

COI

“GPhC”

BOB NICHOLLS

Chair Designate
GPhC

BOB NICHOLLS:

Professional regulators a) - need to be more of a partnership between the public and the profession being regulated, and b) - need to be seen to be independent from the professional bodies. The General Pharmaceutical Council is charged with providing safe regulation for the public, making sure that professional pharmacists and professional pharmacy technicians and indeed, their premises, are properly regulated against a set of standards. We're a designate council. We're waiting for Parliamentary approval both from the Scottish and Westminster Parliament. We're hoping, and at the moment we look on course for achieving that by the end of the year, subject, of course, to Parliamentary timetable. We will then be a legal body who can formally consult on the processes of regulation, the structures we're going to put in place and so on, and then we're currently aiming for April 2010, when we'll become a live, new, regulatory body.

For pharmacists and pharmacy technicians I think the benefit of an independent regulator is essentially an assurance that they meet basic standards and they're helped with their professional development, to continue to meet standards that will change as the demands on pharmacists and the pharmacy world change as well.

Over time, one would hope that it helps raise the overall standards and helps them adapt to new challenges, new opportunities for the pharmacy professions.

I think the public benefit will come from it being independent, it will be clearly demonstrated that we're no longer part of a professional body, we're separate. We're accountable to Parliament, not to governments or Departments of Health in Scotland, Wales or England, and we're independent of the big commercial interests that are clearly there in pharmacy. And I think that gives more confidence to the public in assuming that their interests are being safeguarded.

One of the chief ways of people getting involved with the General Pharmaceutical Council, particularly in its formative preparation days is to use our new website, to get involved in our stakeholder workshops, or just writing in with any other ideas that people would like to give us.

END OF BOB NICHOLLS