

Grassroots campaign continues to grow

The English Pharmacy Board continued its high profile political grassroots campaign when Board member Sid Dajani invited his local MP Chris Huhne, Home Affairs Spokesperson for the Liberal Democrat Party, to his pharmacy for a visit and discussion of key issues of concern to the profession.

Sid gave the MP for Eastleigh a tour of Wainwright's pharmacy in Bishopstoke, where he highlighted the importance of the pharmacist in medicines advice and providing additional services in an informal environment. Chris Huhne was particularly interested in the provision of medicines such as orlistat, which require supply from a pharmacist in conjunction with health and lifestyle advice.

A range of additional services are provided at Wainwright's, made possible by full use of a good skill mix. Chris took part in a demonstration of these by having the carbon dioxide levels in his lungs tested and comparing his weight on a BMI chart. During the checks, Sid emphasised the positive effect pharmacy has on personal and public health,



Sid Dajani (left) with Chris Huhne MP

demonstrating how pharmacy delivers real benefits to local communities.

Speaking later to the media, Chris Huhne said "Pharmacies are not just places to pop in for a prescription or some toiletries, but can now perform really valuable roles in preventing and treating dangerous conditions like diabetes and chlamydia. Of the 106 people who have come forward in Bishopstoke in the last seven months alone, 93 have given up smoking."

Sid and Chris also explored how an electronic link between pharmacy and other healthcare professionals would improve health outcomes. Sid explained the range of factors that led to stress within the profession, including workload pressures, the non-level playing field in commissioning additional services and delays in payment by PCTs.

The decriminalisation of dispensing errors was raised and a further meeting was agreed. The Society is raising the matter with all main Westminster parties to seek a commitment to amend the law and ensure a more proportionate response to errors. ■

New guidelines for pharmacists using EPS

The Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) is now well on the way to being introduced across England.

EPS will reduce the risk of errors because prescriptions are transmitted electronically, freeing pharmacists from re-keying prescription information and helping streamline dispensary workflows. It also means that contractors currently offering prescription collection services will be able to receive these directly online.

To help community pharmacists understand the profound impact that EPS will have on their current practice, the Society has launched *Good dispensing guidelines for England*.

The guidelines clarify how to create robust standard operating procedures for e-pharmacy. They cover issues such as nomination, accuracy checking, substitution and the submission of prescriptions for reimbursement online. Principles of good practice such as confidentiality, risk management, and business

continuity in the event of system failure are also addressed. The guidelines also support collaborative working with general practice on EPS.

Pharmacists can access further information on the infrastructure of electronic prescription services through NHS Connecting For Health. www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk

The guidelines for England are available at: www.rpsgb.org/worldofpharmacy/currentdevelopmentsinpharmacy/itinpharmacy/index.html ■



The next English Pharmacy Board meeting is in Birmingham on 24 June. If you are a pharmacist in the West Midlands, you are welcome to attend an evening event starting at 6.30pm on 23 June to find out more about the responsible pharmacist regulations and the development of the professional leadership body. Contact prita.jobling@rpsgb.org ■

Portsmouth pilots healthy living pharmacy

The Government laid out some clear aims within the 2008 Pharmacy White Paper. One of these was for pharmacies to become healthy living centres, promoting health, well-being and self-care. One year on, Michael Holden, Chief Officer for Hampshire and IOW Pharmaceutical Committee, examines progress.

The move to a more clinical role requires a change to the existing community pharmacy model. Identified as one of the major work streams of the National Public Health Leadership Forum, the Healthy Living Pharmacy (HLP) model has been largely developed by NHS Portsmouth City and Hampshire & IOW LPC with input from the Forum at critical stages. Additional research, starting soon, will build standards for premises and an accreditation framework into the model, after which it will be piloted in Portsmouth and potentially other sites in England.

There will be no single model of HLP; what it looks like and does will depend on local needs and the capability to deliver against those needs. The foundations will require workforce development, premises fit for purpose and significant engagement

with other community, primary and secondary care services. It is proposed that the clinical roles will fall broadly into three areas, each with three levels above the current essential and advanced services within the national contractual framework:

- promoting health, well-being and self-care – active health promotion, assessments and appropriate interventions
- optimising medicines interventions – targeted adherence support, managing long-term conditions and clinical reviews
- provision of treatment – minor ailments, PGDs and prescribing

The transition will need careful planning to enable the change, involving effective communication; buy-in of contractors, pharmacy teams and other stakeholders; consistent delivery of patient outcomes and a return on investment. Above all, we as individuals need to change our mindset and practice and not wait for someone else to make it happen. ■

Campaign steps up pressure

President Steve Churton has vowed to step up the campaign have dispensing errors decriminalised as part of a raft of key initiatives to improve the working conditions of pharmacists.

