

## **Pharmaceutical Society NI**

### **Annual General Meeting**

**06 October 2016**

#### **Chief Executive's Statement**

May I add my welcome to all of you, and thank you for your interest in our work.

I'm afraid most events that I attend now somewhere in the discussion mention Brexit – it would be remiss of me to fail to mention it tonight as, whilst there is much uncertainty as to what “Brexit means Brexit” actually means, we can be certain that it does mean it will affect both what we do, and how we do it

From free movement of professionals, prescriptions and patients to mutual recognition of qualifications and sharing of information including fitness to practice data there is potential for significant impact. Whilst we are not responsible for the staffing of our health service, we are a part of the route to entry for professional staff, and are obliged to have in place systems to provide access to the register which meet the needs of the service. Uncertainty surrounds the current alignment of professional qualifications going forward and one possible outcome in the future is that all EU applicants are required to do an OSPAP or some other top-up activity if the educational systems diverge.

Additionally, access to legal resources within government is likely to be constrained by Brexit related departmental priorities, potentially affecting our ability to secure support for our legislative reform.

Fortunately we are part of a larger regulatory group and we will work together to find solutions where they are needed, and we will of course keep our stakeholders advised of progress.

Looking forwards, we continue to work with the Rebalancing Pharmacy Legislation and Professional Regulation Board – whilst it is disappointing that the decriminalisation work has been snagged by recent local elections and parliamentary process, we do hope to see progress in both secondary and primary care this year. We have a clear objective to see better reporting and learning from errors and near misses which will serve to protect patients better and make the work of pharmacists in so doing easier.

We will be advancing this year the premises standards, the Section 60 Order having completed its approval process, and want to have meaningful engagement with stakeholders from the earliest possible stage – ensuring that what we produce meets its primary objective around safe and effective service delivery whilst enhancing the ability of service providers to be innovative, maximising technology and the use of the workforce.

Looking further into the future we will commence work on standards for RP and SP, taking a global view of governance which recognises the responsibilities of owners, SPs and RPs in a continuum, aiming to remove current lack of clarity around roles and ensure that authority and responsibility are appropriately paired.

Having standards that link the whole way through the governance of pharmacy will help all parties to establish safe and secure delivery, supported by owners, senior managers and local management, empowering those most suitable to take decisions to do so.

Draft Section 60 Orders are close to completion for consultation, our work can commence when final proposals are approved.

We very much welcome the DoH proposal to modernise pharmacy regulation in NI – our legislation is not adaptable, innovative or agile enough to allow us to do all that we need to do in the future, and improvements, such as those proposed by the Law Commissions would improve our effectiveness, drive down costs and ensure our accountability for what we do. It is unfortunate that the UK government has decided not to advance these proposals but opportunities remain for a local application of some of the proposals.

In the interim we are committed to identifying shortcomings and having them addressed in an open and transparent manner – all of the nine UK healthcare regulators have issues with their legislation and require improvements as recognised in the Law Commissions' report, we welcome the wider exercise now underway to endeavour to find and develop improvements which do not require legislative reform in parallel with our specific endeavours to identify and seek to develop those that do.

I look forward to working with you to deliver our ambitious programme, improving public safety and reducing the burden of regulation by introducing permissive standards that support innovation and service development and improvement in pharmacy.

Throughout this short presentation I have talked a lot about innovation and its importance - Why all the fuss about innovation you might ask?

Some quotes for you;

Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible." – *Lord Kelvin, President, Royal Society, 1895*

Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons." – *Popular Mechanics, forecasting the relentless march of science, 1949*

If at first the idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it." – *Albert Einstein*

The Internet? We are not interested in it." – *Bill Gates, 1993*

Now there is someone not embarrassed to change his mind!

I particularly like:

Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative. – *Oscar Wilde*

It is for the profession, their representatives, service commissioners and public demand to determine what innovation is needed in pharmacy practice and service delivery, as a regulator our job is to ensure that our standards and rules do not unnecessarily get in the way of it

I will conclude where my colleague, the chair of Resources Committee will begin, by saying thanks to registrants and our hard working staff, who have for many years been helping us to reduce costs – from innovative use of IT to contain administration and other costs, the introduction of in-house legal support within the existing salary budget and through better utilisation of the building, to the welcome uptake by registrants in on-line retention we have been able to do more with less, in real terms, resource.

Thanks to all for coming tonight to hear about our work.