

# Collection of retention fees for 2006

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's head of registration, **Andrew Gardner**, answers questions about the collection exercise for the 2006 retention fees for pharmacists' and sets out Council guidance on completing the fitness-to-practise declaration on the retention fee form

## When will I receive my form?

Following the Privy Council's approval of the proposed changes to the Society's Byelaws on 21 October, pharmacist retention fee forms are being printed and are due to be posted by 9 December.

## How much do I have to pay?

If you are a practising member, the fee is £267. If you are a non-practising member, the fee is £60. There is no part-time, low income or long service fee for 2006 but, as you may have read (*PJ*, 22 October, p529), the Council remains committed to reviewing the fee structure for 2007 and beyond.

**Overseas pharmacists** There is a new overseas fee of £106 for pharmacists who live overseas but who are not required to be registered with the Society. Those who are required to register must pay the practising fee of £267. Some members who live overseas may choose to retain the right to practise in Britain and undertake continuing professional development, and will pay the £267 practising fee. Overseas pharmacists cannot pay the non-practising fee.

## When must I make payment?

Fees are payable on 1 January 2006. If payment is not received by 20 January 2006 you will be sent a statutory demand. If payment is not forthcoming after the issue of the demand, you risk being erased for non-payment. Penalty fees apply if you do not pay in time and are removed from the Register.

## How can I pay?

Payment can be made online, by direct debit or by cheque.

**Online** Payment can be made online at [www.rpsgb.org/payment](http://www.rpsgb.org/payment). You will receive instant confirmation that your payment has been successful, and a receipt will be e-mailed to you within 24 hours of processing if you need to print it out. You do not need to complete the paper form if you pay online. All you need is your retention fee form number and your registration number, both of which are on the form. The secure payment site will accept major credit and debit cards. If you have lost or misplaced your form, please telephone or e-mail the registration section (see Panel above). Using the website is quick and easy and is the most cost-effective way for the Society to receive payment.

**Direct debit** If you have a direct debit instruction with the Society, then the practising fee will be debited from your account on or

## Further information and advice

Further information and advice can be obtained by contacting the Society's registration team (tel 020 7572 2322; e-mail [registration@rpsgb.org](mailto:registration@rpsgb.org)).

shortly after 3 January 2006. Please ensure there are sufficient funds in your account. It is now too late to set up a direct debit instruction for the 2006 fee if you do not already have one in place. Unfortunately, direct debit cannot be used to pay the non-practising or overseas fee. Please do not pay online or by cheque if you have a direct debit.

**Cheque** If you do not pay online using a credit or debit card and do not have a direct debit instruction, then you can pay by cheque. Cheques should be in pounds sterling and drawn on a UK bank account. Please make your cheque payable to "RPSGB (member)" and return it with your retention fee form in the reply envelope. Remember to put a stamp on the envelope. Please do not include any other payment on your cheque.

**Other** Payment cannot be accepted by internet payment direct from one bank account to another, by telephone or by the Banks Automated Clearance System. Payments by cash or postal order cannot be accepted and will be returned to you.

**Payment query** If you have a query about making your payment, please contact the registration section (see Panel above).

## What if I cannot pay?

The Benevolent Fund may be able assist those members most in need.

## How do I retire from the Register . . .

If you wish to retire from the Register, please complete the retention fee form by ticking the "I wish to retire" box and return your certificate of registration with your form. No payment is required.

## . . . or return to the Register after retiring?

If you wish to return to the register, you will be required to pay a restoration application fee and the current year's retention fee. You will be subject to CPD requirements when these become mandatory and may be required to complete a personal development plan.

## What happens if I do not pay?

If you fail to make a payment in time, your name will be reported to Council and you will be removed from the Register, and your name will be published in *The Pharmaceutical Journal* as one of those who has been erased for non-payment. To restore your name to the Register you will be required to pay a penalty fee, which will be £509 in 2006, plus the appropriate retention fee.

## How do I sort out a payment problem?

Although the Society aims to deliver the highest levels of service at all times, there may occasionally be difficulties. If you have a problem, please contact the registration team (see Panel above).

## Am I practising?

The Society's leaflet, "Practising or non-practising: guidance for members", has been updated and is a useful resource for members who do not clearly fall into the practising category. The leaflet can be downloaded from the Society's website ([www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/retfeedcguid.pdf](http://www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/retfeedcguid.pdf)).

## Guidance on completing the fitness-to-practise declaration

The Council has agreed the following guidance for pharmacists completing the fitness-to-practise declaration on the 2006 retention fee form.

1. For the purposes of the retention fee form, a "conviction" is a finding, in criminal proceedings in the UK (or elsewhere), that a person has committed the offence alleged.
2. Road traffic offences in which the member committing the offence has been offered the option of paying a fixed penalty will not be treated as a "conviction" for the purpose of the retention fee form. This is so even if the member refuses the option of paying the fixed penalty and subsequently is convicted of the offence by a court.
3. Such offences need not, therefore, be declared.
3. All other convictions must be declared to the Registrar and will be considered by the chairman of the Statutory Committee on a case-by-case basis.
4. All cautions, conditional discharges, bind-overs, admonishments and reports to a procurator-fiscal must be declared to the Registrar. The Infringements Committee will consider all such cases in the same way that it considers any allegations made against a member.
5. It must be emphasised that consideration by the Infringements Committee will not necessarily lead to a referral to the chairman of the Statutory Committee or any disciplinary action being taken.
6. The Infringements Committee will consider all

### Must I sign the declaration on the form?

You must sign the declaration on the retention form if you can. If you do not sign it you will be asked why you have not signed it. You should sign the declaration whether you are practising or non-practising (or overseas). If you cannot sign it because you have been convicted of a criminal offence, bound over, conditionally discharged, cautioned or reported to a procurator-fiscal and have not already informed the Registrar, then you must do so. Similarly, if you are the subject of ongoing or pending criminal proceedings or ongoing or pending fitness-to-practise proceedings by a licensing or regulatory body, then you must advise the Registrar. A form is available to download at [www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/retfeedecproc.pdf](http://www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/retfeedecproc.pdf). If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the registration section for a copy of the form. Complete the form and return this with your retention fee form and fee payment.

### Guidance on completing the declaration

The Council has agreed guidance for pharmacists on completing the fitness-to-practise declaration on the 2006 retention fee form (see Panel below). The Infringements Committee and Statutory Committee procedures set out are necessary to ensure the protection of the public, to maintain public confidence in the profession and to ensure that all allegations against members are considered by the Society in an open, transparent and consistent way.

### What will happen if I do not give details?

If you deliberately mislead, you will be in breach of the Code of Ethics and may be subject to investigation by the Society.

### How do I obtain a receipt?

Online payments are acknowledged instantly by e-mail, and a receipt is e-mailed within 24 hours. Members who pay by cheque or direct debit will be sent a receipt normally within 10 days of processing. Contact the registration section if you have not had a receipt 28 days after submitting your form and payment.

matters referred to it on a case-by-case basis in accordance with its published referral criteria and the relevant case law.

7. Cases that do meet the referral criteria will only be referred to the chairman of the Statutory Committee if there is a real prospect of a finding of misconduct being made sufficient to render the pharmacist unfit to be on the Register.
8. Under the Regulations that govern the procedure of the Statutory Committee, the chairman has discretion as to whether or not to order an inquiry. In particular, under Regulation 6(ii) the chairman may decline to order an inquiry where he is of the opinion that the conviction or misconduct alleged is not of a serious nature.