

Editor and Editorial Director
OLIVIA TIMBS

Personal Assistant to the Editor
LYN MCCULLOCH

Deputy Editor
ANDREW HAYNES, *MRPharmS*
(The Society Section)

Managing Editor
GRAEME SMITH, *MRPharmS*
(Letters, Broad Spectrum,
Original Papers, Articles)

Assistant Editor
MICHAEL THOMPSON, *MRPharmS*
(Editor, *Pfj Online*)

Senior Staff Editors
HARRIET ADCOCK, *MRPharmS*
(Clinical News)
CLARE BELLINGHAM, *MRPharmS*
(News Features)
JONATHAN BUISSON, *MRPharmS*
(General News)

Staff Editors
DAWN CONNELLY, *MRPharmS*
(Contributions, Reviews)
HANNAH PIKE, *MRPharmS*
(Notice-Board)
LIN-NAM WANG, *MRPharmS*
(Continuing Professional Development)

Production Editor
CHRISTOPHER ICHA

Website Controller
GOWAN CLEWS

Administrative Assistant
PAULINE HESLOP
(Copyright and Permissions)

Editorial Advisory Board
ANGELA ALEXANDER, *FRPharmS*
JUDY CANTRILL, *FRPharmS*
ANTHONY COX, *MRPharmS*
NOEL DIXON, *MRPharmS*
NICK HALE, *MRPharmS*
JOHN HALL, *FRPharmS*
NORMAN LANNIGAN, *MRPharmS*
CHRISTINA LOWE, *MRPharmS*
BOB RIHAL, *MRPharmS*
STEVE WICKS, *MRPharmS*

Head of Business Development
PHILIPPA STAHELIN

Office Administrator — Sales
JO COOK

Classified and Systems Support — Sales
CLARE KNIGHTS

Display Sales
STUART THOMAS

Classified Sales
DORINDA LEWIS
ZIA NAMOOYA

Head of Publishing Services
JOHN WILSON

Production Manager
JOANNE MARKS

Production Assistants
YASMIN ASGHAR
ADAM JONES

Director of Publications
CHARLES FRY

The Pharmaceutical Journal
1 Lambeth High Street
London SE1 7JN

Telephone editorial, 020 7572 2420
advertising, 020 7572 2222
Fax editorial, 020 7572 2504
advertising, 020 7572 2505

E-mail editorial, editor@pharmj.org.uk
advertising, advertdept@rpsgb.org.uk
(see also "Notice-Board" page)

Pfj Online www.pjonline.com

DOUBLE VISION FOR PHARMACY

While politicians were packing their bags and thinking of their summer holidays, the Government produced not one but two visions for community pharmacy in England. However, this double vision does not, at present, make the future much clearer; if anything, the picture remains rather blurred.

The first vision is the long-awaited response to the Office of Fair Trading report on control of entry (see p105) produced by the Department of Trade and Industry. This paints a picture of increased competition among pharmacies and will introduce some new loopholes into the regulations covering the "necessary or desirable" test for granting new contracts. The second vision, produced by the Department of Health, is an update to the pharmacy plan launched in September 2000. This predicts a growing range of roles for pharmacists (see p106). The problem lies in trying to match the two together.

The "balanced package of measures" is, as has been long suspected, a typical fudge: a compromise put together by at least five Government departments and overseen at the highest political level. It is woefully short on detail and, as the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee points out, raises more questions than it answers. The PSNC is now suggesting openly that unless some of the vagaries of the statement are clarified urgently then the new pharmacy contract that both sides want is not going anywhere (see p105).

The Department of Health's "vision for pharmacy" is a mixture of past achievements (not all of which can be credited to the Government), recycled announcements and some blue sky thinking from the chief pharmaceutical officer, Dr Jim Smith. His renewed proposals to revise the way in which supervision takes place in pharmacies do appear to reflect a realisation among pharmacy contractors that current supervision rules and the new contract are not compatible. However, Dr Smith's idea of local terms of service for pharmacy contractors may not be so well received. On patient packs, Dr Smith fails to rise to the challenge, suggesting only the same half-baked compromises we have been given before.

Matching the visions is difficult. Until much more detail is given about how the revised control of entry regulations will work, uncertainty will continue to surround the future of community pharmacy. Dr Smith's vision of a brave new world for pharmacy cannot be put in place until clarity is forthcoming. The PSNC says that it managed within an hour to produce 40 questions on the proposed changes to control of entry. The Government may take a bit longer to answer them, but its double vision will not resolve until it does.