

Life and times of Mr Clarke

The independent inquiry into the future professional body for pharmacy was chaired by Nigel Clarke. The vast majority of people who had any dealings with the inquiry team or the process believe a good job has been done. The inquiry recommended that the next stage of the process should be the establishment of a transitional committee charged with establishing a prospectus for the new body, among other responsibilities. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Council has adopted that recommendation. It has set up Transcom and has appointed a chairman for it: Nigel Clarke (p645).

Some interested parties might be concerned that this will mean that Transcom will simply rubber-stamp the inquiry's original findings. But with time being of the essence there are huge benefits of having a chairman who has already got to grips with the issues. Moreover, Mr Clarke must be only too aware that he will have failed the profession if any such criticisms are made and stick.

However, since Transcom is expected to have members representing a wide range of pharmacy interests and its prospectus will have to be accepted by the Council of the Society as well as the members themselves, it is unlikely that Transcom's proposals will be universally unpopular.

After all, Transcom's success will be measured in the numbers of members it can attract to the new professional body, not in how closely it does or does not follow the inquiry's recommendations.

Waiting for supervision

It sounds a bit like a Beckett play — Waiting for supervision — but it is hard not to draw the conclusion from the Department of Health's response to the consultation on the responsible pharmacist that many people are still waiting for the consultation on supervision (due to start towards the end of this year). Then more pieces of the jigsaw might fall into place and pharmacists in all the UK countries will have a better understanding of what the future of pharmacy might look like.

One of the main decisions the DoH has made, however, is that responsible pharmacists will be permitted to be absent for two hours in any 24-hour period. This is one hour less than it originally proposed, and that decision has been made despite over 40 per cent of respondents to the consultation being opposed to any absence at all.

In a **News feature** this week (p649), we outline the main recommendations and give the initial reactions to the outcome from a range of pharmacy bodies. The opinions, loosely, are divided down sectoral lines, with community bodies being largely in favour of the limited decisions made so far, and the hospital sector considering the two-hour absence to be too restrictive. It seems there is everything to play for still.

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