



Association of
Pharmacy
Technicians (UK)

Branch Communication Policy

Oct 2007

Introduction

1. APTUK Branches are the most important part of the organisation since they provide the direct interface with our members. They also provide the majority of APTUK CPD activity around the country and provide networking opportunities for members. In order that strategic developments and national work can be communicated to members and APTUK branch work can be communicated to national officers, it is essential to develop effective two way communications.

APTUK Media Policy

2. APTUK have a published Media Policy, which can be found on the APTUK website. Many of the broad principles that apply to national officers also apply to branch officers and to members. Therefore, it is important that this policy is read in conjunction with the APTUK Media Policy.

Responding to Incoming Communication

3 Most Branch correspondence will be of a routine nature and can effectively be dealt with at branch level. Occasionally, correspondence of a more strategic nature could end up with branch officers for action. In such cases, branch officers will need to decide whether to respond or to pass the correspondence on to national officers for action. It is not possible to provide detailed advice on which course of action should be taken but some broad principles relating to this are shown below:

3.1 Branch officers remain accountable for any communication they produce and distribute. However, all correspondence should accord with APTUK strategic policies and should be written utilising the principles laid out in the APTUK Communication Policy.

3.2 If branch officers feel that providing a response is beyond their ability or experience the matter should always be referred to national officers through the Secretary.

3.3 Advice should be sought from national officers in the case of any contentious correspondence.

3.4 Any requests for APTUK input at a national level, such as request for presentations at conferences or responses to consultation documents should be forwarded to the APTUK National Secretary for action.

Outgoing Correspondence

3. All outgoing correspondence should comply with the principles of accuracy, brevity and clarity. Untold damage can be done through the dissemination of inaccurate information, therefore, every effort must be taken to ensure that this does not occur.

The following principles apply to all outgoing correspondence:

3.1 All outgoing branch correspondence should, where possible, be proof-read by at least one other branch officer. During this process accuracy, tone, clarity and content should be reviewed.

3.2 All correspondence should be signed by the appropriate branch officer, usually the Branch Secretary.

3.3 All official correspondence generated by APTUK Branches should be written on official APTUK headed paper.

Meetings

4. Branch Meetings are predominately networking and CPD opportunities. Where any official branch business does take place, a set of minutes from the meeting should be produced and kept on file with other official correspondence. The following principles apply:

4.1 The responsibility for making accurate notes and writing up the minutes of meetings rests with the Branch Secretary. The notes shall provide a correct and authoritative record of meetings and should be sufficiently detailed to provide an audit trail of discussions.

4.2 Formal minutes of meetings should be produced and distributed by the date of the next meeting.

4.3 The minutes of the previous meeting shall be agreed at the next following scheduled meeting and signed to that effect by the chair of the meeting.

4.4 In the interests of transparency and openness, branch secretaries should provide electronic copies of the minutes of branch meetings to the Branch and Projects Officer (e-mail: branchandprojects@aptuk.org)

E-Mail Correspondence

5. E-Mail is a common communication mechanism for APTUK national and branch officers. It is fast, convenient and enables the rapid electronic transfer of documents to facilitate discussion, debate and decisions. The following principles apply to e-mail communication

5.1 It is very easy to respond to anything which is perceived as controversial **too** quickly leading to conflict. All e-mail responses should be reviewed and considered carefully before sending to try and reduce the chances of misinterpretation or controversy.

5.2 Ensure that the same principles of accuracy, tone, clarity and content that are applied to formal written communications are also applied to e-mails.

5.3 Consult other branch officers if you are unsure about providing a response to any e-mail.

5.4 Consider whether the response you are providing accurately reflects the APTUK standpoint.

- 5.5 Given the trend towards greater use of e-mail as the main form of communication, Branch Secretaries should ensure that a list of contact e-mails is available for branch officers and, as far as is possible, members. Branches should provide a copy of e-mail contact lists to the National Branch and Projects Officer. Following this policy will help facilitate good inter-communication between members, branches and national officers.

The Internet

- 6 As well as the APTUK Website and forum, there are a number of other websites offering a forum through which pharmacy technicians, who are non APTUK members can express their views. These tend to attract some of the more vocal and radical pharmacy technicians across the country. It is worth being a member of these forums so that you can follow the discussions and feelings of pharmacy technicians across the country. However, the following principles apply to all APTUK national and branch officers.
- 6.1 APTUK branch officers who post on these forums run the risk of their individual views being taken as the APTUK official line. This may not necessarily be the case and care should be taken to make sure that these risks are managed.
- 6.2 APTUK branch officers who chose to make individual postings on these forums should caveat their message to make it absolutely clear that this is an individual view and not that of the APTUK.

Communication between Branches and the National Committee

7. The day-to-day business of the Association can be significantly enhanced by good two-way communication between national officers and branch representatives. All national officers and branch representatives are encouraged to communicate using all available forms of communication. The following principles apply:
- 7.1 Regular correspondence between branches and national officers should be encouraged through the Branch Projects Officer
- 7.2 Branch officers and individual members should be aware of, and encouraged to use communication routes to national officers.
- 7.3 Branches are encouraged to use the APTUK website for publishing information about branch events, for following strategic developments and participating in networking via the website forum. Information can be published through the Publicity Officer who can be contacted at publicity@aptuk.org
- 7.4 Branch activity can be varied and of great interest to other APTUK members around the country. Branches are encouraged to produce articles, letters or other correspondence for the Pharmacy Technician Journal. Correspondence should be submitted to editor@aptuk.org who can also offer advice on any issues relating to the Journal.