

Responsibility for pharmacy issues now with new Minister

Jane Kennedy is the new Minister responsible for pharmacy issues at the Department of Health. She effectively takes over the pharmacy portfolio from Rosie Winterton.

As Minister of State for quality and patient safety, Ms Kennedy's other responsibilities include the National Patient Safety Agency, standards, inspection and performance, clinical governance and quality issues. Also in her portfolio are clinical negligence, methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, reducing bureaucracy, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, genetics, the pharmaceutical industry, research and development, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency and counter fraud.

For pharmacy issues, there is some overlap with the responsibilities of other ministers. For example, Ms Winterton's new portfolio as



Jane Kennedy: Minister now responsible for pharmacy portfolio

Minister of State for health services includes emergency preparedness, cancer services, cardiac services, diabetes services, mental health, patient and public involvement, renal services and equality and diversity issues. She is also responsible for prison health care.

□ As well as new ministers, last month's general election has also brought about proposals for new

health care legislation potentially affecting hospital pharmacy. Bills announced in the Queen's Speech included a NHS Redress Bill, which is designed to provide patients with a quick response to low value clinical negligence claims. This is designed to introduce a real alternative to litigation and avoid its associated delays and costs and to drive consistency across the NHS in the way claims are dealt with.

There will also be a Hospital Hygiene Bill, introducing a hygiene code of practice for all NHS bodies, independent health care providers and care homes in an attempt to reduce the incidence of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. Inspectors, from the Healthcare Commission or the Commission for Social Care Inspection will be able to issue improvement orders. Consultation is to take place to determine further details about the hygiene code and what the enforcement sanctions will be.

brief

■ **Improvements in working practices and pharmacy services, as a result of the best use of IT, are the subject of the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists and First Databank Information Technology Award 2006. The prize is worth £2,500. Entries should be submitted by 7 November and further information is available from www.link2content.co.uk/uploads/ghpfitgawd06.pdf (See p231 for details about the 2005 award-winning project)**

■ The programme for this year's *Hospital Pharmacist* conference, "Pharmacy at the interface — bridging the gap" is announced in this issue. The conference takes place at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society on 10 November. The programme and booking form start on p227.

■ **Over 540 questionnaires were returned as part of the *Hospital Pharmacist* readership survey. An article reviewing the results will be published in a forthcoming issue. The names of Nia Evans from Cardiff and Sarah Corlett from Canterbury were randomly drawn as the prize winners. They will each receive a copy of *Martindale* and three month's free subscription to *Medicines Complete*.**

■ The eighth edition of "The Maudsley prescribing guidelines", which cover psychiatric prescribing in the UK, has been launched. The guidelines are based on a combination of literature review, clinical experience and expert contribution. New treatments in the latest edition include aripiprazole, atomoxetine, buprenorphine and duloxetine. Copies can be obtained from Taylor and Francis on 01264 343071. Price £19.95.

Guidance for clinical trials launched

Pharmacy clinical trial services practice guidance was launched at a meeting at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society on 19 May. The guidance has been jointly written by the Society and the Institute of Clinical Research.

When launching the guidance at a recent clinical trials meeting (see p226), John Gilroy, chair of the Institute of Clinical Research Pharmacy Subcommittee, recommended that it should be read by all pharmacy staff. He highlighted the need for designated pharmacy staff to look after all aspects of clinical trials in dedicated facilities and stressed the importance of developing good working relationships with staff involved in trials both inside and outside the NHS. Ensuring

proper management systems, and suitable archiving practices are also key recommendations of the report, he added.

Mr Gilroy pointed out that the guidance has been developed as a result of the significant amount of new regulation affecting clinical trials, such as the EU clinical trials directive that came into force in May last year, changes to the Research Governance Framework for Health and

Social Care, changes in the Central Office for Research Ethics Committees and developments in medicines management. "A lot of trusts are likely to be already working to the standards suggested in the guidance," he added.

