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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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An Independent Inquiry into a Professional Body for Pharmacy

Publication of the Clarke Inquiry Report

The Report of the Independent Inquiry into a Professional Body for Pharmacy, chaired by Nigel Clarke and commissioned by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain in September 2007, was published this morning.

The Report is the culmination of a wide-ranging consultation exercise involving the whole pharmacy profession. It recommends the creation of a new Professional Body, which will actively involve the whole profession.

The new Professional Body should be strongly member-focused, delivering services through a structure as devolved as possible throughout Great Britain. In doing so, it must offer its members the services they need to support their practice, and at the same time promote the leading edge of the profession.

It must focus on leadership, on being the champion for the science and practice of pharmacy. It must work to build the confidence of all - patients, the public, Governments, the new Regulator - in pharmacists and the skills they offer. The profession needs a public voice: the new Body must supply it.

The Body must be accountable to its members and transparent in its operation. The Report recommends representation of all pharmacists within its governance, and an enhanced role for National Boards. Functions should be devolved in a practical way. For clarification, it should be emphasised that where the Report refers to science and academia, it encompasses science, industry and academia.



Nigel Clarke said:

“The pharmacy profession has responded with great enthusiasm to this consultation exercise, and I am grateful to all those who took the time and trouble to take part. The debate has been informed by well thought through evidence from many bodies and individuals, who care passionately about their profession, and the patients and public it serves.

“As many people said to us, this represents a time of great opportunity for pharmacists. It is a moment when the profession can take the experience it has built over its distinguished history and use it to fashion a reinvigorated Professional Body, which can support its members and the public in a more dynamic way than has been possible in recent times.

“If this is to succeed, the whole of the pharmacy profession must work together to fashion the new Body. Time is tight; the new Regulator will be operational by January 2010, and the Professional Body must be too.

“We recommend a Transitional Committee to ensure that this can happen. This must be made up of those who will make up the new Professional Body, and should involve all stakeholders in its work.

“This is happening at a time when demands on pharmacists within healthcare systems in the UK are increasing, a process likely to be taken further by the imminent White Paper on Pharmacy. Safe and effective use of medicines is an essential part of good care; patients and the public, and indeed other healthcare professionals, have great need of the expertise and advice that pharmacists supply. A Professional Body able to support its members, and working to drive up standards, speaking authoritatively, should be at the heart of those developments.”



Notes to Editors:

The Inquiry undertook a wide-ranging consultation exercise with the pharmacy profession between November 2007 and February 2008. There were seven formal evidence sessions and seven public meetings held throughout Great Britain. 32 organisations gave evidence at the formal sessions, 65 pharmacy bodies and 170 individuals submitted written evidence.

The Report makes 64 recommendations.

The main conclusions of the Inquiry were:

- An effective Professional Body for pharmacy is essential in the interests of both the profession and the public. In the past the successful regulatory function has inhibited the development of a professional body for pharmacy. The new regulatory arrangements provide the opportunity to strengthen this essential professional support.
- The new Professional Body must provide clear leadership to the profession; provide services to its members that support their work, especially in relation to Continuing Professional Development and Revalidation; allow all to develop the highest standards of practice, such as around specialisms; and also represent the profession to patients, the public, healthcare professionals and the devolved administrations. In all cases, it must be a trusted source of information and advice.
- The new Professional Body should embrace not only pharmacists, but the whole of the 'pharmacy family'. Registered pharmacists should be the core of the new Professional Body. Other membership categories should be created to cover non-practising and retired pharmacists, academics, pharmaceutical scientists, registered pharmacy technicians, pre-registration trainees and students.
- A new structure for a Professional Body should be established, built upon the existing RPSGB. Its Council would have representation from enhanced National Boards for England, Scotland and Wales, as well as sectoral representation from pharmacists in community, hospital/PCT/Health Board, science and academia, and specific representation from technicians and special interest groups within the profession.
- For clarification, it should be emphasised that where the Report refers to science and academia, it encompasses science, industry and academia.
- The Professional Body should not perform trade union functions, nor represent individual pharmacists in proceedings against them.
- The RPSGB should set up a Transitional Committee, based around those who have expressed an interest in being part of the new Regulatory Body, and working with all those with an interest, to make arrangements to ensure that the Body is operational at the same time as the General Pharmacy Council in January 2010.

Ends

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