

Minutes of the Consumer and Patient Working Group Meeting Thursday 25 September 2025

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

Present:

Malcolm Mulholland (Chair)
Rachel Smalley (Deputy Chair)
Libby Burgess
Tim Edmonds
Chris Higgins – *attended half of the meeting*
Francesca Holloway
Trent Lash
Gerard Rushton
Tracy Tierney
Deon York

Pharmac staff in attendance:

Jannel Fisher (Reset Programme Manager)
Sarona Iosefa (Reset Programme Engagement Lead)
Sam McCarthy (Reset Programme Project Manager)
Becky Littlewood (Reset Programme Coordinator)
Ryan Perica (External Engagement Manager)

Apologies:

1. Karakia and welcome

Opening by the Chair

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting minutes were approved.

- Moved by: Libby
- Seconded by: Rachel

3. Action items

Action register reviewed, completed actions were noted and updates given on in-progress actions.

Agreed actions:

- Update to be provided by Pharmac on the Pae Ora advice process and Budget data changes at the next working group meeting.

4. Interest register

No new declarations or changes were made.

5. Consumer Relationship team

The External Engagement Manager provided an overview of the new Consumer Relationship team currently being established. This team aims to shift Pharmac's engagement approach from transactional to relational, strengthening the voice of consumers and patients in Pharmac's work.

The Chair acknowledged written feedback from a Working Group member.

Members discussed consumer involvement in the recruitment process. It was noted that a member of the interview panel had lived patient experience.

The importance of partnership and collaboration between the Consumer Relationship team and the Working Group was emphasised. It was clarified that the establishment of the Consumer Relationship team would not impact the Working Group's role in driving process improvements.

It was noted that Pharmac's Engagement Strategy may need to be reviewed and updated in light of the new Consumer Relationship team and Reset Programme.

The need for clear expectations around the role of the Consumer Relationship team was discussed, including the development of a consumer and patient guide to support engagement. Education for the patient community and advocacy groups about Pharmac's processes was considered valuable.

Members acknowledged that groups vary in size and structure, and that trust can be fostered through partnerships and culturally safe engagement practices. In-person meetings and attending events were identified as effective ways to build trust. Members agreed to support initial introductions between the Consumer Relationship team and patient advocacy groups.

Agreed actions:

- Create a consumer relationship guide and supporting resources
 - Members to express interest to the Chair in joining a sub-working group
 - Establish a sub-working group (with Pharmac staff) to co-develop the consumer relationship guide
 - Identify and create education resources for the patient community about how Pharmac works
- Edit the key messages about the Consumer Relationship team to highlight its partnership with the CAP Working Group.
- CAP members to support new relationship managers with introductions to advocacy groups
- Send members a separate PDF of the paper to share and discuss with their wider networks.

6. Engagement register

The Reset Programme Team thanked members for sharing patient advocacy group details. Pharmac previously did not have a central repository for stakeholder

information, and the contributions from members have provided a strong foundation for building an engagement register.

Screenshots of the new engagement register were shared with members. The next steps involve the Reset Programme Team and the Consumer Relationship Team inputting the provided information into the register. The engagement register will continue to grow and evolve over time.

It was noted that engagement register should capture next steps from meetings, including actions, responsible parties and timeframes. It was also noted that it was important to capture the size of groups as some groups are not resourced and this will need to be considered when engaging with them.

Agreed actions:

- Include in the user guide that the engagement register will capture next steps, including actions, responsible parties, and timeframes.
- Members to email the Reset Programme team any additional patient advocacy group details to be added to the engagement register.

7. General business

Members discussed Pharmac's approach to progress reporting and emphasised the importance of being able to communicate and demonstrate progress to their respective networks. This visibility helps show the impact and value of the Working Group's efforts.

Members expressed interest in meeting Pharmac's new Chief Executive, Natalie McMurtry, in person. It was noted that the upcoming Valuing Life Summit in Wellington (October) may provide an opportunity for this.

Members also asked about the possibility of holding a face-to-face meeting before the end of the year. While the Chair has prior commitments in November that may make scheduling difficult, it was noted that many members will be attending the Valuing Life Summit and could connect informally.

The group discussed future 90-day action plan possibilities and raised the topic of medical devices procurement. While discussion of specific health conditions or treatments is out of scope, it was confirmed that process-related actions may be added to the list of potential future items for consideration.

Members were invited to provide feedback on the monthly consumer hui with Pharmac's Chief Executive. It was noted that attendance has declined. To improve engagement, members suggested increasing visibility through calendar invites, clearly outlining agenda items in the invitation, and broadening the invite list to include more stakeholders.

Agreed actions:

- Send members a copy of the 2024/25 LOE progress update

- Create a quarterly report for the Reset Programme that highlights the outputs and impact of the Working Group as a record of change
- Explore possible timings for a face-to-face meeting with the new CE
- Explore feasibility of holding the face-to-face meeting in November
- Members to email the Reset Programme Team with any additional actions items to be considered for future 90-day plans.
- Pharmac to review and implement suggested improvements to the monthly consumer hui with the CE.

Close of meeting at 4.00pm.

Next meeting is 2.00pm – 4.00pm on Thursday 9 October to discuss joined up communications planning.