



Encouraging future pharmacists

The results of a 2005 Society survey showed that branches are keen to get more involved in attracting young people into careers in pharmacy. Network News offers advice to branches on how they can help kick-start a pharmacy career in 2006.

Think for a moment how you first became interested in becoming a pharmacist. Maybe it was a visit to a local pharmacy that inspired you or a family member who was a pharmacist? Perhaps you saw a presentation school

or heard about the pharmacy profession through your careers adviser? Whichever way it was it is likely that someone helped you to make up your mind by showing you how diverse and rewarding a career in pharmacy could be.

This is why the Society is encouraging branches to get involved with promoting pharmacy careers locally. Of course, many branches already do a great deal to promote pharmacy by visiting schools, attending careers conventions and forming links with local and regional education and training partners. The value of such work was highlighted in a survey undertaken by the Society in autumn 2005. Almost 58 per cent of branches responding to the survey proactively work with their local schools and colleges to promote pharmacy to young people.

At the beginning of 2005, the Society's public relations and membership team took over responsibility for promoting pharmacy as a career and since then have produced a range of new careers materials including a leaflet, poster, presentation and website (www.pharmacycareers.org.uk). This work has already attracted the support of Jane Kennedy MP, the health minister with specific responsibility for pharmacy issues.

Network News is produced by The Pharmaceutical Journal in association with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's public relations and membership unit as a service to members of the Society resident in Great Britain.



Nicola Kelly, the Society's membership assistant, gives a copy of the new leaflet to a visitor to the Society's stand

She said: "The website, which the Society has developed, is a valuable resource. It provides useful information to help with career decisions and highlights the great diversity of career pathways within pharmacy, as well as the valuable contribution pharmacists in all areas can make to patient care."

Cath O'Brien, the Society's Director for Wales, has been using the new careers materials extensively. She says: "We have had great success at engaging with Careers Wales. Local help with careers through the Branch network is vital to maintain the momentum and ensure that we get out and about to all of the schools and local careers fairs and get our message across."

"We are keen to engage with the schools sector. There are falling numbers of students choosing science subjects and we need to stimulate interest and make students aware at a young age to ensure we can encourage pharmacy as a career choice. To ensure this we need to educate both students and careers teachers in schools, but we can only do this effectively with the support of the branches."

Bharat Nathwani, Council member and sponsor for the branch and regional network says: "Branches are in an ideal position to be the first point of contact for anyone considering a career in pharmacy. With exciting new career opportunities across all sectors of the profession there has never been a more exciting time to embark on a career in pharmacy."

For more information about the support available to promote pharmacy careers contact Nicola Kelly via e-mail at careers@rpsgb.org or call 020 7572 2330.

Get a taste for the BPC

The British Pharmaceutical Conference and exhibition (BPC) is a unique event bringing together all sectors of the pharmacy profession together in one place and at one time. The 2005 conference programme was of a high standard with expert speakers drawn from many fields including science, practice, industry and academia.

Building on the success of recent years BPC 2005 attracted a record attendance of nearly 1,300 delegates to the three-day event held at the Manchester International Convention Centre in late September. The programme, together with a first class exhibition, succeeded in generating a real buzz of excitement and BPC 2005 has been widely acknowledged as being the best ever.

The Society offers funding to support members from its branches going to BPC, the only criteria being that they must be attending the conference for the first time.

Paul McCabe from the Jersey branch was one of more than 20 branch members who attended BPC 2005. He says: "As a first-time attendee I found the BPC to be an extremely useful event to learn about developments in pharmacy. I had initially been attracted to the conference by the varied programme, in particular to the sessions that I felt would have an influence on pharmacy in Jersey."

"There were networking opportunities in both the exhibition and the social events. I also attended the conference dinner on the Monday evening, which was most enjoyable and was followed by a lively and talented band. I would definitely encourage other branch members to attend BPC, in particular young pharmacists, as it is a good opportunity to meet and talk with the key pharmacy figures outside of the usual formal setting."

Branch applications for first-time attendance at BPC

BPC 2006 will be held at the Manchester International Convention Centre from 4 to 6 September. The conference theme is "Personalised medicine in health care".

All branches are invited to apply for up to £250 in funding to support first-time attendance at BPC. Branches may choose to use the £250 for one attendee or divide the amount between more than one attendee. Application forms are available from b&r@rpsgb.org. The closing date for applications is 1 August.

