

Minister announces boost for medicines management

Twenty trusts in England are now to take part in the Hospitals Medicines Management Collaborative, doubling the number originally set to participate. The announcement was made at the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists' conference at Hinckley, Leicestershire, on Friday 26 March by Rosie Winterton, Minister for Health. Each trust involved will receive up to £40,000, representing a total investment of £800,000. The money is to be spent establishing multidisciplinary partnerships to develop ways of delivering better medicines management across organisations.

The decision to double the number of trusts involved was prompted by the high quality of applications received, Ms Winterton said. Applications were assessed against criteria that included the five aims of:

- Helping patients and the hospital trust to get the best from their medicines
- Optimising patient care in accordance with accepted local and national guidance



Rosie Winterton: medicines management expanded due to quality of applications

- Improving communication systems for disseminating information on medicines management
- Increasing multidisciplinary involvement and making the best use of the pharmacy team
- Developing approaches that increase the clinical and cost effective use of medicines

Also at the conference, Ms Winterton reaffirmed the Department of Health's commitment to creating the

position of consultant pharmacist. A steering group, led by Jim Smith, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer for England, is to be set up to deliver guidance on this new role, she said.

Other announcements included the provision of an endorsed list of unlicensed medicines, the setting up of a multi-professional steering group to advise the Department of Health on developing a coherent framework for a pharmacy public health strategy and a proposed consultation on skill-mix. A fuller version of Ms Winterton's speech is included in the report from the guild's conference on p160.

Implications of budget

In the budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer set out the Government's plans to fund the National Health Service (NHS) over the next few years. Funding for the NHS will increase by 7.2 per cent a year in real terms from now until 2007/08.

brief

■ **Conflict resolution training is now available to all NHS staff who come in regular contact with the public in the course of their jobs. The one-day course will deal with recognising potentially violent situations, verbal and non-verbal communication and cultural awareness.**

■ The Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection launched on 1 April replaces the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI). To be known as the Healthcare Commission, it will measure whether NHS services in England are meeting Department of Health standards.

■ **Information on pay modernisation ("Agenda for change") in the form of a question and answer document has been added to the Department of Health website. A link can be found at www.pjonline.com/links/hp**

■ Pharmacists who wish to pursue research interests or develop leadership skills are eligible to apply for awards from the Health Foundation, a charitable organisation supporting health professionals. Awards are for a period of up to two years, and provide locum, research and travel costs. Applications should be submitted before 5 August. Further information at www.health.org.uk

■ **Health service staff are sceptical of the benefits of, and resistant to, change, according to a new study. (Quality and Safety in Health Care 2004;13:108-14).**

■ Papers are requested for the 8th international pharmaceutical isolator conference. The conference takes place at the University of Warwick, from 6-8 December, and abstracts should be submitted to b.midcalf@leeds.ac.uk

Salary scales announced for 2004/05

New salary scales for pharmacists working under both the Whitley Council and "Agenda for change" national pay schemes have been announced by the Department of Health. A 3.225 per cent increase is being applied to all salaries.

"Agenda for change" will apply initially in 12 early implementer sites, with the national launch due in October 2004. At the moment, five pharmacist profiles have been agreed (see *Hospital Pharmacist* 2004;11:5). A newly qualified pharmacist will be placed in band six.

"Agenda for change" will apply to all staff working in the NHS, except doctors and dentists. Copies of the letter

announcing the new rates of pay, and access to the full scales, are available by following a link at www.pjonline.com/links/hp.

Whitley Council salaries

Pre-reg trainee	£13,745
A grade	£19,337-£21,763
B grade	£21,763-£24,496
C grade	£24,496-£31,775
D grade	£30,637-£36,748
E grade	£34,518-£41,212
F grade	£38,981-£45,674
G grade	£43,443-£50,136
H grade	£50,136-£55,716

Inner London weighting £2,762
EDC payment £2,448

Effective 1 April 2004

"Agenda for change" was discussed at the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists' conference, reported on p162.

"Agenda for change" salaries

Band 6	£21,630-29,302
Band 7	£26,106-34,417
Band 8A	£33,298-39,958
Band 8B	£38,786-47,949
Band 8C	£46,671-57,539
Band 8D	£55,941-69,260

Inner London weighting 20 per cent of basic pay (within limits £3,197-£5,328)
EDC to be calculated differently in "Agenda for change"

Effective from implementation

New president of guild elected

Tony West, clinical director, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust, was elected as the new president of the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists at the annual conference in Hinckley. Mr West was previously the vice-president.

The new vice-president is Anthony Oxley, associate director — medicines management, Leicestershire Partnership. Among the other new appointments are David Miller, business manager, Sunderland Royal Infirmary, who becomes the chair of the terms and conditions committee and Andrew Alldred, pharmacy procurement manager, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, who is now the chair of the practice committee.

Robert McArtney, who stepped down as president is now head of delegation, international committee.

Also at the conference, the guild made two awards for



Tony West: the new president of the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists

outstanding contributions to pharmacy in the health service. The gold award (national level) was made to Professor David Cousins, head of safe medicine practice at the National Patient Safety Agency. The silver award (local) was made to Carwen Wynne-Howells, chief

pharmaceutical adviser to the Welsh Assembly.

Stewart Glaspole, senior clinical lecturer practitioner, Brighton General Hospital, received the AAH best oral presentation award. The title of Mr Glaspole's study was "Numeracy in preregistration pharmacists — a qualitative exploration of perceptions and behaviours". He concluded that there are apparent differences between how able and weak students perceive the numerical challenges of pharmacy. He suggests that adequate support structures are important for weaker students.

The AAH best poster award was given to Samantha Dawes, medical directorate pharmacist, Leighton Hospital, for her poster titled "Impact of pharmacy discharge team on medication waiting times".

A full report of the guild's annual conference starts on p160.

Technicians should submit contact details

Pharmacy technicians who hope to register with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society when the technicians register comes into force, have been asked to submit their contact details to the Society. The Society is building a database of pharmacy technicians, which will support the distribution of information on technician registration.

Employers of pharmacy technicians are also encouraged to submit their contact details.

Janet Flint, the Society's head of support staff regulation, said "We are encouraging all technicians and other interested parties to submit their details, including those who are as yet uncertain as to whether or not they will eventually register."

Information on how to register with the Society and application packs will be sent out once they become available. The voluntary technicians' register is expected to open in January 2005, with registration becoming compulsory in 2007.

Contact details should be submitted via the Society's website at www.rpsgb.org/registration

Pharmacists are youthful

Just 1,432 (12 per cent) of qualified pharmacy staff employed by the NHS in England are over the age of 50, with the biggest demographic group being those between the ages of 25 and 29. These were some of the findings of the NHS non-medical workforce census, carried out on 30 September 2003.

Qualified pharmacy staff employed by the NHS in England numbered 12,093 (of which 5,742 were technicians).

These staff occupied 10,630 whole-time equivalent (WTE) positions. Secondary care trusts accounted for 9,706 WTEs, primary care trusts for 913 and other organisations for 11.

Eighty-one per cent of qualified pharmacy staff were female.

The headcount for pharmacy support staff was 2,854, which represents 2,515 WTEs. A link to the full census document can be found at www.pjonline.com/links/HP

Leadership tool

Leadership development for individuals, teams and organisations will be supported by the development of a new 360 degrees assessment tool. Colleagues, managers and participants all contribute to the overall assessment of leadership and management skills.

The tool underpins the NHS Leadership Centre's Qualities Framework of 15 key leadership qualities. It can be accessed at www.nhsleadershipqualities.nhs.uk