

Questions for candidates

In accordance with the procedure for the conduct of Council elections, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Council has invited *The Journal* to ask the candidates three questions on matters of general interest. Voters in the election may wish to read the answers to the questions in conjunction with the candidates' statements of policy before deciding how to vote.

The aim of the Council's invitation is to assist members in making the most informed decision possible when voting by

allowing them to learn the candidates' views on questions of interest to the profession. *The Journal* is asked to publish the responses as close as possible to the mailing

of the voting papers, so there has been little time for new topics to arise since the March 31 closing date for the receipt of candidates' policy statements. As a consequence,

our questions relate to issues that are not necessarily new but have been raised by members in recent months.

The Council has asked *The Journal* to restrict each response in length to ensure fairness. We have given each of this year's 18 candidates a maximum of 150 words in which to answer all three answers.

The Journal's three questions

- Council priority** What would you most like the Council to achieve in the next 12 months?
- Code of conduct** Explain why you will — or will not — be signing the code of conduct for Council members if you are elected.
- Practice development** What development would you most like to see in place for the practice of pharmacy in the next one to two years?

Hassan Argomandkhah

Council priority Unity, harmony and wisdom in a modern Society.

Code of conduct I have signed it. As I vociferously stated at the time of its introduction, the code must not become a gagging tool. Democracy and freedom of speech are principles that I have always been committed to. For example, during the debate to cut and change the funding mechanisms of branches, I continually challenged the fairness of the proposals and insisted that my name to be minuted against this decision. However this may have escaped the membership as this debate was not reported in *The Pharmaceutical Journal*. Therefore members voting during this election must ask themselves this question: is my vote going to someone who is prepared to act on their principles or being wasted on someone blowing with the wind once they have been elected, abandoning their principles and the membership with it?

Practice development Real pharmacist prescribing, not lip service.



Martin Astbury

Council priority A satisfactory outcome to the problem of reforming the Society enough to satisfy Government, while saving the Society for its members. Secure, through the Council, National Health Service funding for pharmacists to be paid for attending continued education, ie, parity with other health care professionals.

Code of conduct I had not been aware of a problem, but will now read both sides of the argument and then make a judgment.

Practice development Independent prescribing, the right to amend a prescription where necessary, the right to emergency supply prescription only medication even when the doctor's surgery is open. Many pharmacists do this already (pre-scripts) for the patient's benefit. Some crazy doctors' receptionists send patients from the surgery to the pharmacy to BORROW tablets. Pharmacists are breaking the law so let us change it. A simple one: pharmacists, industry and GPs all agreeing 28 days in a month.



Shaqil Chaudary

Council priority I would like to see the new Charter fully developed and ready for implementation. I believe this will give the Society a direction and sense of purpose to work towards with respect to forwarding our profession.

Code of conduct I believe the points within the code of conduct are in place to ensure those who will be representing the profession will be acting in a manner that will ensure maximum benefit to our profession. Consequently I fully support the code of conduct and have no reservations in endorsing it by signature.

Practice development There are many developments I would like to see in place over the next one or two years. Not only would I like to see electronic prescribing as the main source of National Health Service prescriptions (hopefully making the process of supply of medicines more efficient) but would like to see supplementary/independent prescribing synonymous with the pharmacist's role.



Peter Curphey

Council priority Complete the work on putting in place a modern version of the Society which crucially re-engages pharmacists as members of their professional body. Clearly we need (for the constructive members) a major effort at establishing a communication strategy which properly informs and explains the ways in which modernisation will strengthen and support the membership role, as well as satisfying the overwhelming demand by government that we develop our modern regulator function to its satisfaction and in line with all the other health regulators.

Code of conduct Everyone in public life should try to conform to rules of behaviour in terms of selflessness, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. I will sign to signify my determination.

Practice development That the integrated activity of medication review, repeat dispensing, and prescribing will be recognised by public, profession and paymasters alike as the true acceptance of a real and independent profession. A focused Council will enable that.



William Dawson

Council priority Council must achieve effective communication with the membership of the Society so that the key features of the modernisation agenda are understood and the rationale behind them appreciated. This should include the Council composition, its functions, the Charter position and the proposal for charitable status. I recognise that there are different positions on these issues but believe it is possible to establish a consensus position and to clearly define the benefits for the profession as a whole.

Code of conduct I will sign the code of conduct and can see no rational reason against this position.

Practice development The key development needed now for the practice of pharmacy is a service based contract which properly rewards the professional services provided by pharmacists and which contains support for the education of pharmacists including continuing professional development. I believe that all the pharmacy organisations should achieve an agreed position on this as a key priority.



