

GUILD OF HEALTHCARE PHARMACISTS-UNITE

DRAFT

Notes of the General Meeting held on May 16th 2009 at the Marriott Hotel, Leicester

Annual Report

The NPC Chair (President) Richard Cattell offered his apologies to the meeting for the late delivery of the Annual Report, and for the letter about election of candidates to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain which was delivered after the closing date for the elections. He then went through the Report.

Professional secretary's report: Richard commented that the consultation workload remained very high. It was difficult to prioritise the responses as so many were important to members, demonstrating the need for the professional secretary post.

Education and development report: he explained that the organisation of the conference has been taken over by the United Kingdom Clinical Pharmacy Association office. The Guild has found them to be good to work with and the organisation has worked successfully. Bob McArtney, education and development lead had recommended that the Guild should agree for them to organise the 2010 conference. A comment was made that application forms need to be available to members well before the early bird closing date.

Membership: this has remained steady at around 4,000.

Regional members: there was no member for Wales or Yorkshire. NPC members will try to get candidates to stand for these posts as soon as possible ready for elections at the end of the year.

Information Technology Interest Group: the June meeting has been postponed to 11.11.09.

Update from Unite.

Karen Reay, National Officer for Health had been delayed returning from Birmingham from the March for Jobs. Richard reported that because of the recession and the national loss of jobs there had been many redundancies such that Unite have lost around 10,000 members and the associated income. Unite needs to balance their books, so a decision had been taken that any unfilled posts would be cut. Richard said that he and the NPC had made it very clear to Karen that they could not see how they could deliver the professional agenda without this post. The Guild has been offered the support of a Regional officer, Kevin McAdam from Northern Ireland, and Richard has met with him, but this is only industrial support rather than professional support.

A discussion followed.

Suzanne Khalid asked if the Guild had been able to agree a review period for the post. Richard responded that Unite thought that the recession would last several years, so were not prepared to look at this.

Ian Simpson asked if there was any point in writing to the General Secretary, Derek Simpson, and Bill Brookes urged everyone to write to him and to lobby Unite as this is not acceptable.

Trudi Hilton pointed out that all time spent on professional matters comes out of NHS funded time so that if members were to take on the professional secretary role between them there would be a cost to the NHS.

Ron Pate said that he understood the union position: if members are made redundant then they don't need professional support. However pharmacists are faced with the difficulties associated with the formation of the Professional Leadership Body, which will need a great deal of input from the Guild, as well as other professional issues.

It was queried if, for an interim period with no professional secretary, the work could be spread out among the groups, was there expertise there and could they help?

It was stated that Richard must approach Unite in the right way or it may be counterproductive.

Terms and Conditions

An update was given to the meeting.

Recruitment and retention premium (RRP): Dave Thornton had met with the Pay Review Body (PRB) for their final evidence session. Previous to that there had been two meetings with the Department of Health and NHS Employers to see if there was any common ground so that this could be taken forward to the PRB. Despite all the evidence that there was a genuine problem with recruitment and retention a workable solution could not be agreed. At the PRB meeting the PRB was updated on the work which had been done. It was thought that the PRB report was probably on the Minister's desk. It was agreed that Karen should be asked to lobby to get the report issued. It was noted that if the Guild had not been part of a big union it was highly unlikely that the request for an RRP would have got to the PRB.

On-call: It was reported that this issue is likely to be ongoing for some time. A wide range of systems for on-call is being examined. Protection for the status quo had been agreed until March 2010. It is likely that this deadline will need to be extended. A data collection exercise is being undertaken by 50 Trusts and will also be looked at by Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Gillian Arr-Jones pointed out that some members not working in the NHS itself are coordinated through Barrie brown in Unite and they also have issues.

Professional Liability Insurance

This is now available for members. Information is on the Guild web site and the unite web site.

Guild web site

Jim Banner man was thanked for the enormous amount of work he has put in to setting up the new web site.

Dispensing errors/ Sections 64/65 of the Medicines Act

This needs to be flagged up as a top priority for the MHRA review of the Medicines Act. The Guild needs to lobby other organisations for support for this. There will be a meeting in early June between the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the Minister. The Guild has offered Keith Ridge any support they can give as needed.

Ian Simpson suggested all pharmacists should be encouraged to sign the current petition. Richard agreed that the Guild should encourage members to sign.

Responsible Pharmacist

The Guild has concerns about the legality of current hospital practice in the light of this legislation. There is to be a meeting the following Monday with the Department of Health and the MHRA lawyers. It is felt that there is a need for advice/guidance for hospital Chief Pharmacists.

Professional Leadership Body

It was reported that the Guild has input into each Working Group. It was agreed that members need to get engaged with the new body including those who are not very interested.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

Jean Curtis
13.04.10