HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS FOR NEW INDEPENDENT NATIONAL WHISTLEBLOWING OFFICER ROLE

SUBMISSION FROM Royal Pharmaceutical Society in Scotland

How will the order affect the whistleblowing process?

We believe that this will have a positive influence to encourage people to come forward with concerns knowing there is an independent process totally unrelated to their work place. We support the national “once for Scotland” approach to bring consistency and equity to the process. We hope that this is a step forward to promote a learning culture and to give individuals more confidence and security to initiate a whistleblowing process.

Should the ombudsman fulfil the role of Independent National Whistleblowing Officer?

Yes. This would seem to be a natural extension of the role the ombudsman already has for complaints. It is important that this role is independent of employers and so it sits well with the remit of the ombudsman. The proposed standards to accompany the role should also provide clarity for individuals as to how to proceed with a concern.

Does the order give the independent National Whistleblowing Officer adequate powers?

Our response is as a professional body representing individual pharmacists and not a legal opinion. Our understanding of the draft explanatory document would indicate that order seems to allow the wide range of powers required in order to enable a fair and transparent investigation. We support the inclusion of dealing with whistleblowing as an intrinsic part of providing NHS services. We also support the additions which give the ombudsman discretionary reporting power to comment, recommend and share information which supports best practice.

Is there anything you would add, amend or remove from the order?

As above regarding the context of our response.