a busy year. Your Chief Officer has attended numerous meetings on your behalf over the course of this year to ensure that community pharmacy is represented and promoted as a valid partner. The Chief Officer reports these meetings to the committee on a bi-monthly basis and details can be found on the LPC website <http://psnc.org.uk/northamptonshire-and-milton-keynes-lpc/downloads/> the minutes of all our committee meetings can also be found on the LPC website <http://psnc.org.uk/northamptonshire-and-milton-keynes-lpc/lpc-meeting-minutes/> .

Our activity since the 17th December announcement on proposed changes affecting community pharmacy has been dominated by lobbying stakeholders on what this might mean for the provision of community pharmacy services locally. Your LPC immediately supported contractors by holding a local Call to Action event with representatives from Healthwatch Northamptonshire, Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee and National Pharmacy Association in attendance.

Your LPC was represented at the Speed Briefing Event organised by PSNC in May and the Chief Officer was able to meet many of our MP’s in an attempt to challenge their thinking on the Government’s proposals. Dora Shergold from Wellingborough was part of a group of representatives selected to hand in the 1.8 million signature petition to Downing Street.

We have met and briefed all but one of our MPs, local councillors and Healthwatch. We have actively encouraged support for the joint NPA/PSNC/Pharmacy Voice/RPS ‘Support your Local Pharmacy’ campaign, which included the collection of petition signatures on paper and via the national parliamentary website. MPs have been supportive in taking up the cause with both previous and current pharmacy ministers, seeing that local people – their constituents – could be seriously impacted as a result of proposals which could end up with the closure of pharmacies. Unfortunately, responses from both ministers repeated the government’s determination that pharmacy should (like other sectors) not escape efficiencies, and that the way pharmacy services were delivered needed to change. The LPC responded to all of the consultations on the proposals (often in collaboration with Herts, Beds and Leicestershire LPC’s) and nationally there appeared to be some success in that proposals on changes to allow hub-and-spoke pharmacy services across different legal entities had been put on hold; however, we had still expected that funding cuts and other changes would be implemented from October, with the main impact on contractors felt from the NHS payments due around 1st January 2017. The “Brexit” vote and subsequent changes at the top of government delayed this; in September the new pharmacy minister, David Mowat, first announced a pause to allow a re-examination of the proposals, then a couple of weeks later saying that an October announcement on the cuts would confirm the original proposals, with implementation on December 1st. Despite this, the LPC will continue to work alongside all stakeholders to try to ensure that the true value of community pharmacy services is realised, with the aim of mitigating the impact of the changes on contractors, patients and indeed other stakeholders. Most recently we have been able to lobby MP’s once again using the PSNC commissioned PriceWaterhouse Cooper Survey into the social value of community pharmacy.

Market Entry

Our Market Entry sub-committee deals with these applications and this year the LPC was able to take advantage of a PSNC training day specifically for Market Entry skills.

Applications for new pharmacies and other changes requiring regulatory approval (eg relocations, changes of ownership) have not been numerous. We have seen minor relocations, changes in ownership and Distance Selling reach conclusions but the unforeseen benefits applications are still under consideration. The LPC is confident that contractors can continue to feel confident that the PNA is an effective tool in managing market entry.

A further development for Autumn 2016 will see the move towards centralised management of Market Entry applications. This was previously managed by the contracts team locally at Welwyn. Capita will now take over the responsibility.

Going forward into 2017

The campaign for community pharmacy in the future is not over and we have a huge challenge in influencing stakeholders both nationally and locally of the value of community pharmacy. The LPC will continue to champion the benefits of community pharmacy.

You can still get involved and - Write a letter or email to your MP (or attend an MP’s surgery) .

Your LPC remains in a good position with regard to our relationships with other stakeholders.

The challenge for Northants and MK LPC remains as to how we can integrate, innovate and evidence pharmacy practice into patients outcomes and local commissioning intentions and this is where we need your help to accumulate local evidence to present to other stakeholders.

Without the continued support from community pharmacies and their teams the LPC cannot continue to optimise the use of community pharmacy locally. We would ask that all community pharmacies and their teams continue to focus on delivery of quality services to patients particularly local public health and CCG (where available) locally commissioned services. This will continue to demonstrate community pharmacies value as an integral part of the health and social care team.

Without your input we cannot continue to progress. By working together we can transform the future of community pharmacy that best meets the needs of the general public in the future. Get involved today whether it’s attending an LPC event, looking at ways you can deliver local services more effectively or engaging with your customers to help them understand what their community pharmacy can do for them.

Finally I (Anne-Marie King), would like to thank all the LPC committee members who guide and assist me as we endeavour to best represent you throughout the year.