

PHARMACY GETS THUMBS UP FOR STAFF HOURS PLAN

Evening contracts for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians means staff can plan their out-of-work lives

The pharmacy department at Doncaster Royal infirmary has been recognised for providing good working conditions for its staff.

The commendation appeared in a Government document entitled "Investment and reform for NHS staff — taking forward the NHS plan", released on February 15.

The hospital was given special mention for some initiatives which it had put in place in the pharmacy department. These include a review of skill-mix and evening-only contracts for pharmacy staff.

Mr Andrew Barker (director of pharmacy services, Doncaster Royal infirmary) said that a key



The pharmacy at Doncaster Royal infirmary gets a special mention in this Government document

aim of the skill-mix review was to increase the availability of pharmacists for those tasks from which maximum patient benefit could be derived from the professional and expert input that only they could provide.

He said that during the past five years, the proportion of pharmacists' time committed to

clinical and advisory services in the trust had increased from 35 to 70 per cent of available pharmacist hours.

Mr Barker cited the inpatient dispensary as an example of this process of skill-mix review. This section of the department, which dispensed about 10,000 inpatient and discharge medication items per month, now operated without any pharmacists, who were now based on the ward.

On the evening-only contracts, Mr Barker explained to *Hospital Pharmacist* that these referred to two part-time pharmacy technicians who worked from noon to 7.30pm on a "one week on, one week off" basis. The hospital's resident pharmacists were also contracted to work from noon to 9.30pm on a rotational basis. This arrangement had helped in solving the difficult situation where staff sometimes had to stay late in order to finish off the day's work.

Seminar discusses hospital preregistration training changes

New performance standards and the revised examination syllabus for preregistration trainees were part of the issues discussed at a seminar recently held in Leeds.

The seminar, arranged by the National Health Service Pharmacy Education and Development Committee, had as its theme "NHS preregistration pharmacy training — 2001 and beyond". It was attended by hospital preregistration tutors from England, Scotland and Wales.

Other issues that were considered at the seminar included the implications of the requirement for hospital preregistration trainees to gain cross-sector experience and the need to develop links with community pharmacy.

The materials produced at the

seminar have been collated into a pack, copies of which are available from Professor Theo Raynor (e-mail D.K.Raynor@leeds.ac.uk).

● During the seminar, it was announced that the Pharmacia and Upjohn preregistration trainee project award scheme

will continue during 2001-02. Under the scheme, a prize is awarded for the best project undertaken by a hospital preregistration trainee in each region during the training year. The prize is an expenses-paid trip to the annual UK Clinical Pharmacy Association autumn meeting.

brief

■ The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Hospital Pharmacists Group is to hold a conference entitled "Clinical governance: self regulation in hospital pharmacy" on Tuesday, April 24, at the Society's headquarters in Lambeth, London. The views of the Department of Health, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists on clinical governance will be presented at the conference.

Registration fee is £85 (£100 for non-RPSGB members). Further details from Liz Griffiths (tel 020 7735 9141, e-mail lgriffiths@rpsgb.org.uk).

■ The College of Pharmacy Practice is to hold a seminar entitled "Progress in palliative care" on March 29 at the Thistle hotel in Liverpool. The seminar aims to provide practitioners with an overview of the organisation and delivery of palliative care services and update them on drug use in palliative care. Registration fee for the seminar is £45 (£55 for non-members of the College). Further details from Teresa Holloway (tel 024 7669 2400, fax 024 7669 3069).

■ Pharm EDI is to hold a meeting for pharmacists and technicians on the use of electronic data interchange on March 27 at Roche Pharmaceuticals, Welwyn Garden City. Registration fee: £30. Further details from Steve Banfield at Leo Pharmaceuticals (tel 01844 347333).

■ *Hospital Pharmacist* will hold its fifth annual conference at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's headquarters in Lambeth, London on Thursday, November 1. The theme of this year's conference is "Medicines management — what's new?"

