

Council meeting 5 & 6 December 2006

PUBLIC BUSINESS

FOR NOTING

Report from the Council member sponsors of the Branch and Regional network

Purpose

To update the Council on the work of the Council member sponsors of the Branches and Regional network

Strategic objective domain

- Improving member engagement in the work of the Society

Action required

Council is asked to note the report.

1. Background

David Carter and John Gentle are the Council members who act as sponsors for the Branch and Regional Network. The following report reflects on some of the key developments relating to the Branch and Regional network from 2006.

Jean-Pierre Moser
Head of Corporate Communications & Membership

Report to Council from the Council sponsors for the Branch and Regional Network.

Careers

The Society published a new suite of careers materials in August 2005 including a leaflet, poster and dedicated website www.pharmacycareers.org.uk. A subsequent survey of the Branches revealed a great demand to engage with promoting careers at a local level and a Power Point presentation and script were made available to the network in early 2006. A careers exhibition stand has also been made available for Branches to order at cost price via the membership team. The careers material will be updated in 2007 to reflect the changes that have happened across the profession and across England, Scotland and Wales. The careers work has been a notable success with to date over 38,000 recorded visits to the careers website and over 35,000 leaflets having been sent out.

Key meetings

BRM

The Branch Representatives' Meeting was held on Wednesday 25 May at the QEII Conference Centre. The BRM is an opportunity for members to raise motions for Council and for Council to inform the Branch representatives of the Council's activities or proposed activities. This year 105 members attended to debate and vote on the 17 motions submitted. Following a review of the BRM undertaken by the PR and Membership team a toolkit, to help Branches prepare their motions, has also been published and issued to the Branches.

RSM

Seven Regional Secretaries attended an evening meeting at the Society on 17 October chaired by David Carter. One of the main points for discussion concerned the future roles of the Regions and how they would interact with the new Pharmacy Board structures.

Branch and Regional Secretaries' meeting

Over 50 Secretaries attended the annual meeting on 18 October 2006, Chaired by Ann Lewis, the Society's Secretary & Registrar. The Branches and Regions are the local face of the Society and this annual meeting is important in helping to build members' understanding about the work of the organisation across England, Scotland and Wales. During the morning John Gentle introduced a 'best practice' session during which three Branches were invited to share experiences with colleagues. The meeting also provided the Secretaries with the opportunity to hear directly from the Officers during a 30 minute Q&A session with the President, Vice-President and Treasurer.

In the afternoon session, Paul Gimson, Long-Term Conditions and Public Health Lead Pharmacist, gave a presentation on long-term conditions: integrating community pharmacy's contribution. David Pruce, Director of Practice & Quality Improvement led an interactive session to develop ideas for pharmacy in the future. David introduced the session with a recap of *Pharmacy in a new age* (PIANA): what it was, what it set out to achieve and what the process was and Rob Darracott, Director of Corporate and Strategic Development, gave an update on the current situation with the development of the National Pharmacy Boards

CPD

The Branch and Regional network has an important role to play in supporting members with their CPD. Over 20,000 members have logged onto the website www.uptodate.org.uk, yet a large number of members are still not fully engaged with this process. Since 2004 the Branches and Regions have been running meetings to support pharmacists with their CPD needs holding over 200 meetings attended by some 6,000 members, supported by Branch CPD facilitators trained for this role.

The membership team is continuing to encourage Regions and Branches to work together to meet the CPD needs of local pharmacists. In October the team supported the West Midlands Region in running a one-day sell-out CPD conference which attracted over 100 pharmacists, demonstrating that there is still a high level of demand for local CPD meetings. The meeting was reported in the PJ (7 October) and will form the basis of a template to encourage other Regions and Branches to run similar events.

The Society's Branch CPD facilitators' role has now formally ceased but many of these pharmacists are likely to take up a role as a champion for the Pharmacy 2020 project or to provide ad-hoc support when requested by Branches.

Communications

Network News

Two editions of *Network News* were published in the PJ in January and in August 2006. *Network News* carries a detailed listing of Branch and Regional meetings and regularly features items of interest for the Branches including updates on CPD meetings, tips on promoting careers, sharing best practice, advice on how to improve Branch communications with the media, reports from BPC and student views from the BPSA.

Ask about your antibiotics

The Society, in association with the Specialist Advisory Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance (SACAR) at the Department of Health (DH) and the Health Protection Agency has launched *ask about your antibiotics* an awareness campaign aimed at helping the public to better understand the use of antibiotics.

The President has written to all registered community pharmacies in England encouraging them to get involved in the campaign. All pharmacies in England will also receive campaign material (leaflets and posters) to support local campaigns via the DH distribution service. A local media campaign is also underway, working with the BPRO network to highlight our key messages at a local level.

Media

The BPRO and RCO network are kept regularly updated about the Society's latest announcements or topical news stories via regular emails. This means that should they be approached to comment about a particular subject area they are informed of the Society's position. BPROs and RCOs are also encouraged to discuss pr opportunities or media approaches with the Society's PR team. They also receive a monthly PR and media report which details recent press releases and general PR activity.

In addition, some BPROs are used as national pharmacy spokespeople and have proven to be excellent 'voices' for pharmacy.

The *ask about your antibiotics* campaign provides a good example of how the PR team engage with the network.

The PR team has contacted its network of BPROs encouraging them to get involved in the campaign and providing a press release for distribution to each BPROs local media (print and broadcast). It is also contacting the local media on their behalf and any subsequent interviews will be coordinated by the PR team.

Parliamentary lobbying toolkit

This guide is provided by the Society as a Branch resource to help explain and support "lobbying" activity; which is often misunderstood and, as a result, its value not recognised. However, lobbying is important for the following reasons:

- to highlight and raise awareness of an issue
- to put across a point of view persuasively
- to seek to influence decision makers and opinion formers.

2005 saw the toolkit see its first year of full service. The toolkit, for which the first full year of use was 2005/2006 shows how to highlight and raise awareness of an issue and put across a point of view persuasively in order to influence decision makers and opinion-formers.

Future Branch Pilot

The *Future Branch* Project was launched in 2003 to explore new ways of working to help identify new ways of organising Branch programmes to capture best practice and appeal to a wider audience. The project comes to an end in December 2006.

A final report has been compiled based on the findings and reports submitted by the nine Branches that took part in the project.

The main findings show that the *Future Branches* have enjoyed the experience and the additional funding they have received has removed the need for external sponsorship. Most of the *Future Branches* have worked to support members' with their CPD and this led to increased attendance at such meetings. Joint working with other inter-professional organisations has also helped professional development locally. The lessons learnt from the project have been shared with the wider network.