An abridged version of the guidance is available from *The Pharmaceutical Journal* (2005;pp629-30), with the full version available at www.rpsgb.org/practice

National Pharmacy Clinical Trials Network

The first meeting of the National Pharmacy Clinical Trials Network was held recently. Almost 50 delegates met in Birmingham on 27 April to discuss manufacturing in the NHS, Good Clinical Practice inspections and commercial research.

Those interested in joining the network group should, in the first instance, e-mail Mark Howells at mark.howells@burton-tr.wmids.nhs.uk to be provided with further details.

Hospital pharmacist fellows attend presentation at Society

Pharmacists working in hospitals who were designated as fellows of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society during 2004 were among those presented with their fellowship certificates at a ceremony that took place before the Society's annual general meeting on 24 May. The fellows include:

- Susan Ashwell, director of medicines management, Hinchingbrooke Health Care Trust and Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust and a member of the Society's Hospital Pharmacists Group Committee
- Rosamund Baird, community services pharmacist at West Dorset General Hospitals Trust, previously principal pharmacist at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London
- Alison Ewing, clinical director of pharmacy at the Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust and former member of the Society's Council
- Robert McCartney, all Wales clinical pharmacist lead and the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists' head of delegation, international committee



Alison Ewing (top picture, right) and Robert McCartney (bottom picture, right) receive their fellowship certificates from Nicolas Wood, president of the Society

Former hospital pharmacists receiving certificates included Monica Rose, previously pharmacist in charge at Parkside Hospital, Wimbledon, past chair of the Association of Private Hospital Pharmacists and

president of the National Association of Women Pharmacists, and Roger Walker, a former senior lecturer in clinical pharmacy at Cardiff University and honorary clinical pharmacist at University Hospital, Wales.

Nottingham pharmacy department renamed

The pharmacy department at the Queen's Medical Centre University Hospital is to be known as "The University of Nottingham, School of Pharmacy — Department of Medicines Management and Hospital Pharmacy." This follows on from its formal designation as a department of Nottingham University's school of pharmacy. The hospital's chief pharmacist and clinical director of medicines management, Malcolm Partridge, has been appointed as head of the new department.

The new arrangement allow a specialist hospital pharmacy component to be developed for fourth year university students. According to Professor Partridge, it provides undergraduates with the opportunity to put their academic learning into context and to gain a good appreciation of the risks associated with medicines use and what the public expects of pharmacists. It is also hoped that the new approach will lead to more joint research opportunities.

Picture credit

The picture on p184 of the May issue of *Hospital Pharmacist* was taken by Christine Clark

Agenda for Change progress to date is slow

Only 21 per cent of NHS organisations have met the target of transferring at least a half of their staff to Agenda for Change pay bands by the end of April. Agenda for Change is due to be implemented for all NHS staff except doctors, dentists and some senior managers by the end of September.

"I am disappointed by the latest overall position on assimilation but this position masks some very good

performances by individual organisations," said Andrew Foster, director of workforce at the Department of Health. He also commented: "I am satisfied that a solid start has been made and that the right processes have been put in place locally to ensure that good progress toward the target in September can be made. It is also encouraging to see that 48 per cent of staff have already been matched to their appropriate pay band."

Tony West, chief pharmacist at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and president of the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists said that many people, including members of the Government, had underestimated the amount of work required in assessing the jobs of all NHS staff and moving them onto the new pay bands. He added, "it takes time to do it properly and consistently." Mr West also commented that it is not clear whether the process is

any slower or more complicated for pharmacy staff.

A number of milestones were announced by the Department of Health in January to monitor implementation of Agenda for Change (*Hospital Pharmacist* 2005;12:46). NHS trusts also have a target of having 40 per cent of staff with a Knowledge and Skills Framework outline by the end of May and 80 per cent assimilated to their new pay band by the end of June.

Correction

Mark Howell's e-mail address (p197) is
mark.howells@burtonh-tr.wmids.nhs.uk