The commitment was one of the main outcomes of the Society's intensive two-day symposium held recently to combat work-related issues in the profession.

The symposium was held jointly with the Pharmacy Practice Research Trust and drew together representatives from trade unions, employee groups, pharmacy organisations, employers and leaders from throughout the profession.



"The decriminalisation of dispensing errors is a key change we are committed to fighting for. In my mind, the law as it stands is not only unfair, it is out-of-date and does not reflect the nature of the modern profession," commented Steve.

The Society also promised to take a firm line on the enforcement of rest breaks for pharmacists, in addition to putting in place measures to make working life easier for responsible pharmacists and locums.

"I think there is a sense of optimism that if the profession works together, we can make real, tangible improvements," added Steve. ■

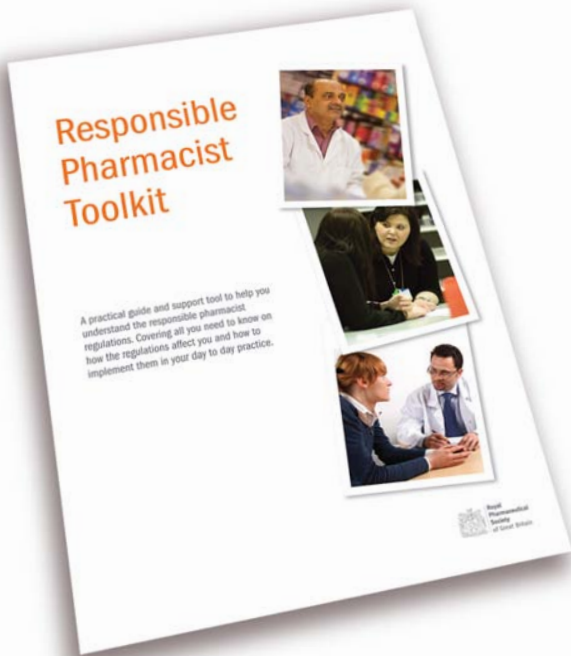


The dangers of faking it

Community pharmacists have received new leaflets about the dangers of counterfeit medicines, produced by the Society and the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency.

One side of the postcard explains the safest way to purchase medicines, and the other outlines 'The dangers of faking it.'

Pharmacists are being asked to insert the postcards into prescription bags, targeting those drugs which are commonly counterfeited. ■



New tools for responsible pharmacists

The new regulations concerning responsible pharmacists come into force on 1 October 2009.

The regulations replace the concept of 'personal control' and set out the quality framework for the safe and effective operation of a pharmacy, including during periods of absence.

To help pharmacists work through these complex and major changes, the Society has produced a *Responsible pharmacist toolkit* along with new professional standards and guidance.

The toolkit has been sent to all practising and pre-registration pharmacists, and is the first example of the kind of support pharmacists can

expect from the new professional body.

Produced after extensive consultation with grassroots pharmacists, the toolkit is a highly practical, interactive resource containing pullouts, case studies, and frequently asked questions. The key learning objectives in the toolkit can be used to complete one of the nine continuing professional development records that must now be submitted every year.

The toolkit is also available online at www.responsiblepharmacist.org. As this is the first initiative of its type, feedback is welcomed via the website. ■

Attended by pharmacy organisations, leading UK academics and the national Chief Pharmaceutical Officers, the summit looked at the starting points for a strategic direction for pharmacy practice research. These included research capacity, workforce, research priorities and integrating the findings of research into practice.

Sue Ambler, Director of the Trust, said "The need for further investment in pharmacy practice research is vital to build evidence in terms of patient outcomes and value for money."

Key recommendations are made for consideration by a range of important stakeholders including government,

"...investment in pharmacy practice research is vital to build evidence in terms of patient outcomes and value for money."

academia, employers and pharmacy leaders – all of which were supported by those that attended the event.

A summary or full report is available at: www.pprt.org.uk/ResearchActivity/StrategicDirectionForPharmacyPracticeResearch.aspx ■

Trust calls for research funding

The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust has published a report calling for major investment to build research capacity and a robust evidence base to meet the aspirations for pharmacy in the future.

The report, *A strategic direction for pharmacy practice research*, sets out a series of recommendations from a research summit held in November last year.

Pharmacy in England: one year on

At a packed meeting of the All-Party Pharmacy Group in April (APPG), the Department of Health reported back on progress implementing the 2008 White Paper.

