



guild matters

For personal use only. Not to be reproduced
without permission of the editor
(permissions@pharmj.org.uk)

NEWSLETTER FROM THE GUILD OF HEALTHCARE PHARMACISTS

Welcome to another edition of *Guild Matters*, the newsletter from the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists.

The theme of this newsletter is "having your say". With so much going on in the profession at the present time, and with everything happening at such a fast pace, pharmacists need to remain on their toes. The Guild is contributing to several consultations and working groups and is committed to stating the views of its members. So let us know your thoughts. It is, after all, the future of your profession.

Unite rejects pay offer and calls for industrial action

Unite members rejected the recent three-year pay deal offered by the Department of Health (*The Pharmaceutical Journal* 2008;280:741). The union is now seeking the views of members to gauge support for industrial action.

Unite was the only union not to accept the pay deal. Members were advised that the percentage increases for the next two years were too low when compared with the rate of inflation and there were insufficient safeguards in the agreement to ensure the government would reopen negotiations if inflation rose above the level seen during April 2008. Because inflation has continued to rise since that time, and is expected to continue to rise, the Guild and Unite continue to believe that this advice was correct.

As well as voting to reject the pay deal, Unite members also voted for a ballot on whether to carry out industrial action. Such action is not limited to workers going on strike, it could, for example, consist of refraining from carrying out non-patient duties, such as cancelling meetings for a specified period.

Unite is striving to reopen pay negotiations before next year. The ballot for industrial action will take place in early autumn to try to force the Government to engage with this issue. In the meantime, meetings of accredited representatives are being organised to gauge members' views on what sort of industrial action they might be prepared to take.

Guild members are encouraged to have their say. Please join in local discussions or contact your local Unite representative or Guild regional member. Further information can be found in the health section of the Unite-Amicus website (www.amicus.theunion.org) or on the Guild website.



Guild updates

2009 conference

The fifth annual joint conference of the UK Clinical Pharmacy Association and the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists will take place at the Marriott Hotel, Leicester, on 15–17 May 2009.

Further details regarding the programme, speakers and deadlines for poster presentations, etc, will be published on the Guild website (www.ghp.org.uk) and the UKCPA website (www.ukcpa.org) in the coming months.

Guild meetings

25 September
National Professional Committee meeting, King Street, Covent Garden, London

26 November
National Professional Committee meeting, Friends Meeting House, Euston, London

27 November
Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists group secretaries meeting, Friends Meeting House, Euston, London

Contact the Guild

Members can provide comments to the Guild through their regional representatives (a list of these can be found on the Guild website) or by e-mailing Jean Curtis, Guild professional secretary (jeancm23@aol.com).

Updates on the new regulator and the Society's separation

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society is being split into a regulatory body, the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), and a professional body. This is part of a wider government work plan set out in last year's White Paper ("Trust, Assurance and Safety"), which aims to protect patients from poor practice by health-care professionals.

Jean Curtis, professional secretary for the Guild, attended a meeting organised by the Department of Health on professional regulation and the end of July. Several healthcare professions are undergoing changes in council membership of their governing bodies — from elected representatives to members appointed by the Appointments Commission. There are currently public consultations running, for example, for the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

The working group for medical revalidation published its report at the end of July. This report can be accessed via the DoH website (www.dh.gov.uk). It is expected that the working group for non-medical revalidation, which includes pharmacists, will consider this publication, however it has not yet completed its work.

GPhC

A briefing was issued on the progress of setting up the GPhC during early July. A consultation on the regulations to establish the GPhC through a "section 60 order", to which the Guild will be responding, will start soon. The briefing can be accessed from the DoH website — search for "PRLOG".



The Royal Pharmaceutical Society headquarters in Lambeth, London

Professional body

The transitional committee (Transcom), set up to oversee the development of the new professional body, has set up several working groups to consider specific aspects of the new body's creation (eg, membership).

For both the GPhC and the professional body, it is vital that all pharmacists engage with discussions being held locally and nationally to secure the future they want. The Transcom website (www.transitionalcommittee.com) has blog pages that give pharmacists an opportunity to voice concerns or questions on any topic relating to Transcom's work. Guild Council recommends that all pharmacists read these blogs and contribute. The work is being done at a fast pace, so haste is required to make sure we have all had our voices heard.

Guild continues work with NHS pay review body

Dave Thornton, chairman of the Guild's terms and conditions committee, is working with Karen Reay, national officer for health at Unite, and NHS Employers to determine how best to implement the national retention premium recommended in the pay review body report earlier this year.

A draft paper outlining the Guild's position on the retention premium recommendation will be sent to NHS Employers and will be available on the Guild website shortly.

Questions on liability cover

As mentioned in the previous edition of *Guild Matters*, the Guild now offers professional liability insurance. Many pharmacists have expressed queries regarding various aspects of the policy. Each query is sent to our insurers and their response is published (without identifying the person from whom the query originated) in a document that can be accessed from the Guild website or the health section of the Unite-Amicus website (www.amicustheunion.org).

A policy schedule for pharmacists is also available from the Unite website, along with further information and an application form. The insurance costs £15 per annum, in addition to the standard union subscription.

Joining the Guild

Details about joining the Guild can be obtained from the Unite (Amicus) membership department, telephone 020 8462 7755 / 0845 8504242, e-mail membershipdepartment@amicustheunion.org.

Details can also be found at www.amicustheunion.org.