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26th March 2024

Dear Pharmacy Contractors in Lancashire and South Cumbria

As Executive Chair of Community Pharmacy Lancashire and South Cumbria (CPLSC), I wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on the launch of the Pharmacy First Service within our footprint, along with positive news on our contractor levy.

Pharmacy First is a real game changer, opening up opportunities for our pharmacists and teams so we are better able to support our patients and residents. An advanced service commissioned outside of the global sum.

We were fully aware of the tight timelines that had been proposed at a national level with the launch date being the much-publicised 31st January. CPLSC Chief Executive & Board took a very early independent decision to start urgent preparation and scoping options around practical clinical diagnostics training for our contractors and Pharmacists, as the national training rollout for our geography was scheduled for the end of February 2024, well after the proposed Go Live date.

Our Chief Executive Mubasher Ali had challenged very heavily at Local, Regional and National level via ICB, WT&D and NHSE for additional funding for implementation training of this nationally commissioned advanced service. It was made very clear to us that no funding would be released and therefore the CPLSC Board took the decision to go at risk and fund the training ourselves with the understanding that lobbying would continue in the background. Once the success of our approach became evident after the events, along with our relentless chase for equitable support for training, national funding for the Cliniskills element was granted via National NHSE and WT&D, saving contractors use of levy funding.

Contractors were asked via expressions of interest as to what they required from this training, and this information was used by our Chief Executive Mubasher Ali to design a detailed programme and planning map around these needs, culminating in a series of six face to face sessions, spanning daytime, evening & weekend, with practical training events run by CliniSkills and Allied Health Training. To that end Mubasher and the team saw over **500** Lancashire and South Cumbria based pharmacists at these events.

To further this support Mubasher Ali and Sarah Vaukins one of our Board members, held three drop-in sessions on Teams, one tailored specifically for self-employed professionals. Over **150** pharmacists dialled into these sessions. CPLSC also made available LIVE daily updates via our website and regular Newsletter updates, with links to many other training providers and relevant support webinars including the fully funded Virtual Outcomes Pharmacy First training module, <https://www.virtualoutcomes.co.uk/> which is provided free of charge by CPLSC to our contractors and their healthcare teams, and it received over **600** hits.

I would like to thank our Chief Executive Mubasher Ali and the team for their hard work, focussed over a very short time frame to make all of this happen at a local level; above and beyond what was to be provided nationally.

This national funding support, alongside a comprehensive zero-based budgeting principle and effective negotiations approach to the logistics, venues, and sundries costs has contributed to a decision made by the Board to suspend the contractor levy for March 2024. The Treasurer, Ben Fell informed the NHSBSA of this decision and has received acknowledgment from them that there is no contractor levy to be taken from your March submission.

“Putting Community Pharmacy on the local healthcare map!”

Chief Executive Mubasher Ali MPharm MRPharmS FRSPH
Executive Chair Kath Gulson MRPharmS, Vice-Chair Mike Ball MRPharmS

Approaching April and a new financial year, the team at CPLSC will continue to work hard for our contractors, listening to your feedback and ensuring that all our actions are focussed on supporting you and your teams in delivering community pharmacy services in Lancashire and South Cumbria.

The Board meetings are open to all contractors, details of which can be found on our website www.cplsc.org.uk
If you wish to attend please let us know via our office email address office@cplsc.org.uk.

In the meantime, can I personally thank each one of you for the service that you and your teams provide from the community pharmacy network across Lancashire and South Cumbria

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kath Gulson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small underline at the end.

Kath Gulson
Executive Chair
Community Pharmacy Lancashire and South Cumbria

“Putting Community Pharmacy on the local healthcare map!”

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