QUALITY AWARD FOR FORTH VALLEY PHARMACY

Hospital pharmacy in central Scotland achieves ISO standards for customer focused organisations

The pharmacy services at Forth Valley Acute Hospitals NHS trust, Falkirk, was recently accredited with the ISO 9002 quality management system.

ISO 9002 specifies the key elements of a management system which focuses on customer care.

Speaking to *Hospital Pharmacist* on February 27, Ms Laura McIver (chief pharmacist, Forth Valley), said that the desire to

establish a culture of continuous quality improvement had prompted the pharmacy services to work towards the ISO 9002 standard. It had taken about two years to achieve the standard.

The Forth Valley trust serves about 276,000 people in central Scotland. The pharmacy services in the trust are spread across two sites: Falkirk and District Royal infirmary and Stirling Royal infirmary.

Guild meet to focus on pharmacy staffing issues

New roles and challenges for pharmacists and technicians will be discussed at the forthcoming annual weekend school of the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists.

This year's meeting has as its theme, "2001 a pharmacy odyssey — developing staff and the service" and will be held at the Majestic hotel in the Yorkshire town of Harrogate from April 6 to 8.

Professor Peter Taylor, chairman of the event's organising committee, said that it had become crucial to create services fit for the future and make staff available to deliver them,

given the rapidly changing workplace.

The keynote address on the opening day will be delivered by Lord Hunt, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health. The programme also includes presentations, posters, workshops, debates and seminars covering a wide range of topics, including the expanding role of pharmacy technicians.

An enjoyable social programme has also been promised by the weekend school's organising committee.

Full details of the programme can be found on the guild's website (www.ghp.org.uk).

PJ editor appointed

Miss Olivia Timbs has been appointed editor and editorial director of *PJ Publications* (of which *HP* is a part). She took up her appointment at the Lambeth offices of *The Pharmaceutical Journal* on February 12.

Miss Timbs succeeds Mr Douglas Simpson who retired last September.

In a related development, Mr Andrew Haynes has been designated deputy editor. Mr Haynes had been acting editor and editorial director until Miss Timbs's appointment.

The editorship of *HP* still remains the responsibility of Mrs Diane Langleben.

New computer system to help out with radiopharmacy calculations

A computer system for handling various aspects of radiopharmaceutical dispensing is being launched.

The system, Pax_RPM, was designed by a joint venture of Amercare, supplier of radiopharmacy isolators, and PaxSys, a company that specialises in supplying computer systems to the

medical and scientific community.

Pax_RPM is a nuclear medicine management system that can undertake key aspects of the radiopharmaceutical dispensing process, such as batch recording, calculations, stock and waste management, and quality control. The system is also capable of

scheduling, reporting and archiving nuclear medicine patient details.

The Pax_RPM system is currently being piloted in selected hospitals across the United Kingdom.

Further details from Graham Wilson at Amercare on 01844 261244.

brief

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society is terminating its arrangement with Jardines Lloyd Thompson (JLT) UK to provide pharmacists with professional indemnity insurance. The termination is by mutual consent. From April 1, JLT will provide the current indemnity insurance service directly to pharmacists. In the future, queries on this insurance can be directed to Ms Tina Cant on tel 01483 251145.

Novartis and *The Daily Telegraph* have launched "Visions of science" photographic competition. Entries are being invited from pharmacists and other scientists for photographs in the health care category. The best photograph will attract a cash prize of £500, courtesy of the Science Photo Library. For more details or to obtain an entry form, call 020 7613 5577 or visit the website (www.visions-of-science.co.uk). The deadline for submission of entries is May 31.

Eli Lilly has launched a new website on sepsis for health care professionals. The website, (www.sepsis.com) contains information about the epidemiology and pathophysiology of sepsis, as well as links to other useful sites such as the Critical Care Forum and the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine.

Useful dates "Mental health: stop exclusion, dare to care" is the theme of this year's World Health Day, to be held on April 7. More information can be found on the World Health Organisation's website (www.who.int/world-health-day). April 14 to 21 is Lupus Awareness week. Further details from Lupus UK, St James House, Eastern Road, Romford, Essex RM1 3NH (tel 01708 731251).