

Minutes of the Consumer and Patient Working Group Meeting Thursday 12 March 2026

The meeting was held online from 2pm to 4pm.

Present:

Malcolm Mulholland (Chair)
Tim Edmonds
Chris Higgins
Francesca Holloway
Trent Lash
Gerard Rushton
Tracy Tierney

Reset programme team:

Jannel Fisher (Reset Programme Manager), Sam McCarthy (Reset Programme Project Manager), Becky Littlewood (Reset Programme Coordinator), Danielle Campbell (Reset Project Manager).

Pharmac staff attendees:

Ryan Perica (External Engagement Manager), Hannah Burgess (Principal Policy Advisor), Sarona Iosefa (Principal Advisor, Consumer Relations), Rachael Dowrick (Manager ICT Services).

Apologies:

Deon York
Libby Burgess
Rachel Smalley (Deputy Chair).

1. Karakia and welcome

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

- Moved by: Trent
- Seconded by: Francesca

3. Action items

Action items were noted.

4. Interest register

No new declarations or changes were made.

5. Consultation Process

Pharmac provided an update on several pieces of work underway to improve consultation processes, following discussion at the 20 November working group meeting.

A draft internal consultation policy was shared and discussed. The purpose of the policy is to provide greater internal consistency in consultation practice. Members discussed implementation and noted that while the policy will not result in immediate changes to consultation practice, it establishes a foundation for future improvements. Members emphasised that early consultation is best practice, and Pharmac confirmed it is working towards this approach. The internal consultation policy was provisionally endorsed, subject to incorporation of member feedback.

Decision: The internal consultation policy was provisionally endorsed.

Moved by: Malcolm
Seconded by: Tracy

Pharmac also presented proposed consumer-facing website content designed to support consumers to provide feedback to Pharmac and to more easily access information. Members noted that the content was clearly written, used plain language, and was relevant for consumer communities. It was acknowledged that the content will continue to be refined and updated over time.

Decision: The consultation consumer guidance website content was endorsed.

Moved by: Malcolm
Seconded by: Francesca

Members were provided with a demonstration of an online platform that could be used to help streamline consultation with consumers and other stakeholders. Pharmac advised that the platform will be piloted ahead of potential future introduction. Members were supportive of the initiative and expressed interest in the platform's additional features, particularly those that could improve transparency.

6. Consumer advice framework

Pharmac presented a range of options for how the future consumer advisory function could best support Pharmac's work beyond the conclusion of the Reset Programme and Consumer and Patient Working Group on 30 June. The working group had previously reviewed and supported early thinking on this work at its meeting on 12 February.

Members discussed the potential future function. They noted the importance of ensuring continuity across the strategic, process-improvement, and implementation focus areas, which are currently supported through the two existing consumer groups.

Feedback from this discussion will be included in a paper for the Pharmac Board to consider later in March, alongside feedback from the Consumer Advisory Committee and Pharmac staff who regularly seek consumer input.

Decision: Members agreed that the feedback to the Board should reflect unanimous support that the status quo is not an option, that the future consumer advisory function should have oversight of the three focus areas, and that there is a desire for wider involvement of consumers and patients.

Moved by: Gerard
Seconded by: Chris

7. General business

The final in-person CAPWG meeting will be held on 18 June. Members agreed to the date, and the Reset Programme Coordinator will begin making travel arrangements.

Agreed action:

- *Pharmac to commence booking travel for final in-person meeting.*

Close of meeting at 4pm.

The next meeting is on Thursday 26 March 2.00pm – 4.00pm to discuss prioritisation and the new vision and strategic priorities.