

Is April the cruellest month?

Some pharmacists may be relieved that, although the new community pharmacy contracts in England and Wales came into effect on a Friday in April, it was the first day of the month and not a Friday the 13th. But there will be those who enjoy the irony of implementation on All Fools' Day.

There are some pharmacists who are not as prepared for the changes as they might wish. For a start, they are concerned about how they are going to change their premises in order to accommodate a consultation area (p383).

Other pharmacists see the new contract as a disaster. Top of that list are those who dispense fewer than 2,000 items a month and who are set to lose as much as £18,000 per annum. Although multiples may be able to capitalise on this by providing a range of clinical services in premises that are not dispensing factories, sole contractors are likely to find the going tough. There are fears that many of them will sell up, notwithstanding their concerns that the local population will lose a core service.

To add to that, many community pharmacists will now be worried about the impact of GlaxoSmithKline's decision to reduce discounts on certain products, which has been followed by a similar move by generics manufacturer IVAX (p381) and which may be followed by others in due course.

In three months' time, everything will look different. Those pharmacists who have been on tenterhooks for years, waiting for a new contract to transform their professional lives, will be providing the kind of care for patients and customers that they have previously dreamt about.

For the rest, whatever their views now, the future will look much less hazy. Those who are not at all prepared at the moment, should have a clear idea of what they have to achieve by the end of September — when the transition period between contracts comes to an end. And even those who believe that they cannot survive under the new regime may find themselves pleasantly surprised.

Cast your vote before it is too late

With just over a week to go before the election to the reconstituted Council of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society closes, time is running out for those who have not yet voted. This year has been the first time that canvassing has been permitted although, as far as *The Journal* is concerned, this is restricted to the writing of two letters for publication. What will be of interest is whether it will have made any difference to the turn-out. Will a higher percentage of pharmacists vote? And, in the past, there have been seven pharmacy places available each year but, with 17 places available this year, will the way they vote be affected?

Editor and editorial director

Olivia Timbs
Tel 020 7572 2414

Deputy editor

Andrew Haynes, MRPharmS
The Society section
Tel 020 7572 2421

Managing editor

Graeme Smith, MRPharmS
Letters and other contributions
Tel 020 7572 2426

Assistant editor

Michael Thompson
Editor — PJ Online
Tel 020 7572 2428

News editor

Harriet Adcock, MRPharmS
Tel 020 7572 2415

News and feature writers

Dawn Connelly, MRPharmS
Tel 020 7572 2427
Tom Moberly
Tel 020 7572 2417
Hannah Pike, MRPharmS
Notice-board
Tel 020 7572 2430

Contributions editor

Lin-Nam Wang, MRPharmS
Continuing professional development
Tel 020 7572 2413

Production editor

Christopher Icha

Website controller

Gowan Clews
Tel 020 7572 2418

Personal assistant to the editor

Emma Kerby-Evans
Tel 020 7572 2414

Administrative assistant

Pauline Heslop
Branch meetings, copyright, permissions
Tel 020 7572 2422

Editorial advisory board

Angela Alexander, FRPharmS
Judy Cantrill, FRPharmS
Noel Dixon, MRPharmS
John Hall, FRPharmS
Christina Lowe, 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 advertisement manager

Lily Emery

Classified advertisement executive

Anne-Marie Judge

Head of publishing services

John Wilson

Production manager

Joanne Marks

Production assistants

Yasmin Asghar
Adam Jones

Director of publications

Charles Fry