Branch programmes, January to June 2006

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's membership unit has compiled the following provisional programme of branch meetings during the first half of 2006 to help members plan their meeting attendance. Members should note that the details of some meeting are still to be finalised. Additional and revised information will appear in the Diary section of *PJ Online* (www.pjonline.com/noticeboard) and in

The Pharmaceutical Journal's weekly Diary column (in the Society section), which gives details of meetings for eight days from the Monday following the publication date of the issue.

Members should also note that they are normally free to attend meetings of any branch and not just the one to which they have been allocated or which they have chosen to join.

Aberdeen & NE Scotland to Bristol

Branch	Date	Topic
Aberdeen and North-Eastern Scottish	23 January	Pharmacy practice research: relevance to practice and policy
	13 February	The different roles of community, primary care and hospital pharmacists and the use of supplementary prescribing to enhance each role
	20 March	Public health: obesity
	24 April	Annual general meeting
Ayrshire	21 February	Role of the National Pharmacy Association's development officer
	25 April	Annual general meeting
Barnet	25 January	A to Z of dermatology
	22 February	Hands-on diabetes
	22 March	Annual general meeting/ Controlled Drugs: what's new?
	9 May	Infection control in health care
Bath	17 January	New pharmacy contract
	23 February	Continuing professional development training evening (Further dates to be confirmed)
Bedfordshire	22 February	Risk management
	15 March	Shipman, Controlled Drugs and update on Code of Ethics
Bolton	9 February	Annual general meeting
	7 March	Dental pain
Bradford	13 April	Topic to be announced
	11 May	Topic to be announced
Brighton	8 June	Topic to be announced
	7 February	Annual general meeting/ Aphrodisiacs from plants
Bristol	21 March	Public health and the pharmacist
	9 May	Men's health
	17 January	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
	21 February	Asthma
Bury and Rochdale	21 March	Community pharmacy framework collaborative
	11 April	Annual general meeting and discussion of motions for branch representatives' meeting
Bristol	25 January	Topic to be announced
	27 February	Topic to be announced
	28 March	Topic to be announced
	18 April	Topic to be announced
	31 May	Topic to be announced
	27 June	Topic to be announced

Bromley to Crawley, Horsham & Reigate

Branch	Date	Topic
Bromley	16 January	Asthma
	13 February	Continence
	20 March	Topic to be announced
	10 April	Annual general meeting
	15 May	Topic to be announced
Bury and Rochdale	27 February	Pharmacy support staff education and development
	27 March	The National Patient Safety Agency and patient safety
	24 April	Nutritional support
Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	18 January	Charity skittles match
Ceredigion	9 February	Medicines usage review workshop: Concordance of people with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
	28 March	Influenza — from seasonal to pandemic
	30 March	Drugs to treat stroke and Alzheimer's disease
	24 January	Alzheimer's disease
Chelmsford	23 February	National Patient Safety Agency: Continuing professional development opportunity
	21 March	Anti-TNF therapy
Cheltenham and Gloucester	20 April	Dinner and discussion of motions for branch representatives' meeting
	23 May	Annual general meeting/NHS Direct
Clwyd	22 June	Suicide: National Institute for Mental Health in England strategy
	24 January	Rheumatology
Croydon	28 March	Dementia
	16 May	Nutrition
Crawley, Horsham and Reigate	30 January	Annual general meeting
	1 February	Influenza — from seasonal to pandemic
	15 February	Risk management and the pharmacy contract
Croydon	15 March	The new contract: the story so far
	25 March	Dinner
	28 March	Dyspepsia: therapeutic update
Colchester	15 February	Annual general meeting/ Registration issues
Crawley, Horsham and Reigate	9 February	Proton pump inhibitors
	14 March	Veterinary medicine
	20 April	Annual general meeting/New information technology and electronic prescribing
	10 May	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

Croydon to Gwent

Branch	Date	Topic
Croydon	31 January	Sickle cell disease and thalassaemia
	28 February	Haemophilia and von Willebrand's disease
	28 March	Leukaemia
	25 April	New contract: one year later
	23 May	Medicines management: pharmacist role in coronary heart disease and updates
Dudley and Stourbridge	21 February	The new pharmacy contract
	21 March	Cardiology: acute coronary syndrome
	4 April	An inspector calls
	9 May	Epilepsy (to be confirmed)
Durham	16 May	Address by Society's President (Hemant Patel)
	13 June	Visit to Botanical Gardens, Birmingham
East Cumberland	25 January	First aid evening
	15 February	Diabetes update
	26 April	Pharmaceutical fraud
East Kent	23 May	Annual general meeting
	6 February	Infections and methicillin-resistant <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>
Edinburgh and Lothians	6 March	Council and continuing professional development
	4 April	New aspects of depression
Enfield	25 January	Questions of access to pharmaceutical services
	15 February	Annual general meeting
Epsom	26 April	Review of the Code of Ethics
	1 February	Clinical governance: seeking best practice
Fife	30 March	Pharmacist's input in diabetes: diagnostic testing
	7 March	Continuing professional development evening
Guernsey	18 April	Annual general meeting/Talk on progress of local Maggie's Centre
	19 January	The new British National Formulary for Children
Gwent	18 January	Charity skittles match

