

Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain – Scottish Pharmacy Board Draft Communications Strategy and Plan 2009

Introduction

The strategy proposed for 2009 builds on the strategy and work carried out by the Scottish Pharmacy Board in 2008. The objectives have been reviewed and new ones, set in line with the issues encountered over the year and the challenges that lie ahead. The strategy also draws on perception research of the Society and objectives set by the UK PR and public affairs plan and the Transcom Prospectus.

Overview

The Scottish Pharmacy Board made progress in 2008, during a year of consultation and uncertainty among the profession over the future direction of a professional leadership body.

It has continued to build on the work started in 2007 when the Scottish Pharmacy Board was formed and there was limited awareness of the Board among MSPs. Over the last two years it has developed relationships with the Scottish Government and Parliament, having a presence at party conferences, responding to consultation papers, facilitating individual MSP meetings, briefing through ezines and hosting an exhibition and reception at the Scottish Parliament. As the latest Ipsos Mori research shows, this has clearly helped to raise the profile of RPSGB among the Scottish Parliament from 18% familiarity in 2007 to 31% in 2008.

Work has also been undertaken to broaden understanding of the expanded role of pharmacists through stakeholder engagement and also through campaign and media work. National campaigns, like hay fever and holiday health, have been localised to branch level, where possible, and have helped to promote the range of local pharmacy services.

A YouGov survey carried out in August 2008 indicated a general increase in levels of awareness among the general public of pharmacy services from a similar study carried out in 2002. However, there is obviously still a great deal of work to be done here.

Working with branches and engaging individual members has remained a challenge. 2008 has been a year of uncertainty as the profession awaits the publication of the Section 60 Orders on the Regulation of Pharmacy Technicians and the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), which will help guide the future direction of the new professional body and set out other issues and challenges for the profession. A series of roadshows and a seminar on professional leadership were held during 2008 and, while successful, had relatively low turnouts.

The Scottish Pharmacy Board, along with Transcom have committed to continuing their work as best they can under these circumstances, but it's often left them with less to communicate of substance and a perception that activity is not progressing, or is moving very slowly.

Communicating with members in a direct way and demonstrating some of the tangible steps the Scottish Pharmacy Board are taking to represent members and the profession will be a major priority during 2009.

During 2008 much was achieved by aligning the Board’s priorities for change with the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework, its strategic priorities, targets and outcomes. As a result, parts of the Board’s “A Manifesto for Scottish Pharmacy” were adopted by the Scottish Government as policy; for example issues relating to smoking and sexual health are now being addressed in the community pharmacy contract, while the “Road to Recovery “ strategy provides opportunities for pharmacists to maximise their contribution.

The Board also submitted written evidence to the Health and Sport Committee’s Health Inequalities Inquiry and contributed to the Better Health Better Care consultation.

While the Board will continue to build on the work undertaken in 2008 to develop closer links with ministers and MSPs on general health policy matters, it will be important to focus primarily on the two Section 60 Orders that will be placed within the Parliament and to brief them on developments of the New Professional Body.

Communications Plan 2008

The key aims of the 2008 strategy were to:

- Raise awareness of the role of the RPSGB Scottish Pharmacy Board amongst MSPs and other key stakeholders
- Broaden understanding of the expanded role of pharmacists and their contribution to improving Scotland’s health
- Ensure that the RPSGB Scottish Pharmacy Board is seen as a key source of expertise, advice and comment on health issues
- Increase the engagement of members and branches in communications activity

The communications strategy workshop carried out for the 2008 strategy identified a number of perceptions of the profession. While the majority of these still apply, it will be useful for the board to review them as some of them may have experienced a shift. For example, the profession being considered positively as trustworthy, may have taken a knock following an undercover investigation from *Which?* and other media reports highlighting unsatisfactory advice being given by some pharmacies during 2008.

