

## **Government proposals for pharmacy -- the Society's response**

The Government intends to remove regulation from the RPSGB and give it to a newly-created General Pharmaceutical Council (GPharmC). It also wishes to see what it describes as a 'body akin to a Royal College' to provide leadership for the profession.

The Department of Health (DH) set up a Working Party on Pharmacy Professional Regulation (now concluded) in January 2007 to further these proposals. The Society submitted a great deal of evidence to this working party, and some of that material looked at what the two new bodies might look like, and how they might be established. We also looked at how the two bodies might work together and what that might mean for pharmacists.

The Society was not able to share this material with its membership and staff as early as it would have liked, due to the Government's confidentiality restrictions. However, we are now free to publish summaries of this material, to share our early thinking on what lies ahead:

### **[Establishment of a General Pharmaceutical Council](#)**

### **[Establishing a professional leadership body](#)**

### **[Professional Body and GPharmC - A cradle to grave relationship](#)**

### **[Establishing a professional leadership body: transitional route](#)**

It is comparatively easy to predict what the GPharmC will look like, and how it will come into being, as these things are to some extent pre-determined. The establishment of a professional leadership body is less easy to summarise, simply because there are so many more choices to be made, and risks to be faced.

Like everyone else, the Society has a view. We believe we are uniquely placed to form a UK-wide professional leadership body in partnership with others. The Council is well aware of its responsibilities as the governing body of the existing professional organisation and believes strongly that any new arrangements should bring stronger professional leadership for pharmacists. However, we are very conscious that it is for the profession as a whole to prescribe what the future professional leadership body will look like. Nor do we want to pre-empt the findings of the independent research on what the profession needs and wants.

That said, the discussion has to start somewhere, and we hope these papers will contribute to a meaningful, evidence-based debate. The Council needs to know what the members want. If there is to be a new body for pharmacy then the membership must be at the forefront of the process.

### **Update**

**The papers on which these summaries were based were submitted to Lord Carter's working party in the spring, and should be regarded as a snapshot of our thinking at that early date.** Since then, [Lord Carter's report](#) has been published and its findings have been debated in a number of forums. Lord Hunt, in particular, galvanised the debate in May by saying that the new professional body should be a new entity, not a reincarnation of the RPSGB. However, the Society believes this is for the profession, not the Government, to decide. It is therefore pressing ahead with plans for an independent analysis of the functions and structure of a future professional body, together with in-depth research to determine what members might want, need and expect from such a body, to be followed by a formal consultation process.

The Government has recently announced plans to set up seven working groups to implement the White Paper proposals, together with an Oversight Group for pharmacy.