Gwynedd to Manchester, Salford & Trafford

Branch	Date	Topic
Gwynedd	31 January	Influenza — from seasonal to pandemic
	8 February	Annual general meeting/Dinner
	16 February	Dyspepsia: therapeutic update
	28 February	Managing obesity
	15 March	The new contract
	22 March	Asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease concordance workshop
Halifax	26 January	Annual general meeting
	23 February	<i>Topic to be announced</i>
	30 March	<i>Topic to be announced</i>
	27 April	<i>Topic to be announced</i>
Harrogate	8 February	St Michael's Hospice: update on treatments and facilities
Hereford	<i>(Programme not yet finalised)</i>	
Huddersfield	20 January	Annual general meeting
Ipswich	2 February	Multidisciplinary audit in pharmacy
	2 March	Parkinson's disease: treatment and management
	20 April	Common skin complaints
	16 May	Annual general meeting
Isle of Man	2 February	Current health issues in the Isle of Man (including avian flu)
	March	Talk by Jonathan Buisson (Society Council member)
	26 April	"Better medicines for children"
Lanarkshire	23 February	Medical use of cannabis
	16 March	Annual general meeting/Dinner
Lancaster	7 February	Insight into dementia
	4 April	Annual general meeting
	6 June	Child protection
Leeds	18 January	Annual general meeting/Continuing professional development training
	15 February	MAJAX (major incident planning) and its relevance to community pharmacy
	16 March	POM-to-P medicines: current developments
	26 April	Pharmacy practice research project: long-term illness theme
	17 May	Prescription Pricing Authority prescription data and analytical systems: what can the Quality, Prevalence and Indicator Database tell us?
Leicestershire	7 February	Sexual health: chlamydia and the community pharmacist
	7 March	Robotic dispensing (includes visit to Leicester Royal Infirmary)
	17 March	Chairman's dinner
	4 April	Annual general meeting/Ethics quiz
Macclesfield	18 January	Annual general meeting
Manchester, Salford and Trafford	26 January	Role of pharmacists in major incidents
	15 February	Professional leadership
	March	Over-the-counter migraine treatments
	6 April	Pharmacoeconomics
	May/June	Drug development, cradle to grave

Mid Glamorgan East to SE Metropolitan

Branch	Date	Topic
Mid Glamorgan East	18 January	Charity skittles match
	21 February	Responding to symptoms: eyes
	1 March	Annual "Christmas" meal
	12 April	Annual general meeting
Northamptonshire	9 February	National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence
Northern Scottish	7 February	Provision of supervised methadone services in Highland
	14 March	The Society's museum
	18 April	Annual general meeting/ Discussion of motions for branch representatives' meeting
North Hampshire	16 January	<i>Topic to be announced</i>
	20 February	<i>Topic to be announced</i>
	27 March	<i>Topic to be announced</i>
	24 April	<i>Topic to be announced</i>
North Staffordshire	23 February	Keele School of Pharmacy
	23 March	Current issues in pharmacy
Norwich and Norfolk	2 February	Substance misuse: preventing needless deaths
	22 March	Compliance aids: friends or foe?
	17 May	Pharmacists' role in public health
Nottingham	9 January	Information technology requirements and the new NHS contract
	13 February	Asthma
	13 March	The Nottingham Self-Care Fair
	10 April	Annual general meeting
Oxfordshire	14 February	Cardiovascular focus
	14 March	Changes in Controlled Drug legislation
	18 April	Epilepsy
	9 May	Annual general meeting/Foot care
Sefton	30 January	Annual general meeting
	7 March	Visit from local inspector
	3 April	<i>Topic to be announced</i>
	8 May	<i>Topic to be announced</i>
Sheffield	7 February	Vaccines
	7 March	Health policy: Where pharmacy and pharmacists fit in
	5 April	Caring at home for the terminally ill
	10 May	Childhood obesity
Slough	10 February	Continuing professional development
	7 February	Nutritional supplements
	14 March	Epilepsy in children
	5 April	Hot topic discussion
	8 May	Developments in diabetes
		Annual general meeting
South Cheshire	17 January	Local support for drug abusers
	15 February	Rheumatology
	16 March	Annual general meeting/ Pharmacogenetics
	25 April	New ways of working and pharmacist prescribing
South East Metropolitan	15 February	An evening with the Society's President (Hemant Patel)
	29 March	Authentication at the point of dispensing
	17 May	Current affairs topic (<i>to be announced</i>)