The 2008 perceptions identified were:

Positive perceptions of pharmacy	Negative perceptions of pharmacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible • Trustworthy • Expert and authoritative • Offering good advice • High standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercially orientated (shopkeeper) • Not ‘professional status’ • Less confidential • Lack of appreciation of ‘added value’ • Lack of confidence in expansion role

Context

Looking ahead, 2009 is going to be a year of change for the profession. Transcom has laid out its proposals for a new professional body in its Prospectus, which focus on leadership and representation, professional development and networking and publications. The profession will be asked to vote on changes to the Charter early in 2009.

It is critical that the focus for much of the Board's communication strategy lies directly with the 4,400 individual members of the profession in Scotland. While there is an understanding amongst pharmacists that 'something is happening' to their professional body, the majority of them have yet to fully turn their minds to the work of Transcom and the Prospectus. It's also fair to speculate that many members are unlikely to have considered the needs and benefits of a professional leadership body.

As the Transcom Prospectus acknowledges, the profession wants to see change and a new professional body that engages with, supports and motivates its members, and communicates with and for them in an open way. The majority of the profession do not believe this has happened in the past. Many pharmacists also believe that the profession lacks a significant voice in public policy debate and should exert greater influence on healthcare policy and the development of services for patients.

This feedback represents an opportunity for the Board to better engage with its members more openly. Through admitting that this is an area that requires improvement and highlighting the steps they are taking to address these issues, they can demonstrate their commitment to change.

The communications strategy action plan 2008 went some way to prioritise the need for improving communication with members and supporting branches in assisting with this goal. The board must continue to build on this work to demonstrate the value of pharmacists having a professional body and illustrate clearly what the body has and can achieve for the profession. Activities focused on them, like the virtual network and members ezine, should be implemented early in 2009.

However, it should also look to review activities and tactics which have not progressed as well. Firm decisions need to be made over prioritising activities according to available resources that will resonate with members and stakeholders, while delivering real benefits. The tactics section of this document suggests some new ideas and activities, such as wider interactive parliament events, which could replace ideas that have perhaps become a little staid, like a pharmacy conference.

Engagement with the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament will continue to remain a high priority. Not only to demonstrate to members that the Board are taking steps to influence policy and represent pharmacy but also to build support and understanding for the profession. This is in line with the Ipsos Mori research results which show that favourability of RPSGB among MSPs only increased by 1% in 2008, although this needs to be seen in the context of a year where only one in ten organisations surveyed improved favourability. It should also be noted that favourability was higher amongst SNP than opposition members.

In 2009 there will be a need to increase contact with stakeholders and politicians and to become more focused in targeting briefings and meeting requests.

The Section 60 Orders on the Regulation of Pharmacy Technicians and the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) will be laid before the parliament in 2009. While these are high on the professional agenda, its relevance to individual members and MSPs is less well known and so needs to be communicated in a tailored and relevant way. It will be important to engage with the members of the Scottish Parliament Health and Sport Committee and Subordinate Legislation Committee as the orders progress through the affirmative procedure, to ensure they are agreed. It also offers an opportunity for the Board to represent itself to MSPs as the face of the profession in Scotland and will help to continue to establish the credibility of the Scottish Pharmacy Board with decision makers.

The Board must also continue to engage with MSPs and Ministers on more general health policy issues, trying where possible to convince decision makers that the profession has an increasing role to play in a modern, patient centred NHS. The Board should build on the relationships formed with MSPs and Ministers in 2008 and continue to press for those priorities contained in the 2007 “A Manifesto for Scottish Pharmacy” that are still to be implemented. By demonstrating that the Board is capable of influencing policy, pharmacists will be more persuaded that there is a continuing need for a professional body.

A key challenge during 2009 will be implementing this work at a time when the RPSGB could be rebranded. Transcom has published the proposals for the new professional body and has therefore fulfilled its function. Its future at the moment and the role, if any, it will have in progressing the consultation on the Prospectus remains uncertain. Similarly, possible changes to the name, look and structure of RPSGB in Scotland will be made clear following the vote on Charter changes early in 2009. For this reason the board should look to capitalise in having appointed spokespeople, including Sandra Melville and Alistair Jack, who can remain constants in the look and feel of communication throughout 2009.

