



**Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society**
of Great Britain

Scottish Pharmacy Board

9 January 2009

Mr N Clarke
53 Chandos Place
Covent Garden
London WC2N 4HS

Dear Nigel

SCOTTISH PHARMACY BOARD OF THE ROYAL PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN RESPONSE TO THE TRANSCOM PROSPECTUS

The Scottish Pharmacy Board of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Prospectus for the New Professional Body for Pharmacy that has been produced by the Transitional Committee under your chairmanship. We are very appreciative of the efforts of members of the Committee and its working groups, and of your role in achieving a consensus in some difficult and contentious areas.

Generally the Board is supportive of the proposals in the Prospectus and believes these can be used to form the foundation for a successful and financially viable new professional body for pharmacy in Great Britain. However, we do not underestimate the considerable work still required to turn these proposals into reality, particularly in convincing potential members that the new body will be an organisation genuinely focused on meeting their professional needs and worthy of their support. We look forward to seeing the responses from the wider profession and will do everything we can to engage potential members in the ongoing debate as the blueprint is developed into a tangible body.

As the Board represents the 4400 pharmacists in all parts of Scotland and in all practice environments we particularly welcome the clear and continuing recognition that within Great Britain there are increasingly diverse health and social care policies, structures, and services that reflect political, cultural, and geographical variations as well as different patterns of need. The Society's Devolution Review, which reported in 2005, prompted the creation of the three National Pharmacy Boards in early 2007. This recognised that for the profession to fully realise its potential each Board required to have an enhanced level of authority and autonomy to represent and work on behalf of the profession within their respective countries. This was a significant step forward and the process is still evolving, but devolution within the Society needs to develop as it has in government, and at a similar pace.

The creation of the new Professional Leadership Body (PLB) for pharmacy creates the opportunity to advance the profession utilising organisational structures that are seen by members to facilitate a better level of understanding of the issues that affect their practice environment and by politicians and other decision-makers as truly representative of the profession in Scotland.

The current composition of the Scottish Pharmacy Board is based on the advice of its predecessor, the Scottish Executive, and is different to that of its English and Welsh equivalents. This was hailed by the last Chairman of the Scottish Executive as “Devolution in action” and there is, therefore, some disappointment that the Prospectus proposes standardised compositions for the three Boards based on sectoral representation. Within NHSScotland the ethos, which is endorsed by all health professions, is to remove organisational barriers and to plan and deliver health and social care services that simplify the patient journey in order to deliver more effective, high quality care. Re-enforcing sectoral boundaries within the profession is seen by the Board as a retrograde step, particularly when we are working hard to integrate services and enable all patients to benefit from the full range of pharmaceutical expertise and knowledge.

We understand that some pharmacists have expressed a desire for a sectoral composition because there is a perception that having someone from a particular practice environment at the ‘top table’ is necessary for effective representation. We appreciate that there is a degree of flexibility afforded by the three unallocated places on the Scottish Board and can accept this as a starting point. However, we expect the Scottish Pharmacy Board of the new PLB to quickly demonstrate by open and inclusive ways of working that all members can contribute their views, influencing policy and future direction. It is important, therefore, to ensure the new body remains fit for purpose by having governance arrangements that allow each Board to consider appropriate and necessary changes to composition as these new entities evolve and develop.

Not surprisingly, the composition and remit of the Assembly have also attracted considerable attention and comment. It is important that the new PLB is a genuine partnership between members in each of the three countries as represented by their Boards. Leadership and advocacy have been recognised as important functions of the new organisation and it will have to operate effectively in three very different political and cultural environments. The new PLB will not be a successful professional body unless it can influence the three governments and NHS organisations in order to demonstrate effective professional leadership within each home country. The emphasis must, therefore, be on activity by the Boards at a national level and by the Local Practice Forums within regions. We support the proposal that the Assembly’s functions will be limited to overall strategy and governance issues, and that it will meet less frequently than the Boards. It is important that the remits of the Assembly and the Boards, and their relationships and ways of working, are clearly articulated at an early stage. Otherwise there is a very high risk that members will see the Assembly as a replacement Council (there is already evidence of this in correspondence published in the PJ), which will extend the perception of a ‘rebadged RPSGB’ and be detrimental to the PLB’s sustainability.

In summary, we welcome the publication of the Prospectus and look forward to hearing the response of members to the consultation. We particularly look forward to working with others to turn the broad principles outlined within the document into the reality of a viable and effective professional body. With their support we can help realise their ambitions in delivering a Professional Leadership Body worthy of their support and which strives to ensure that our profession continues to play a major and increasingly important role in improving the health of the Scottish people.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S Melville".

S Melville
Chairman, Scottish Pharmacy Board
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain