

CONSULTANCY GROUP

Report of the Committee for 2006/2007

The Chemical Consultancy Forum was established in 1990 as a professional group open to all members of the Society upon application and payment of an annual subscription. It became the Consultancy Group in 2005. The objectives of the Group are set out on the Society's web page <http://www.rsc.org/Membership/Networking/InterestGroups/Consultancy/Objectives.asp>.

The Group represents an important group of RSC members, many of whom have a direct interface with the public; those who do not have many links with industries. Consequently, the Group plays an important part in fulfilling the RSC's role.

On Thursday 11 May, 2006 the 15th Annual General Meeting of the Consultancy Group was held with an ordinary meeting of the Group. The topic was 'Regulations - help or hindrance?' Following the meeting, several members accepted the invitation to attend the House of Commons Parliamentary and Scientific Committee meeting on 'Expert Witnesses in the Dock'.

During the year, members of the Committee have continued discussions about managing changes in support from the Society, and as announced at the 14th AGM, communication with members is now electronic rather than by conventional mail. Whilst some difficulties have been encountered with the RSC IT system, an email alert is being sent every month or so to all the CG members who have provided an email address. Problems remain with the intended email discussion group.

Professional indemnity insurance (PII) regularly emerges as an important issue to members. Information from a small sample of members indicated that about a third were not covered by PII. A commonly stated reason is that the premiums quoted appear to be quite out of proportion to the perceived risk, which, in the case of chemists, seems to be highly exaggerated and generalised by insurers. We strongly support negotiations being conducted by Andrew Scott on behalf of the RSC regarding access to professional indemnity insurance (PII) on terms advantageous to members of the RSC. We have liaised with Mr Scott on behalf of RSC members who are consultants and to whom the outcome of the negotiations is most likely to be relevant.

The Group was represented at the RSC General Assembly (November, 2006) where amongst other matters, the Membership Department gave an outline of member benefits with discussion of different subscription fees. The Committee continue to explore with the Society opportunities for being proactive for the benefit of their members. The Society holds the view that members should benefit from Chartered Chemist publicity in various journals/magazines.

The Committee also continues to represent the Group on the Joint Consultants Forum (JCF), which has links with similar groups from other professional bodies; members of the CG can attend JCF meetings, and meetings organised by JCF members (such as the IoP), at preferential rates.

Members of the CG are reminded that they are entitled to have an entry in the Directory of Consulting Practices (DCP) at no charge. RSC members, who are not members of the CG, will still have to pay the initial fee of £50 for their entry. There is no subsequent annual charge. Members of the Consultancy Group who are not in the DCP are encouraged to submit an entry to the Directory to increase awareness of their professional activities as well as raising the profile of the DCP. (http://www.chemsoc.org/networks/dcp_index.htm).

The Committee also reminds members that the revised Guide to Consultants is free to members of the RSC.

As always, the Committee invites members to give their views on their specific needs in the area of Chemical Consultancy. We are also hoping to set up an email networking chatline, available only to CG members, and details will be provided in due course.

Email alerts were sent out by various routes in April, June, September, October and November (two). If you did not receive one or more of these updates will you please contact the list manager (cglist@rsc.org) giving your current email address.