

## Andrew Carruthers – Address for the Position of Chair of RPS Scottish Pharmacy Board

I initially got involved with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) after recognising the need for change when several friends left the profession due to their expectations of pharmacy not being fully met. I started as a contributor to Medicines Ethics and Practice (MEP) and I was the RPS Local Co-ordinator for Greater Glasgow and Clyde for 3 years – where I organised and developed multiple events based on the needs of local pharmacists. I ensured these events provided networking opportunities and support. I was then co-opted on to the Scottish Pharmacy Board (SPB) in 2018 and I have been an active and effective member of the board. I was re-elected to the board in 2021 and I stood and was elected as Chair. I am standing to be re-elected as Chair for another term.

Inclusivity and the engagement and support of early years pharmacists is a current key priority of the RPS. Since my election as Chair, we have co-opted an early years pharmacist to ensure their voice is heard, and I hope to continue to demonstrate the benefit of this. This demonstrates to the membership, and the rest of the organisation, that we are a dynamic, supportive and inclusive board – truly determined to increase engagement with early years members.

Throughout my experience with the RPS I have developed my knowledge of the profession, and healthcare politics. I completely appreciate that no one pharmacist can truly understand all aspects of the profession, as Chair – so I would work hard to continue to utilise the experience and knowledge of the other fantastic board members. I will continue to attend meetings on behalf of the SPB and ensure that I represent the views of the Board and encourage collaboration and co-production of workstreams and statements. I'd continue to ensure the SPB remain up to date with key discussions and outcomes.

I want to see an increase in membership engagement at RPS as a strategy to increase the membership numbers. As Chair, I have advocated for members being able to attend and observe RPS Board meetings and have worked to see a move to open business as the default. During the coronavirus pandemic the SPB have utilised technology to meet remotely, and the Board have embraced this fully. I have pledged to continue to have a blend of face-to-face and remote meetings of the Board to increase accessibility for potential Board members and allow the membership to view our meetings.

In my second term I want to continue to support and drive the introduction of RPS Ambassadors and the creation of an online RPS community. As a previous RPS local co-ordinator, I've seen first-hand that RPS Local events are a great forum to formally support the training and development of local pharmacists. The topics can be based on the local training needs of members and support learning across the profession at all career stages. I appreciate that evening events do not suit all members, so I support the development of an online RPS community, which can be accessed at any time. With input from our members and RPS staff we could share learning, inspire, and enable development, and build a supportive online community for the profession.

Inclusivity and authentic leadership are extremely important to me. I am currently a member of the RPS Action in Belonging, Culture and Diversity group (ABCD). This is a group

that works across all areas of pharmacy in the UK to support the RPS Inclusion and Diversity strategy. This group aims to represent the full diversity of protected characteristics across the profession – a goal I will continue to champion if I were re-elected to Chair of the SPB.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only amplified the negative impact on health outcomes for those in our most deprived communities. Pharmacists defy the trend of the inverse care law as there are a greater number of pharmacies in socio-economically deprived areas, ensuring that people across Scotland have access to healthcare and advice within their localities wherever they live. As Chair, I will continue work with the Board to fully realise the role pharmacists could have in tackling health inequalities by providing guidance and championing the vital services available. I will continue to ensure that the challenges, and opportunities, of remote and rural communities of Scotland are continually considered at a GB level within the organisation.

With the publication, and ongoing work, of the Independent Commission to Pharmacy Professional Leadership I will continue to support the engagement of this extremely important piece of work which will shape the future of pharmacy. This work has not been without its controversy, and I believe that maintaining consistency within the board, and Chair, is paramount to ensure Scotland's voice is heard in this.

Many thanks for your consideration. Please get in touch if you would like to discuss any aspect of my address. Regardless of the outcome, I am excited to continue to work with you all.