Objectives

The objectives for the 2009 strategy draw on the RPSGB UK public affairs plan, the Transcom Prospectus and the specific Scottish issues and challenges. In particular they look to:

1. Raise awareness among members of the work carried out by the Scottish Pharmacy Board of RPSGB to lead, represent and support the profession - and influence public policy
2. Broaden understanding of the role of the Scottish Pharmacy Board of the RPSGB and the future professional leadership body among MSPs and key stakeholders
3. Position the Scottish Pharmacy Board of RPSGB as the new professional body for pharmacy, highlighting:
 - a. How it's delivering the ambitions of the Prospectus
 - b. How it's changing as an organisation
 - c. What the new body can and will deliver for individual members
4. Position the Scottish Pharmacy Board of RPSGB as a key source of expertise, advice and comment on pharmacy and wider health issues

Stakeholders

The stakeholders remain largely unchanged from the 2008 strategy. In 2009 there will be more focus on segmentation of particular stakeholders, like MSPs, so that engagement programmes with them are more realistic and achievable.

Political	Other Health Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government – Ministers – Policy Advisors • Civil Service • Scottish Parliament - Health & Sport Committee - Cross Party Groups - Individual MSPs • MPs/Councillors • Political Parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Boards • NHS management • Other healthcare professionals • Pressure groups
Public	Internal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients • Patient groups • Public • Media – Pharmacy Press – Scottish National, regional and local media – Specialist publications, Holyrood etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members • Owners • Other pharmacy bodies • Community Pharmacy Scotland

Key messages

The key messages in 2009 will be more focused on the Board and targeted towards members and key stakeholders, including MSPs. This represents a shift from 2008 when the strategy looked to address issues relating to both the pharmacy profession generally, as well as the organisation.

- The RPSGB in Scotland is changing and becoming a new member focused organisation – not simply a re-branded organisation
- The Scottish Pharmacy Board of the RPSGB is responding to the needs of members and progressing the ambitions of a new professional body, as set out in the Prospectus
- Scottish pharmacy can help tackle health inequalities through its changing role and extended services
- The Scottish Pharmacy Board of the RPSGB is taking steps to effectively influence public policy and represent the profession
- Scottish pharmacists are highly trained health care professionals, providing an essential everyday service in communities, hospitals, prisons, surgeries and educating future generations in science and academia

Tactics

The strategy has stressed so far that the programme of communications activities for 2009 need to be realistic and achievable. The tactics have been refined to achieve this, while still providing a balanced mix of proactive and reactive activities.

Members

Members Virtual Network: Development of this website is a priority in 2009. Once complete it will provide information for all Scottish members on a Scotland wide and local branch level. It is a key vehicle for the Scottish Pharmacy Board to communicate directly with members about the latest news and events, helping to highlight the work they are doing to progress the professional leadership body and engage in the political arena.

Linked to the website is a regular **members ezine** which will supplement the existing paper based newsletter and go to the majority of the 4,400 membership that RPSGB have email addresses and permissions for or who actively subscribe through the website. A members' discussion forum will also be available to help promote networking and to facilitate comment and discussion on topical issues.

The website has huge flexibility to grow according to feedback from members. New sections can be added or taken away to provide more in-depth toolkits on working with the media and meeting stakeholders, which could be beneficial for use by branches.

Members' survey panel: A monthly online survey will be distributed to a panel of Scottish pharmacists. This will seek views on a range of pharmacy issues, including RPSGB services, campaigns and initiatives, the new professional leadership body and the wider changing role of pharmacy in Scotland. The results will be used to inform and shape internal strategies but at times will also be used to generate news hooks for press releases. Recruitment of the panel is currently underway and there has been a good response to the invitation request.