Robert Gartside

Council priority In the next 12 months we must complete the modernisation of the Society in a way which leaves pharmacists firmly in control, perhaps along the lines suggested by the Young Pharmacists Group, but the work must be completed so that Council can move on to more important matters.

Code of conduct I will be signing the code of conduct because confidentiality and collective responsibility are vital if Council is to function with any degree of efficiency.

Practice development The legal framework already exists for supplementary prescribing by pharmacists. Besides hospital and primary care pharmacists, it is not generally realised that community pharmacists can be supplementary prescribers and this may be the best way to bring them into the NHS team as medicine managers. With a determined push the first pharmacist prescribers may be at work in all areas of the profession within 12 months, with really significant numbers within two years.



Nicola Gray

Council priority I would like Council to lay the foundation for a strong future for pharmacists, supported by our members, to ensure that the new Charter and the new Section 60 legislation fit together, getting the balance right between the Society's professional and regulatory roles.

Code of conduct I will sign the code of conduct because Council members have a responsibility to all Society members, and the wider public, to act appropriately. It is consistent with the standards and level of governance properly expected of all those entrusted with public leadership roles.

Practice development I would like to see the target of 1,000 supplementary prescribers exceeded before the end of 2004, and to see the first independent pharmacist prescribers also by that date. There is no need for a delay in the move to independent prescribing — we need to push for it now.



Alison Ewing

Council priority Council must continue to lead the profession through the difficult process of change. As the leaders, they must also raise the profile of pharmacists in the corridors of power, ensuring our voice is heard when it matters. "Pharmacists are worth investing in" should be our motto.

Code of conduct I will sign the code of conduct as standards should be set and maintained. There is nothing in the code with which I do not agree.

Practice development I hope to see independent prescribing in all sectors of the profession with appropriate back-up by increased input from the technical workforce. This will undoubtedly improve the quality of patient care while advancing the status of the profession. This, together with a sound continuing professional development programme, will help the profession evolve into the medicines expert in the health care teams in both primary and secondary care.



Gordon Geddes

Council priority Stability with not a special general meeting in sight. The current debate on modernisation, a new Charter and charity status is destabilising for the Society and its membership. Letters to *The Pharmaceutical Journal* from distinguished ex-presidents of the Society cause the membership to ask "What exactly is going on?". In 12 months from now I should like to see these matters fully resolved and Council addressing the important external issues of the day rather than navel-gazing.

Code of conduct I would have no difficulty signing the code of conduct. On the contrary, point 10 dealing with corporate responsibility is not strong enough.

Practice development Within two years the practice of community pharmacy should have developed by the introduction of a new contract. Although the lead in this will be the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee, the Society will have an important supportive role in the development of protocols and governance issues.



Maurice Hickey

Council priority For Council to reform the Charter and Bye-laws in a democratic and transparent way, in a manner that is both acceptable to and reflects the aspirations of the membership.

Code of conduct All candidates were forced to sign the code as a condition of being allowed to stand. However, clause 10 allows the individual to publicly express personal views that may not coincide with that of Council. I will use this clause if I feel it necessary.

Practice development A move forward from local project based services to their day-to-day provision in all pharmacies, widespread extension of model schemes and the natural progression from supplementary to independent prescribing. Scotland is further ahead in this respect than the other UK countries. This is in no small part because the Society's Scottish Department, in conjunction with other relevant bodies, has actively pursued its representative function, rather than deny its existence as has happened at Lambeth.



John Jolley

Council priority Complete reviews of all modernisation measures are essential. The existing modernisation committee must be replaced by a group consisting solely of Council members, who should be responsible for consulting with all interested parties to implement those changes, which are consistent with the principles of "Save our Society".



Code of conduct I do not support the considerable amount of Council business that is currently carried out in closed sessions, or the Society's censoring of reports of Council and committee meetings published in *The Journal*.

Practice development I will help to develop and promote new roles for pharmacists and facilitate the opportunity for practice research to make our Society a centre of excellence for the practice of pharmacy in all area of activity. The Society can no longer ignore the new technologies and must devote resource to developing a future for the profession and for pharmacists.

Kirit Patel

Council priority The Council needs to make sure that the interest of the membership is protected in its new role as a modern regulator. The two magical words "PROTECT" and "SUPPORT" the membership must be enshrined in any new Charter.



Code of conduct No organisation can function effectively without corporate governance. Only by acting collectively can the Council take our profession forward. It is equally important that the code of conduct does not curtail any freedom of speech of Council members. I shall be signing the code of conduct on that basis.

