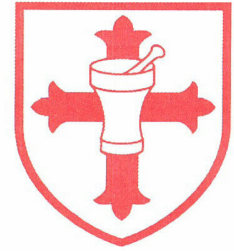


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# GHP

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*Guild of  
Healthcare  
Pharmacists*



5<sup>th</sup> August 2008

Fees consultation  
Office of the Chief Executive and Registrar  
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain  
1, Lambeth High St  
London SE1 7JN

Dear Jeremy

## **Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain fees for 2009 consultation**

### **Response from the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this consultation. The Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists represents UK wide around 4,000 pharmacists including the majority of hospital pharmacists, pharmacists employed by Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and pharmacists employed by other public bodies such as the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the Healthcare Commission. The Guild is part of the health sector of the union Unite-Amicus section.

#### **General comments**

The Guild notes that the proposed fee increase is relatively small, although we consider that a fee increase should not be necessary after the 40% increase last year.

We are not convinced from reading the Society's Annual Review that money is being spent wisely, including that for Council members' expenses (we note an increase in daily allowance expenses of 11.5%), so that the justification for the increase is not there.

Restraint in expenditure should be the order of the day, given last year's fee increase and the current financial climate, in order not to alienate members. NHS staff have received a 2.75% pay increase with a 3 year total package worth about 7% for pharmacists and been told they are lucky to have jobs and to tighten their belts. NHS staff have to pay their own fees (a few get £38 through last year's pay award) as

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do locum staff, whereas many community pharmacists have their fees paid by their employer. We see no similar restraint exercised by the Society.

The Guild is pleased to note that there will be the facility to pay fees by instalments as discussed with Jeremy Holmes last year.

### **Answers to consultation questions**

#### **Question 1**

Do you support the introduction of a reduced retention fee for members who have a low personal income?

*If this proposal is supported, the increase in retention fee for practising pharmacists for 2009 would be 4.5%*

No

As noted in the consultation document the costs of registering and dealing with fitness to practise issues are the same whether a registrant is full or part time.

Although the part time member may make less use of the professional services offered by the Society the estimated cost reduction possible for this is not shown in the consultation document. The proposed fees to be charged for someone earning less than £16,500 in total, do not appear in the document. There is no real evidence of how this would be “policed”, and in general the cost of means testing is nearly always expensive. We are not sure whether this exercise would be worthwhile and our members would accept it.

It would take some time and effort to set the level of the reduced fee so as to be seen to be fair to all registrants and at this late stage in the life of the Society we do not think it is worth it.

#### **Question 2**

Do you support an increase in retention fee for practising pharmacists of 3.9%?

*If this proposal is supported, the increase in the retention fee for practising pharmacists for 2009 would be 3.9% and there would not be a reduced retention fee for members who have a low personal income.*

No

We consider that the fee increase for 2008 should be sufficient for 2009 without increase.

#### **Question 3**

Do you support an increase in all other fees of 3.9%?

No

We consider that the fee increase for 2008 should be sufficient for 2009 without increase.

#### **Further Comments**

Please let us have any other comments on the fees or the consultation process

We would like to ask how the Society is using the funds identified by the Government to help with transitional costs? The use of such funds should be open and transparent.

We hope these comments are of assistance

Our reply may be made freely available.

Yours sincerely

*Jean Curtis*

Jean Curtis  
Professional Secretary