Internal / Members / Newsletter: Members will continue to receive the quarterly Scottish Pharmacy Board newsletter 'The Bulletin'. It will be supplemented by the members' ezine and reviewed periodically throughout the year as to whether it will be fully replaced by the ezine.

Roadshows: Once the future of the professional leadership body has been confirmed it will be important to communicate exactly what it means for members and how it will affect them face to face to secure their buy in. A series of roadshows, ideally targeting branch areas and involving branch support, will be rolled out. As well as standard presentations, discussion panels, encouraging debate and opinion can be carried out. To help reach a wide audience, one of these sessions could be filmed, edited and loaded on to the virtual network website, for those members unable to attend.

Online Question Forum: Members could be given the opportunity to 'Ask a Board Member' a question. This could be developed either on the virtual network or the existing Scottish RPSGB website. It would be useful to set topics to guide the questions and set a regular date for answers to be posted online.

Media

Proactive opinion: Opportunities will be identified for the Chair and Deputy Chair to offer opinion on current issues of healthcare policy as speakers at conferences and through 'First Person pieces' in

the broadsheets, pharmacy press and select Scottish publications, like Holyrood magazine. Feature opportunities to promote the range of pharmacy services will also be identified.

Local comment: All UK national media campaigns will be tailored to the Scottish regional and local newspapers as far as possible. The RX Campaign spokesperson, Laura Wilson, will be used to front Scotland specific interviews. Where possible, opportunities to use a well known Scot or design a Scottish specific photo opportunity, within budget, will also be identified and integrated into the campaign plans. Where possible, pro-forma press releases will be drafted and issued in the name of the local branches or board member.

Pagoda will work closely with the Scotland and London RPSGB offices to review the relevance of any campaign research findings to Scotland and to agree target media outlets. Particular consumer media campaigns may not be as relevant to sell into hard news broadsheets.

Following a review of branches and the possible implementation of toolkits to help them engage with the media it may be worthwhile carry out 'newshound training' with branch committee members who have responsibility for communications. This would help them to identify possible news stories and example case studies that can be used to generate local press releases and informazine and newsletter articles.

Reactive opinion: A system is in place to monitor and identify possible news stories released by the Scottish Government or other bodies, including comments in Parliament where the Scottish Pharmacy Board can respond. This would be done in the form of submitting a spokesperson's comment very quickly following the break of the news story to the Scottish Press Association. To ensure more effective identification of possible stories and a faster reaction time, a system needs to be put in place to facilitate closer working between the London Press office and Pagoda PR and to share standard media lines and responses.

Political & Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement with the Scottish Government: The Scottish Government has accepted some of the proposals that were contained in the 'Manifesto for Scottish Pharmacy'. However, there are a number of key proposals that are still to gain the support of government, including:

- Access by pharmacists to health care records
- Involving the profession more closely in the development of health policy and planning

In 2009 the Board will re-address the manifesto, consider and agree future strategic objectives for the profession in policy development.

The Board should continue to engage and look to facilitate meetings with Scottish Government Health Ministers – Nicola Sturgeon, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health & Wellbeing, and Shona Robison, MSP, Minister for Public Health. In the context of the Scottish Government's commitment to cross departmental policy development - for example seven ministers were involved in the discussions that led to the production of the Government's "Equally Well" policy document- the Board should also look to engage with other relevant Ministers. For example, where health gains may be achieved by policy changes in areas not strictly contained within traditional health portfolios - like drugs policy in prisons - the Board may wish to engage with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice.

Engagement with policy advisers: Access to government ministers can be expedited by developing positive relationships with the appropriate political advisers. The key political adviser on health issues is Senior Policy Adviser, Noel Dolan, who provides advice on the Health and Wellbeing

Portfolio, reporting directly to the Deputy First Minister. He should continue to be included in briefings and meetings.

Engagement with the civil service: Within the civil service there are a range of officers who should be targeted, where appropriate, as having a significant influence in developing the Government agenda.

