

# Delivering the Prospectus

Steve Churton, the RPSGB president, speaks to Pharmacy Business about the new pharmacy body and feedback received from the professionals...

## Who has the Prospectus been sent out to?

We sent a copy to all Society members – approximately 48,000 pharmacists, all our office staff, pharmacy schools and pre-registration graduates. It has also gone out to various representative bodies so its gone out wider than our current membership since we are interested in views from the breadth of the profession and not just our own members. They have till January 9, 2009 to send in their feedback.

## Do you fear lack of participation and involvement from the members?

I'm hopeful a substantial number of our members will respond. What we have stressed in the covering letter and the Prospectus is that this is the final opportunity for pharmacists to make their voices heard with regards to the new body. At this stage we want a mandate from the membership to say that this looks like the type of body we want so my plea right now to members is if they haven't been involved already is to get involved now. We also have a communications programme alongside the Prospectus and our email database in order to increase participation.

## Were there any surprises in the feedback received?

There weren't major surprises but there were issues around the level of support that members feel the Society provides. There were constructive indicators as to the type of support they would like and how it should be delivered to them as well as professional guidance in terms of professional development. And even though there weren't any great revelations in terms of things we hadn't thought of, it is nice to be re-affirmed by members what the core issues were when it comes to what they want.

## Has this lack of support issue been addressed in the Prospectus?

Yes it has been. We suggested that the centre of gravity of the new organisation should be the national boards to represent the views of England, Scotland and Wales and not top-heavy organisations currently in London. The respective boards will be responsible for the delivery of supporting services in their respective countries and there will be local mechanisms to get people engaged locally. An increased use of technology is emphasised so virtual communities can be set up online allowing pharmacists with similar interests to create a virtual community and discuss advancements in that area.

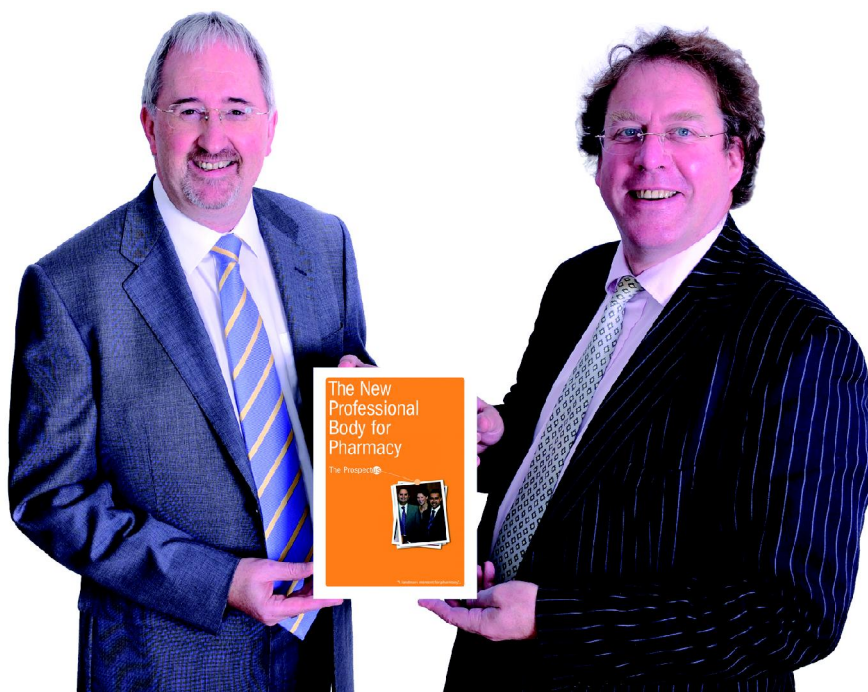
## Will there be a joining fee for the new organisation?

In order to practice pharmacy and call themselves pharmacists, they will have to join the regulator, the General Pharmaceutical Council and there is a fee involved with that. If they want to be a member of the professional body and benefit from the services that will be provided then there will be a fee for that as well although that will be a voluntary membership. Hopefully the total of these two combined fees will be no more than the fee they currently pay plus inflation but it will provide better value for money by the support and services we deliver.

Prospectus. It will chair the transitional working group that will include four council members and others to support that process.

## With your aim of having the new organisation setup by 2010, does it not seem like a tight schedule?

It is a tight schedule. Our tentative launch date of January 1, 2010, seems unlikely so we're looking at April. It gives us more time but considering that we are creating a new organisation – and not just an extension of the Society – it will still be tight. Some of the expertise we have here will clearly be in the



Steve Churton, president RPSGB, and Nigel Clarke, chairman Transcom, with the Prospectus

## What will be the Society's next step?

Even after 15 months of feedback, we are still interested to hear what our stakeholders have to say. Feedback can be sent via the tear-away form that comes with the Prospectus or via the TransCom website. This will be collected by TransCom and a detailed report presented. The RPSGB will then decide whether to keep the Prospectus as it is or amend it according to the feedback received. There is a council meeting in February so hopefully we'll be able to make a decision. There will be a transitional working group in place which will build the infrastructure and there's a lot of work left in delivering what we promised in the

new body and my background in business development also is crucial in this role and will hopefully aid our progress.

## What is your message to the members out there?

We all need to be taking an interest in this and it is important for professionals to come forward and contribute. It will make a difference to you individually and your profession. It would be wrong to have a strong regulator and a weak professional body so the two need to work side-by-side. Don't take this as something happening in London with no relevance to you. Make your views known.