Pharmacy Schools Council Meeting on 14 November 2022

Outlined below is a brief summary of the topics that were discussed at the Pharmacy Schools Council (PhSC) meeting on Monday 14 November 2022.

Post-registration education

The post-registration landscape has recently changed significantly and schools of pharmacy (SoP) with established postgraduate departments are now having discussions around their future postgraduate course offerings, particularly independent prescribing courses and diplomas. Accreditation of individual postgraduate courses by several accreditation bodies is a concern to the PhSC and the PhSC awaits with interest the content of the final report of the UK Commission on Pharmacy Professional Leadership.

Transition from MPharm to Foundation Year

The PhSC discussed the possible impact on the small number of pharmacy students who would pass an MPharm to the old General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) standards but would start a Foundation year programme to the new GPhC standards. Solutions to this issue are likely to involve several stakeholders (SoP; GPhC; Statutory Education Bodies (SEBs)) and the PhSC Executive will be formally writing to stakeholders to raise this concern.

Best practice in selecting pharmacy students

The PhSC Admissions group has developed a 'Best practice in the selection of pharmacy students' document. The document is a voluntary minimum standard that all SoP should be able to apply. The approach incorporates the new GPhC requirement to interview all pharmacy applicants and the inclusion of NHS values-based recruitment (VBR). The document allows for flexibility around how SoP can conduct interviews, while making provision for applicant preferences. The document will be reviewed regularly and revised where necessary to allow for closer collaboration with SEBs.

Benefits of independent community pharmacy placements

The National Pharmacy Association (NPA) is keen to work with the PhSC and other stakeholders to increase uptake of pharmacy placements at independent community pharmacies, so pharmacy students have placement opportunities in all pharmacy sectors. Challenges to establishing placements in independent community pharmacies will include the use of contracts for placements, differences across the nations and making systems work across regions, how employers can handle the different requirements of SoP, and SoP expectations for placements for their student. All stakeholders involved supported increased community pharmacy placements and agreed to work together to explore how to take advantage of this opportunity.

Consensus statement on clinical tariff in England

A consensus statement on clinical tariff in England has been written by the PhSC and has recently been published on the PhSC website. While the inclusion of pharmacy in the list of professions eligible for clinical tariff in England is welcomed, the current payment level for

clinical tariff is much lower than the tariff for medical student placements. This may impact on the ability to secure pharmacy placements in general practice settings and lead to competition between SoP to secure these placements. Although this may be less of an issue in the other UK countries where payment for pharmacy placements is aligned more closely with the medical tariff, the exact differences in overall placement funding across the four nations is not completely clear at this stage. Pharmacy students should be viewed by training providers as contributors to the work force rather than simply being observers and the PhSC is keen to explore the use of validated certification systems for pharmacy students so that they can make a greater contribution on placements.