

## *Bridging scheme for community technicians moving into hospitals*

From Miss C. Grout

Thank you for publishing the article by Debbie Andalo in the June 2003 edition of *Hospital Pharmacist* (pp 263), regarding the initiative led by Joanne McLaughlin to review pharmacy technician qualifications and develop a bridging programme for technicians moving from community to hospital practice.

We would really like to acknowledge the excellent work done by City College, Manchester who collaborated with Joanne in developing the programme, and ran the course on our behalf. Joanie Yoffe and Frank Rooney at City College have been key players in the development, implementation and review of the course.

I am pleased to report that last year's cohort have all successfully completed the programme, with many obtaining either merit or distinction. The new cohort of 17 will be commencing the course soon. These candidates have largely been employed on the basis of the availability of the programme, so it has had a significant effect on workforce numbers within the hospital pharmacy service in the north west.

On a point of accuracy, the Greater Manchester Workforce Development Confederation leads on pharmacy workforce development for the north west. Therefore this is a north west programme which is used and recognised across not just in Greater Manchester, but also in Cheshire and Merseyside and in Cumbria and Lancashire.

We look forward to the introduction of pharmacy technician registration which will resolve issues of standardisation of first-level training. However there will still be a need for targeted continuing professional development for technicians changing area of practice so this may provide a future direction for the programme.

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