SW Metropolitan to Worthing & W Sussex

Branch	Date	Topic
South West Metropolitan	7 February	Bowel cancer
	7 March	Dermatology
	4 April	Psychiatry (or neurology)
	9 May	The British National Formulary for Children
Sunderland	11 January	Annual general meeting
	4 February	Annual dinner dance
	March/April	Three-part course on respiratory medicine
Teesside	February	Stress relief for pharmacists
	April	Practice-based commissioning
	June	Every child matters
Thames Valley	26 January	POM-to-P changes
	16 March	Information resources for pharmacists
	11 May	Annual general meeting/ Nutritional supplements in public health
Weald of Kent	9 February	Annual general meeting/Skin disorders
	16 March	First impressions of a new Council member (non-pharmacist)
	11 May	Supplementary prescribing
West Cumberland	18 January	Annual general meeting
	8 February	The history of mining in Cumbria
	8 March	The new community pharmacy contract
	19 April	<i>Topic to be announced</i>
West Metropolitan	8 February	<i>Topic to be announced</i>
	5 April	Therapeutic advances in the management of pain
	31 May	<i>Topic to be announced</i>
West Surrey	14 February	Diabetes: practical advice for Type 2 sufferers
	14 March	Shipman and new Controlled Drug regulations
	11 April	Annual general meeting/ Community pharmacy collaborative
	9 May	Infant feeding
Wirral	19 January	Annual general meeting
	<i>(Other meetings not yet finalised)</i>	
Worthing and West Sussex	25 January	Dementia
	21 March	<i>Topic to be announced</i>
	9 May	Veterinary referrals

The following branches are not planning to hold any meetings during this period: Burnley, Dumfries and Galloway, Eastbourne, East Metropolitan, Enfield, Exeter, Great Yarmouth and Waveney District, North East Lancashire, Powys, Scunthorpe, Stirling and Central Scottish, York, Walsall and Wolverhampton

No programme information was received from the following branches: Birmingham, Bro Myrddin, Buckinghamshire, Cambridge, Central Lancashire, Chesterfield, Cornish, Coventry and Warwickshire, Derby, Doncaster, Dorset, Dundee and Eastern Scottish, Glasgow and West of Scotland, Grimsby, Harrow and Hillingdon, Hastings, Hereford, Hertford, Hounslow, Hull, Isle of Wight, Jersey, Lincoln, Liverpool, Mansfield, Medway, Moray and Banff, Morgannwg, Northumbrian, Penfro, Plymouth, Reading, Scottish Borders, Sefton, Shropshire, Solihull, Somerset, Southampton, South Cumbria, South Essex, South Lincolnshire, South Staffordshire, Stockport, Swindon, Torbay, Warrington, West Hertfordshire, Wigan, Worcester

Hitting the headlines: how to achieve local exposure

Believe it or not, some 84 per cent of British adults read a regional newspaper. With 1,286 titles to choose from, including 27 morning papers, 75 evenings, 21 Sundays, 526 paid-for weeklies and 637 free weeklies, there is plenty of choice. Add to this the ever-increasing numbers of regional television and radio stations and it soon becomes clear how important regional media are in influencing public opinion.

Regional media take national news stories and show readers what effect they might have on their day-to-day lives. They also devote time and space to local stories that would never see the light of day in the pages of *The Times* or on the BBC Six o'clock news desk.

An important element of the Society's public relations (PR) work is aimed at using the regional media to help highlight pharmacy stories to the public.

By running a series of planned campaigns based on public health messages, the PR unit has secured media coverage that helps to increase public understanding of the role of pharmacy and also raise awareness of the expert skills that pharmacists have.

In running its campaigns, the PR unit works closely with the Society's branch

"The Society's campaign was a great success. It is pleasing to see that so many pharmacists were keen to be involved in the campaign and I would like to thank my colleagues at the front line for their enthusiasm in promoting the profession in a responsible and important extended public health role." — Sid Dajani, a member of the Society's Council and Council sponsor for Ask About Medicines Week.

public relations officers (BPROs) and regional communications officers (RCOs).

