

Pharmaceutical Society NI
Annual Meeting
Thursday 15 October 2015

President's Address
Delivered by Ms Sinead Burns, Vice President

Due to unavoidable circumstances the President, Dr Jim Livingstone, is unable to be here this evening. He is extremely disappointed he cannot be with us and has sent his most sincere apologies.

As Vice President, I will deliver the President's Address in Jim's absence.

Both the President and I have been in our respective roles for one year now, having attended our induction session with the Pharmaceutical Society NI on the date of last year's AGM. It has been an honour to undertake the role of Vice President in this organisation, which is engaged in exceptionally important work in Northern Ireland in terms of regulating pharmacy, helping to ensure public protection and safeguarding the reputation of the pharmacy profession.

The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI provides the strategic direction for the organisation and oversees the work of the Executive and holds it to account for the delivery of key objectives.

PSNI has achieved many successes over the past year. It has, however, also been a difficult period for the organisation with the discovery of issues relating to the legislative basis for fees charged to some registrants and pre-registration students over a period of twenty years. In keeping with our commitment to act openly and transparently at all times, all registrants will have received a letter from the President advising them of this situation. Council was deeply concerned about this revelation and initiated an immediate and comprehensive review of fees charged and their legislative basis. I can provide assurance that Council is working with the Executive of the organisation and in partnership with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to resolve this issue as quickly as possible and to put in place

measures that will prevent any recurrence of this most regrettable and clearly unacceptable situation.

Having considered the issue of fees, it is appropriate that I also take some time to reflect upon some of the considerable successes and achievements of the organisation over the past year.

Over this time significant progress has been made in relation to the objectives outlined in our Corporate Strategy which is entitled "A New Era" and this progress is outlined within our Annual Report.

This year we have also concluded a consultation process in relation to the new Code of Ethics for pharmacists in Northern Ireland, which includes focus upon the professional duty of candour. The new code will be published in early 2016.

I am delighted to say that CPD is now well established within the profession. This is to the credit of the profession and is also to the benefit of the general public, with an estimated 10% of the total population of Northern Ireland visiting a community pharmacy each day and many others availing of hospital pharmacy services.

We have also made online registration available for the first time this year and initial feedback in relation to this has been both positive and encouraging.

This has also been a significant year for the organisations Fitness to Practice regime with a number of high profile cases being progressed. Through the work of the Registrar, Scrutiny Committee and Statutory Committee and our power to apply Interim Orders, we have again successfully protected the public and maintained confidence in the profession.

Looking forward, Council is aware of changes in direction that both the profession and commissioners may wish to develop in relation to the practice of pharmacy. While it is for the profession of course to determine how it develops, as a modern regulator, we are committed to ensuring that regulation does not hinder any developments the profession wishes to make.

That brings me onto some words of thanks which I wish to express on behalf of the President and myself.

I would like to thank the members of Council. It has been a pleasure to work with this group of capable, committed and enthusiastic individuals. Thank you all for your contribution over the past year.

I would like to say a special word of thanks to outgoing Council member Brenda Maitland for her significant contribution to the work of the Council over many years.

I would also like to thank Trevor Patterson, Chief Executive and his senior team Brendan, Mark and Joan and all of the staff of PSNI. Thank you all for the effort, commitment and sheer hard work you have invested in the organisation over the past year and we have briefly touched upon just a few of the fruits of that labour.

In addition, I would like to congratulate the Forum on their achievements this year. I wish to extend our appreciation to Kate McClelland, former Chairperson, Julie Greenfield, the Chief Executive and her team. I would also like to wish Roberta Tasker, the recently appointed Chairperson every success in this role.

I would further like to thank the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, who we work closely with in relation to a number of matters. In particular I would like to extend our gratitude to the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, Mark Timoney and his team.

Finally, I would like to thank the general public, registrants and all other stakeholders for sharing your views and feedback in relation to our work. Your input is extremely important to us and I strongly encourage you to continue to engage with us. This can of course be done through our formal consultation processes or by contacting the Pharmaceutical Society at any time in relation to any matter that you feel is important.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your attention.