

Coventry LPC and Warwickshire LPC Responses to Wright Review Questions - August 20th 2020.

Coventry LPC and Warwickshire LPC Members met to produce a joint response. CCA, AIMp and NPA responses were considered. It was acknowledged that a lot of consistency in responses. The view was that the next steps in considering the Review findings should be progressed provided that, there is clarity around associated costs, outputs, timelines and benefits, with transparency at all stages. ALL Contractors, whatever their size having a proportionate input at all key stages. It was recognised that engaging Contractors, particularly independents, was going to be challenging and it will be key for them to recognise the importance of the process and any changes implemented. As LPCs we recognise that we need to play our part in supporting this awareness.

It was also recognised that any votes on recommendations, way forward should be passed by reasonable majority, in order, to have full buy in from the sector. It was proposed that this might be set at two thirds of respondents being in favour (in line with current constitution amendments)

Following detailed discussions and further review of the recommendations, Members feedback, CCA feedback, AIMp feedback and NPA feedback the LPC members present agreed the following responses:

Question 1: How do we fund the process – both to take work on the independent review forwards, and any longer-term changes to LPCs and PSNC?

- Detailed clarity will be needed on the costings of any proposed changes and LPCs should consider their current financial situation, including any reserves and what may be needed to support local and national transformation.
- While we do not disagree with Professor Wright's suggestion that external funding sources could be explored to support with transformation and change, more clarity is needed to determine whether this is a realistic and viable option.
- We think that the transitional process should be funded through PSNC and LPCs rather than requesting further funds from contractors at this stage. This must be a fair division, with LPCs contributions being based on size. This applies to transformation and any ongoing funding requirements.
- The proposed new structures have not been costed within the Wright review. There is little detail on the scope and resources for any future LPCs. There is concern that independent contractors might have to pay significantly more than today to benefit from the same services locally and nationally.
- A key early step in this process needs to be testing the financial assumptions that have been made in the review and developing a full business case for the new models proposed in the Wright review - and any other proposals that may subsequently emerge.
- Once there is consensus on the potential new structures, we believe that a supplementary report should be produced setting out the funding required to deliver the model.
- The benefits of reform must outweigh the costs.

Question 2: How will we explore the review's findings and recommendations together, and consider any alternative proposals?

- Any discussions and decisions about if and how to take recommendations forward should involve all contractors and their representatives, in addition to LPC members.
- To consider the review's findings and recommendations and agree a programme of transformation, we think a working group of contractors and their representatives should be set up to review and explore the recommendations.
- The following considerations should be made in relation this working group:
 - The whole sector should be proportionately represented on this group and any conflicts of interest should be made known prior to the selection process
 - The group's role and remit should be clearly set out from the start and robust terms of reference and governance must be established and upheld
 - The group should be contractor-focused and any LPC or PSNC employees included in the group should only support and inform discussions, but should not be entitled to vote
 - Transparent and timely communications should be sent after each meeting to all contractors
 - Channels of communication should be established to allow contractors to feed into the group's discussions
 - There must be a consistent approach to the consideration of any alternative proposals.
 - Any alternative proposals should be considered by the working group as described above
- It is Contractors who pay levies to support LPC and PSNC activity and it must be Contractors who have the vote. If we are moving towards a Contractors lead organisation, then this Transformation Group should be the same.
- It is essential that have clear milestones and goals within the proposal, with budgets attached. Each milestone signed off with Governance oversight.
- It is difficult for all independent contractors to fully engage with the details and depth of these proposals and so clear messaging is essential so that they can ALL make informed decisions, whether from a large Group or single-handed independents.
- All agreed with CCA points and some additional points from the NPA and individual members.
- Any discussions and decisions about if and how to take recommendations forward should involve all contractors and their representatives, in addition to LPC members.
- An Independent chair should be appointed based on the required skill set.
- Development Transformation Working Group and Governance Board set up. The people on must be appointed / voted on by an open / transparent process.

Question 3: How will we manage this process and any future transformation from a governance perspective?

- In the short-term a shadow governance board should be established to oversee the discussions and further thinking.
- Independents and multiples share many common interests. Yet their distinctive voices must be heard, respected and reflected in governance locally and nationally going forward.
- Throughout the review process the CCA has called for improved governance at both a local and national level and we welcome the emphasis on governance throughout Professor Wright's report.
- National guidance and oversight will be needed to ensure change is implemented in a coherent, managed and transparent way to guarantee the desired outcomes are achieved.
- It has not yet been decided what body will oversee implementation, however, all parts of the sector should be proportionately represented and only contractors and their representatives should have voting rights on any such group.
- Once a final draft plan is developed with detailed timelines and budgets from the working group these must be shared with all and voted on. Any amendments made and final working plan produced for ratification.

- At PSNC, this implies a constitution that equitably balances independents and multiples – evenly and fairly serving all. Whatever structure emerges needs to allow the distinctive voice of independents to be heard, and must work for everyone – big and small

Question 4: What do we need to do to ensure that contractors have ultimate oversight of this process?

- Pharmacy contractors, and those that they have appointed to represent their interests nationally, should be central to the process of shaping proposals and development of any transformation and implementation proposals. Only contractors should be able to make decisions at every stage of the process, but ALL sectors must be included.
- Once there are clear proposals on the table then all contractors should be formally consulted and asked to vote on whether to take these forward or not.
- The radical reform proposed here cannot proceed without the explicit consent of pharmacy contractors who are in possession of the detailed final proposals for the new structures.
- Adopting the principle of ‘one contract, one vote’ will ensure that the whole sector is fairly represented, and that ultimate oversight is given to contractors, as those who fund both LPCs and PSNC.
- We need a process that will deliver a legitimate representative structure which will be recognised as such by both the NHS and the contractors.
- Any decision-making mechanisms must therefore respect the requirements of different parts of the sector. Proposals should secure both the support of the sector as a whole, and its main constituent parts (the multiples and independents), in order to be adopted. This “triple lock” will require an absolute majority of each of a) all contractors, b) independents and c) multiples, to be approved. Significant change needs a significant and unequivocal mandate.
- The Wright review has highlighted the challenges that we face and we remain committed to supporting a process of change. We believe that through collaborative working there will be a solution that meets the needs of all part of the contractor base.
- Vote needs to be clear and consideration as to what will happen if people do not vote this in, what is plan B.
- The group needs some autonomy while making fundamental decisions. Maybe any key decision making.
- Regular consultations and therefore shapes what they decide.