These include:

- Dr Kevin Woods; Director General, Health and Chief Executive NHS Scotland
- Bill Scott; Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
- Dr Harry Burns, Chief Medical Officer
- Jacqui Lunday, Chief Health Professions Officer
- Director; Public Health and Wellbeing
- Social Inclusion; Mike Palmer
- Derek Feeley; Healthcare Policy and Strategy
- Paul Martin; Chief Nursing Officer and Health Workforce (interim)
- Elizabeth Carmichael; Community Justice Services

Engagement with the Scottish Parliament: 2009 will see two Section 60 orders laid before the Scottish Parliament. These are The Health Care and Associated Professions (Miscellaneous Amendments) Order 2009, which will introduce regulation of pharmacy technicians in Scotland, in January 2009. Also the Pharmacy Order 2009 - a public consultation on the Order establishing the new regulatory body, the General Pharmaceutical Council, which is expected to be laid in the first half of the Parliamentary year.

To secure the desired outcomes the Board will wish to engage with those MSPs on both the Health and Sport Committee (Christine Grahame, Ross Finnie, Jackie Baillie, Helen Eadie, Michael Mathieson, Ian McKee, Mary Scanlon, Dr Richard Simpson) and the Subordinate Legislation Committee (Jamie Stone, Ian McKee, Jackson Carlaw, Malcolm Chisholm, Bob Doris, Helen Eadie, Tom McCabe) to which the S60 Orders will be laid. Detailed briefing papers will be produced for both S60 Orders.

In engaging with MSPs on matters relating to general health policy, the Scottish Pharmacy Board will continue to meet with members of the Parliament's Health and Sport Committee, prioritising meetings with individual party political health spokespersons (Ross Finnie, Cathy Jamieson and Mary Scanlon).

Specifically the Board will:

- Seek to follow up the work that the Committee has carried out in relation to their Health Inequalities Inquiry by continuing to highlight the ways in which the profession can intervene in the lives of Scots in ways that would help reduce health inequalities.
- Contribute to the work that the Committee is planning to undertake during the year on the topical subject of Men's Health.

Engagement with Cross Party Groups: Engage with appropriate Cross Party Groups through representation on the groups, attendance at meetings or presentations on related issues. The CPGs should be prioritised to engage with those that have more direct relevance to pharmacy and that have been particularly active during the last session. For example, the CPG on cancer, sexual health and tobacco control. Pagoda would continue to monitor the work of all CPGs to identify potential opportunities.

Pharmacy Bytes Ezine: Will continue to act as a vehicle to brief MSPs and other key stakeholders on the general work of the Board and Scottish Pharmacy Issues. In its first year, the ezine has been effective, with a meeting request with Dr Richard Simpson being set up in response to an edition and the general readership numbers per edition increasing. Future ezines should continue to provide short targeted news items. It's also recommended that future editions are issued in the name of a specific Board member or RPSGB staff member to help increase readership figures, familiarity and favourability.

The template of Pharmacy Bytes can also be used to issue briefings to MSPs, researchers and key stakeholders on issues like the Section 60 Orders at relevant times throughout the year.

Formal consultation responses: Political monitoring will identify opportunities to respond to Scottish Government and Parliament consultations and inquiries. All consultation responses, where relevant, will be publicised through the pharmacy press, newsletter and members ezine.

Local pharmacy visits: RPSGB should capitalise on the breadth of pharmacy it represents and offer visits for MSPs/MPs/councillors and other key stakeholders to hospital, surgery and prison pharmacies, alongside standard community pharmacy visits. The MSP lobbying toolkit will be updated to reflect this and a new priority engagement programme drafted. This will also result in a more focused branch member and MSP twinning agreement.

Parliamentary event / reception: The 2008 parliament event was the first in a series of proposed annual events. A similar event will be organised in 2009 with a slightly different focus. An exhibition will be set up in one of the committee rooms or the Garden Lobby offering in-depth health checks including blood sugar, cholesterol, and cardiovascular 10 year risk assessments. A separate reception should also be organised during the exhibition period where representatives of pharmacy can also be invited.