One such campaign was "Ask about sexual health", part of the Society's contribution to the wider Ask About Medicines Week (7 to 11 November 2005), which encouraged the public to visit their local pharmacy for advice on sexual health. The campaign involved an intensive local and national media push with BPROs interviewed by newspapers and appearing on radio shows to help drive the message home.

An advice leaflet was published to support the campaign. To date, over 100,000 copies have been distributed through pharmacies and primary care trusts in England. A Welsh language version of the leaflet was also produced and distributed through pharmacies and local health boards in Wales.

Against a backdrop of growing national rates of sexually transmitted infections and the highest teenage pregnancy rates in Europe, you might be forgiven for thinking that getting sexual health stories covered in

the regional media should not be difficult. In reality, the sheer quantity and range of competing stories that arrive every day on news desks around Britain means that the competition for news space has never been higher.

In convincing regional journalists that pharmacy stories are newsworthy, it helps to

"Sexual health is one of the main areas that we are promoting in our PCT. I was able to highlight the leaflet to listeners during my regular phone-in slot on BBC Radio Stoke and explain how pharmacists are ideally placed at the frontline of health care to target and treat patients." — Sean Woodward, branch public relations officer for North Staffordshire.

have a local expert available to be interviewed. This is where BPROs come into their own, offering a local perspective and understanding the health needs of the local community.

East Sussex pharmacist Vanessa Taylor, who is BPRO for the Eastbourne branch, was one of those interviewed as part of the "Ask about sexual health" campaign. She appeared in the Brighton-based *The Argus* newspaper (circulation 36,854) and twice on Southern Counties Radio (over 240,000 listeners per week).

Mrs Taylor said: "In terms of getting the pharmacy message across to a wider audience, local and regional media are absolutely vital. It is certainly exciting to sit down in a studio and prepare yourself to be interviewed and know that thousands of people are listening, or to see an article appear on the news stands that you have contributed to. It is great for the profession because it shows that the viewpoint of pharmacists is valued and underlines our presence in the wider health care team."

One interesting link that came from the "Ask about sexual health" local media campaign was that an *Eastbourne Herald* journalist was planning a major feature to coincide with World Aids Day in early December. A quick call ensured a meeting between Mrs Taylor and the journalist, as a result of which the parameters of the feature were widened to take in broader sexual health issues. This meant that the final published report focused on how Eastbourne pharmacists are a major source of advice and practical help on contraception and protection for local people.

Scotland and Wales

In Scotland, Nicola Carlyle, communications officer (pharmacy) for NHS Fife, has picked up a number of Society media campaigns and has been able to localise the pharmacy message for readers and listeners in her region.

She says: "There are massive opportunities for joint working between organisations like

ours and the Society when it comes to spreading the word about pharmacy. The 'Ask about sexual health' campaign was a good example, and we were able to take the Society's media materials and incorporate messages directly relevant to our stakeholders."

Pharmacists in Wales also made good use of the campaign material. Jo Lewis, prescribing support pharmacist, Vale of Glamorgan Local Health Board, says: "During Ask About Medicines Week, local pharmacists manned a stall at Barry market to help inform the public and encourage them to ask questions about their health and the medicines they use. Having literature available that is both informative and user friendly really helped us. In addition, we are hoping to focus on sexual health as one of our major health promotion campaigns in 2006, and these leaflets will be incredibly useful in getting the message across to the public."

2006 campaigns

Looking ahead to the rest of 2006, a number of campaigns have already been identified by the public relations unit and will be rolled out using the BPRO network. They will also feature collaborations with other health care organisations.

The first for 2006 is National No Smoking Day (Wednesday 8 March 2006). The Society has supported this campaign from its outset and the annual event is one in which pharmacists can really get involved, as

"The leaflet was very good, attention grabbing and easy to understand. The PCT set up two stands in the local shopping centre during Ask About Medicines Week and the leaflet was one of the resources distributed to people as they walked by. Sexual health can be a taboo subject and the leaflet educated people and encouraged them to seek further advice from their pharmacist. Some people also asked us for advice while visiting the stands." — Charan Bahbra, prescribing support pharmacist, Surrey Heath and Woking PCT,

they are the ideal first port of call for those looking for help to quit. For pharmacists in Scotland the 2006 No Smoking Day Campaign is particularly timely with Smoke-Free Scotland coming into effect on 26 March.

Other campaigns planned for 2006 include an antibiotics awareness campaign, a campaign highlighting the safe use of internet pharmacy and a campaign to raise public awareness of the changing role of pharmacy.

For more details about forthcoming public relations unit campaigns, contact the Society's communications manager, Felicity Slayford (tel 020 7572 2336; e-mail felicity.slayford@rpsgb.org).