Practice development The Government must ensure that pharmacy is an integral part of health care. We must be fully involved if we are to help deliver the Government's agenda as per the National Health Service plan. The extended roles, such as pharmacist prescribing and medicine management, must be fairly remunerated.

Douglas Simpson

Council priority I would like the Council to find a means of incorporating within the Society the machinery required for the new regulatory agenda in a way that does not compromise the Society's ability to act as a professional association.



Code of conduct Candidates for election were required by the Society to undertake that they would comply with the code of conduct for Council members. On the assumption that the code would not be used to inhibit full and vigorous debate in the Council and elsewhere, I gave the undertaking required.

Practice development I would like to see models developed that allow the great majority of pharmacists to play a formal and remunerated role in helping patients get the best out of their medicines.

Imran Khan

Council priority The council "connecting" with its membership, rebuilding trust and understanding the needs of pharmacists in all sectors of pharmacy. Thus, creating the foundations by which pharmacists can realise their potential. A greater effort to voice the ambitions of its membership at a national level and a readiness to champion the profession in the highest echelons of government.



Code of conduct I would sign the code of conduct, but would be guided by my conscience.

Practice development The integration of health and social care, allowing new and old models of service provision to be developed quickly, demonstrating integration of community pharmacy, hospital pharmacy and community services pharmacy. The rapid development of implementation plans, giving opportunity, for all pharmacists to prescribe for chronic diseases as well as acute prescribing. Allied to prescribing, building on core roles for medicines management within the pharmacy.

Peter Schofield

Council priority Council has lost touch with the membership. If you vote for me and the other Save our Society candidates then we shall try to effect the changes needed to affirm the Society as first and foremost "the representative body for all pharmacists and the profession" and reform Council into a vigorous, open and democratic body which represents our interests.



Code of conduct I am happy to sign a "code of honourable conduct"; unfortunately the current code is also used as an effective "gag" to reinforce the secrecy that surrounds the Council. Unfortunately it has been made impossible to function in the electorate's interest without signing. If elected I will sign under protest and campaign for its reform.

Practice development Pharmacists able to prescribe independently and effectively for simple minor ailments; and pharmacists becoming meaningfully involved in medical management and prescribing for more complex chronic conditions.

Linda Stone

Council priority A modern structure, acceptable firstly to members, but also to Government, supported by legislation and a new Charter. The legislation must enable the Society to carry the dual roles of regulation and membership. The new Charter must facilitate the professional membership and leadership roles. The Council must strive to ensure that the right balance is reached to secure our professional autonomy for the future and allow our aspirations to be achieved.



Code of conduct I have signed, and will continue to sign, the code of conduct. Contrary to some popular misconceptions, the code does not gag Council members. It facilitates open dialogue, including criticisms, in a transparent way, consistent with the Nolan principles of conduct in public life.

Practice development Supplementary prescribing will be firmly established, with significant numbers of pharmacists providing this service, producing demonstrable benefits to both patients and professionals. Independent prescribing must follow, with enabling legislation in place as soon as possible.

The Journal's three questions for candidates are set out on p628.

Noel Wicks

Council priority I would like to see the Council resolve the current issues surrounding modernisation and move forward, having had a democratic mandate from the membership to do so.

Code of conduct The powers of the Council are set out in the Supplemental Charter of 1953. One of the objectives of our Charter is to maintain the honour and safeguard and promote the interests of the members in their exercise of the profession of pharmacy. Should I be elected I will be honoured to sign a code of conduct that has, as part of it, a duty to help the Society fulfil the above objective.

Practice development I would like to see pharmacist prescribing, both independent and supplementary, used to full effect in primary and secondary care. I believe this represents a great opportunity for the profession; however, we need to make it happen sooner rather than later and we also need more support from the Government.



Nicholas Wood

Council priority In the next 12 months the Council should reform the Society in such a way that the Council remains a body representative of the membership while suitable structures are put in place to regulate the profession. These structures, within the Society, must be robust and transparent, and have appropriate lay membership.

Code of conduct The current code of conduct for Council members has huge flaws. I doubt that it can be enforced, although it appears to have been used to attempt to stifle some democratically elected Council members. I shall sign the code on the basis that I can then play a full part in obtaining its thorough revision.

Practice development I would like to see the implementation of schemes for supplementary prescribing by pharmacists in order to manage repeat dispensing. Such an initiative to manage repeat prescriptions through community pharmacy would be one of the most important developments for many years.