Party conferences and other events: There will continue to be a presence at the four main political party conferences in 2009, which is likely to remain jointly with Community Pharmacy Scotland. Opportunities to host additional **fringe meetings**, offering the in-depth health checks along with a presentation and panel session on a topical pharmacy issue, will also be identified.

Building on the concept of a members online question forum, members could be encouraged to submit questions that they would like to **'Ask the Minister'**. A selection of the best questions could be chosen and then put to the Minister or party spokesperson for health at party conferences. The potential of this would need to be scoped and is likely to require that a fringe event is hosted by RPSGB and the Minister or spokesperson is engaged to attend as a guest speaker.

The conferences have proven to be a useful way of engaging with the political parties and their supporters to discuss current issues and promote the Society's policies which have yet to be adopted by the Parliament or the Government.

Online

Parliamentary monitoring: Monitoring reports will seek out opportunities to engage with MSPs and provide briefings in response to questions, motions and petitions tabled.

Communications Strategy 2009 – Timeline

Month	Activity	Audience
January		
	Transcom prospectus feedback deadline (9 th)	Members
	Section 60 Order Regulation of Pharmacy Technicians (tbc) briefing	MSPs Members
	Pharmacy Bytes e-zine reflecting on 2008 and setting out priorities for 2009	MSPs
	Members panel survey & follow up media release	Members
February		
(tbc)	Members vote on Charter Changes	Members, Key Stakeholders
	Publication of SPB newsletter	Members
	Members panel survey & follow up media release	Members
	Premises options briefing / press release	Members
	Sexual Health UK wide media campaign (Valentines Day, tbc)	All
14 – 22	Scottish Parliament Recess	
March		
6 – 8	Scottish Labour Party Conference	MSPs and other Scottish Labour Party Supporters
9	Creating a new professional regulator for pharmacy: health care and associated professions - the draft Pharmacy Order 2009 – consultation closes	
11	No smoking day media – piggyback on National campaign	All
13 – 15	Scottish Liberal Democrat Conference	MSPs and other Scottish Liberal Democrat Supporters
	Members panel survey & follow up media release	Members / Media
	Members e-zine	Members
	Launch of virtual network First members e-zine	Members Branches
April		
	Publication of SPB newsletter	Members
	Section 60 Order GPC (tbc) briefing	MSPs Members
	Members panel survey & follow up media release	Members / Media
	Review of virtual network, survey panel and member's e-zine	Internal
	Hayfever localised media releases (Scotland) (tbc)	Media
May		
	Scottish Conservative Party Conference	MSPs and other Scottish Conservative Supporters
	SPB Roadshows – professional leadership	Members
	Planning for a health holiday UK wide media campaign	All
	Members panel survey & follow up media release	Members / Media
June		
	SPB Newsletter	Members
27 June – 30 August	Scottish Parliament Recess	
July		

	Roll out of individual MSP invitations to local hospital, prison and community pharmacies from Board members	MSPs
	Members panel survey & follow up media release	Members / Media
	Members ezine	Members
August		
6 - 9	British Pharmaceutical Conference, Manchester. Profile Scottish research with media	Members Media
	Members panel survey & follow up media release	Members / Media
	Antibiotics mis-use UK wide media campaign (tbc)	All
	Ramadan Medicines use RX campaign (tbc)	Media
September		
	Scottish Parliament event	MSPs, Members, Key Stakeholders
	Members panel survey & follow up media release	Members / Media
October		
	Members panel survey & follow up media release	Members / Media
	Members ezine	Members / Media
November		
	SPB Newsletter	Members
	Members panel survey & follow up media release	Members
	Pregnancy / child health UK wide media campaign (tbc)	All
December		
	Members panel survey & follow up media release	Members
	Members ezine	Members
	New Year resolutions RX campaign (tbc)	Media