Jeanette Howe, Head of Pharmacy at Department, admitted more time was needed to realise the ambitions of the document, but highlighting achievements such as the community pharmacy commissioning guide for PCTs and the appointment of the two 'Pharmacy Czars', she emphasised it was now widely accepted that pharmacy has a vital role to play in public health.

Welcoming the increased cohesion of pharmacy bodies to realise the aspirations of the White Paper, Howard Duff, Director for England, called for its objectives to be viewed holistically, rather than as individual chapters, to deliver its agenda effectively.

The meeting also highlighted the importance of better communication with general practice, and discussed how quality was a primary concern for the future development of all community pharmacy services.

Howard Stoaite MP, Chair of the APPG, said that one year on, "Clearly the foundations have now been laid, although many of the developments are not yet visible to grassroots pharmacists. Ultimately, community pharmacy wants to see a speedy roll out of the White Paper proposals." ■

In the news

Rx Factor spokesperson Paul Johnson and comedian Helen Lederer recently fronted a highly successful PR campaign for the Society encouraging older adults to visit community pharmacists for advice on sexual health.

To kickstart the campaign, the Society published survey results revealing that almost 1 in 5 adults aged 45–54 admitted to having unprotected sex with someone other than their long-term partner in the past 5 years.

The campaign achieved significant print and broadcast coverage, reaching an audience of nearly 18 million people. The next consumer campaign is about holiday health and will run on 4 June.

As well as creating the news agenda, the Society responded quickly to breaking news



stories. The launch of orlistat and new guidance on the Bonjela range for under 16s saw staff from the Society deliver key messages about pharmacy on a wide variety of major news outlets, including Radio 4's Today Programme and BBC Breakfast. ■

Helen and Paul during filming

Founder's anniversary

The 12th June 2009 marks the 150th anniversary of the death of Jacob Bell, founder of the Pharmaceutical Society and founding editor of the *Pharmaceutical Journal*.

Born in 1810, Bell was a tireless advocate for the proposed Society, hosting meetings prior to its creation and remaining involved in all aspects of its operation once established in 1841. In 1850 he was elected as MP for St Albans and in addition, was a significant patron of the arts. He acted as business advisor to a circle of



Portrait of Jacob Bell by Landseer

artists, including Sir Edwin Landseer with whom he became close friends. Bell amassed a private collection of 156 paintings, 16 of which he bequeathed to the national collection.

Bell is buried in Woodbury Park Cemetery in Tunbridge Wells. To mark the anniversary, the Society has funded some restoration work on the tomb. President Steve Churton has been invited by the Friends of the cemetery to plant some medicinal plants around the memorial and visit sites in Tunbridge Wells related to Bell's time there. The day also sees the launch of a new booklet, *Jacob Bell: a useful and honourable life*. For further information contact Briony Hudson Keeper of the Museum Collections briony.hudson@rpsgb.org ■

Museum work commended

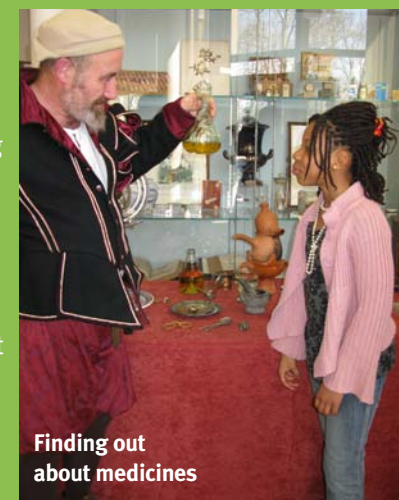
At the Museum and Heritage Awards for Excellence in May, the Museum's *Pharmacy debate packs* were highly commended in the educational initiative category.

They beat the National Museums Liverpool, the Mary Rose Trust, and the Manchester Museum, and only just lost out to the Natural History Museum for its work on the Darwin Exhibition.

The Museum was particularly praised by the judges for breaking new ground and making an "exceptional debut" in the awards. You can download the packs online from the Society's website at www.rpsgb.org/informationresources/museum/resources/pharmacydebatepacks.html ■

Henry VIII Day

Around 60 people attended the Museum's highly successful Henry VIII Medicine Man event in April. This fun day involved meeting a quack doctor, wise woman and barber surgeon, finding out about historical herbal treatments, and listening to talks on Tudor medicine. Those attending were the first to see the Museum's display exploring Henry VIII's links with medicine. Still available in the Society's reception area, highlights of the display include an example of one of Henry's recipes and some of the ingredients he used, as well as a timeline of Henry's patronage of the medical world. ■



Finding out about medicines