



Pharmacists Defence Association
The Old Fire Station
69 Albion Street
Birmingham, B1 3EA

Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists
Unite House
128 Theobalds Road
London, WC1X 8TN

John Rogers
Chief Executive, Skills for Health
4th Floor,
1 Temple Way
Bristol,
BS2 0BY

25 November 2019

Dear Mr Rogers,

Proposed apprenticeship for pharmacists

Thank you for the update as per your email of 25th October.

As the two independent trade unions for the profession we represent the interests and views of individual pharmacists. The Pharmacists Defence Association (PDA) and Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists (GHP) are disappointed and concerned that while business owners and NHS employer organisation are included, no attempt has yet been made to include the independent voice of pharmacists that we would bring to the development of a pharmacist apprenticeship.

As you will be aware we led the reaction to the previous attempt to develop a proposal for an apprenticeship and the PDA was instrumental in activating over 6,000 pharmacists to respond to the consultation on that proposal. At the invitation of IFATE, the PDAU then facilitated the initial stakeholder meeting at which the GHP was also an active participant. It became apparent that after that scrutiny the initial proposal was abandoned.

We were also present at the stakeholder event in July, however the latest process and communication makes no reference to listening to the voice of pharmacists. On behalf of the profession we are concerned with this new proposal and would appreciate confirmation from the employer group that they intend to engage with us as they proceed. We would appreciate clarification on which other professional bodies apart from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society will be involved as noted in the press release on the Skills for Health website:

The employer group will work in conjunction with universities, professional bodies, arms-length bodies and the pharmacy regulator, actively seeking their advice and input to guide the development of the standard. The group will be considering the initial membership of the group as it is recognised that more NHS representation is required. Currently steps are being taken to address this.

Please could you confirm whether our two organisations are to be invited to engage with this new proposal before the consultation period in 2020 as we will need to advise our members accordingly. As you will be well aware, our members have concerns about the underlying motivations for this proposal and are also concerned about the negative effect a poorly devised and delivered apprenticeship would have upon the profession as a whole. Many of those very members are current employees in the employer group organisations and may well have very pertinent contributions to make.

Yours sincerely

Paul Day, Director and Alima Batchelor Head of Policy, (PDA)

Graeme Richardson, Immediate Past President and Alison Smith, Joint Chair of Terms and Conditions Committee (GHP)