



Pharmacists To Be Balloted For Strike Action

As part of the 'Cut my pay, NO WAY' campaign, GHP members, along with all Health Sector members of Unite, are to be balloted for industrial action in protest against the Government's imposed derisory three year pay deal. The ballot is underpinned by a 95% rejection by its members of the Government's unilaterally imposed three year pay deal. It is further reinforced by a 75% vote in favour of an industrial action ballot.

The ballot will open on 28th October 2008 and close on November 12th 2008. Members will be asked 2 questions in the ballot. The first is for one day national strike(s) (with emergency cover provided where appropriate). The second is for national day(s) of protest and campaigns in support of the Unite pay dispute and industrial action short of strike action. The ballot papers will contain information on possible alternative industrial action should a strike not be supported and questions and answers around strike action. If you have not received your ballot paper by 3rd November then ring 0208 889 9203.

At the last GHP National Professional Committee meeting the forthcoming ballot was discussed in some detail. The view of the committee was that it would be difficult to support the national strike as this would potentially put members in conflict with their Code of Ethics. However the committee did support protests, campaigns and industrial action short of strike action by individual members which does not affect patient care. Unite understands and respects the position of healthcare professionals who feel that they cannot take strike action as it may adversely affect patient care.

Goodbye to Jean Curtis

This is the last newsletter that will be overseen by our Professional Secretary, Jean Curtis. Her guiding hand has been invaluable over the past years and she will be greatly missed. I am sure you will all join in wishing her a happy retirement.

Support for Transcom process

Letter from the President

The Guild remains wholly supportive of the work of Transcom in advising on the setting up of the new professional leadership body (PLB) for pharmacy. It is vital for our profession that we have a competent and effective leadership body. We are heartened by the approach taken by Nigel Clarke, especially the open and transparent method of working and the opportunity we have to input and influence the process. We would encourage all those working within the broader Transcom process to engage as widely as possible with the membership, and to ensure that **all** processes are transparent and information is made available quickly and publicised widely.

Role of bodies providing representation (employee or employer)

It is vital to a vibrant profession to have 3 key organisational groupings – regulator, professional leadership body and bodies providing individual representation (either for employees or employers - such as trade unions and trade organisations). Separating the functions of these organisations is vital to achieving a balance and the right challenge within the profession. Offering financial services and other 'added value' deals deflect from the real function of a professional leadership body at this stage.

Expectations of the new PLB

We strongly believe that a new body is needed and any legacy from the RPSGB needs to be handled openly, clearly and with full explanation (Royal Charter, financial obligations etc) to members of the current and future PLB. We find the FIP approach to outlining the strategic functions of a leadership body a good example (details below), and would want to hold any PLB to these values. We have submitted these thoughts into the TransCom Leadership Working Group.

Membership of any new PLB

We are supportive of an inclusive membership which enables the pharmacy family to work more closely together. We are clear that the organisation should be for individuals within the

pharmacy family. We are not clear how the planned 'affiliation' relationship will work with, for example APTUK, who have a relationship with a trade union already and are concerned this may disenfranchise technicians. We must ensure that technicians play a full part in the delivery of pharmaceutical services and as such we feel that technicians should have a place within the membership of a PLB. Using different membership categories will allow us to deal with access to services, post-nominal letters and voting rights.

Fees associated with any new PLB and regulator

We consider that the aggregate costs of membership of both the regulatory and professional leadership bodies should not exceed the current membership fee of the RPSGB. We would not expect that the current state of play, where individual membership fees are relied on to subsidise the registration of premises, to remain. We would expect the General Pharmaceutical Council, when formed in 2010 and the PLB to work together to achieve this position. We would also expect that the PLB will provide services for individual members, and that fees to the PLB will be paid by the individual not the employer. If the employer does pay the PLB fee then they should not expect to have undue influence over the workings of the PLB - professional leadership and commercial leadership must be entirely separate.

Communications with members

It is vital that TransCom take the necessary steps, most likely through the RPSGB membership list, to contact each and every member individually, to engage with the "silent majority". It is essential that when the prospectus for Transcom is published it truly comes as no surprise to the profession at large, never mind groups which already exist.

Whilst this explains clearly where the Guild National Professional Committee currently stands it is possible that our views may develop as does the agenda. It is important that we publicly put down a clear marker as to where the Guild stands on a number of these issues to dispel any misconceptions that may have previously been expressed by others.

The Guild will continue to work with all of our partner organisations and colleagues in order to achieve the best outcome for our profession.

Richard Cattell

President

"STOP PRESS - GHP/UKCPA/ATHP/DH joint meeting to explore the Pharmacy White Paper - 20th November - see www.ghp.org.uk for details"

Pharmacist's Recruitment and Retention

Premium

Earlier this year, the Pay Review Body acknowledged there was a problem with the recruitment and retention of newly qualified pharmacists. They suggested the problem needed a national solution and asked employers and Unite to come up with a workable solution before the next Pay Review Body.

The Guild and Unite have had 2 meetings recently with the Department of Health and NHS Employers to try and resolve this problem. This is a national problem that requires a national solution. In our meetings with the employers we have put forward a number of options to try and resolve this problem. Our discussions are ongoing and we are working towards making a joint recommendation to the Pay Review Body.

Details of the Unite options put forward to try and resolve the recruitment and retention problem can be found on the website at www.ghp.org.uk under the members section.

On Call Protection

The Guild has had several queries about on call protection recently. Some are simply seeking clarification of the current protection arrangements whilst others relate to management wanting to change the way on call is delivered. Regarding protection, this is quite clear. Pharmacist EDC payment is protected until March 31st 2010. Regarding changing on call arrangements, we would resist any move by management to change on call systems at the moment. If changes are made it is important to ensure that the protected remuneration is part of the new agreement. There is a danger that management will try and impose agenda for change on call payments in a bid to reduce costs. This could result in potential pay cuts for pharmacists.

The Guild is involved with the Unite on call working group that feeds directly into the Staff council on call sub-group. It is this group that are working on the new terms and conditions for on call provided by all staff covered by agenda for change.

**5th GHP/UKCPA Joint Conference
Marriott Hotel, Leicester May 15-17th 2009**

Don't forget to put the date of the next GHP/UKCPA conference in your diary. Go to the GHP or UKCPA websites for further details and for information on how to submit a presentation.