

Shaping the future. Together.

100 years
PAGB

PAGB – celebrating 100 years of consumer healthcare

On June 17th, 1919, proprietary medicines manufacturers held the inaugural meeting of what was to become the Proprietary Association of Great Britain. This was a UK first in creating a self-regulatory trade association to oversee medicine advertising to the public.

Setting the foundations for the future

A review of PAGB's first 100 years shows how prescient and far sighted the original members were in creating a ground-breaking trade association. Not only have the intervening years been speckled with glittering firsts (see timeline), it is remarkable how the founding principles remain unchanged with PAGB still focused on promoting best practice through self-regulation, providing a world class service, being the voice of industry and empowering people to self care.

From the start PAGB focused on the evidence-base for the efficacy and safety of medicines, the importance of having products widely available to help people manage their own health and the benefits of self-regulation in ensuring these high standards could be maintained. The experience gained over the years has meant that PAGB has blazed a trail in the field of medicinal products and advertising regulations across the globe.

Before the creation of the Association of the Manufacturers of British Proprietaries (AMBP, which became PAGB in 1926), companies advertised

their products with such fanciful and unsupported claims that the industry was deemed disreputable by the BMA in 1909 when it published its report on "Secret Remedies: What they cost and what they contain". This prompted the 1914 Commons Select Committee Report on Patent Medicines to recommend the need for statutory control to counter the "grossly exaggerated claims of efficacy...by cunning swindlers who exploit for their own profit the apparently invincible credulity of the public".

With the Report published the same day as the outbreak of World War One, plans for change were put on hold but, by 1919, manufacturers faced a clear choice: bring their own house into order or have order imposed on them.



Self-regulation as the bedrock

Respectable manufacturers seized the mantle of change and the AMBP made its founding *raison d'être* best practice through self-regulation. It went beyond the Commons Select Report Committee requirements in making it a provision of membership that all advertised products must include their "composition, origin, place of manufacturer etc and therapeutic and dietetic effects".

In 1936 the world's first ever self-regulatory advertising Code was introduced. This contained 10 principles for advertising, many of which still exist today.

Since then, this Code has become the foundation of other self-regulatory advertising Codes.

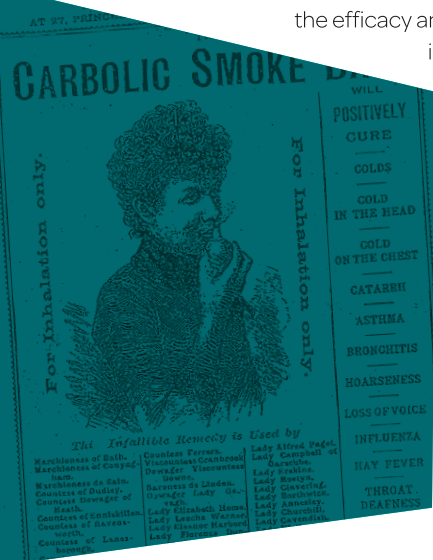
It was so far ahead of its time that, in 1959, the World Health Organization asked PAGB to author a paper on the control of proprietary medicines. Indeed, it was almost 60 years after PAGB's inception that advertising self-regulation finally had a statutory framework, when the 1968 Medicines Act was finally implemented in 1978. The contents of the law were heavily influenced by PAGB submissions.

The intervening years have seen PAGB extend its self-regulatory remit to cover new ways for members to advertise their products, first with the launch of commercial television in 1955 and more recently the growth of internet advertising. The changing face of healthcare means PAGB now also has Codes and guidelines that cover food supplements, medical devices and packaging.

The data continue to show that self-regulation works. The items of copy processed by PAGB has been rising exponentially each year with over 10,000 in 2018, and only 2 upheld complaints against PAGB-approved advertising.

"Advertisements should be of such a character that they do not mislead the public nor contain statements which would permit criticisms to be levelled at proprietary medicines as a whole or which may cause confidence in proprietary medicines to become impaired."

– From first code, 1936





A world-class service

Over the years PAGB has delivered a world-class service for its members, helping them negotiate a changing landscape. Never more so than during the 1940s, when the Association became heavily involved in the war effort and assisted members in adapting to the seismic changes arising from the creation of the NHS in 1948.

Now anyone could access healthcare that was free at the point of delivery. For PAGB and its members it was a period of great uncertainty, with grave concerns over how the NHS would affect product sales. Already within the first year of its launch, concerns were raised over the significant increase in drug expenditure, prompting greater medicines scrutiny.

The war years

It is a testament to the credibility and standing of PAGB that it was asked to be involved in several special war measures to ensure maintenance of medical supplies. This included controls for starch, paper and tin. Its role in alcohol allocation continued until at least 1946.

In recognition of PAGB's longstanding role in helping members export to far flung parts of the British Empire and Commonwealth, the Government also asked PAGB to set up a separate Proprietary Medicines Export Group (PMEG) in 1939, which ran until 1951.

Regulatory challenges

Within the first year of its existence, the then AMBP was fighting the threat of regulatory control, only for this to reappear in different guises over the years. This culminated in the introduction of the 1968 Medicines Act. The regulatory burden was enormous: in 1971 alone PAGB studied 16 draft regulations to mitigate the impact of proposed changes on companies' ability to do their business.

In the 1990s, PAGB worked to ensure new European medicines legislation did not remove existing benefits within the UK, such as advertising self-regulation.

Since 1983, the UK has led the way globally in the number of products and indications reclassified from POM to P. Working with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the Medicines Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has helped PAGB ensure the UK has retained a favourable approach to switching.

Over the years, partnerships with regulatory bodies have become ever closer, most recently with the Better Regulation of Medicines Initiative (BROMI). This was set up in 2005 following a targeted PAGB campaign highlighting excessive red tape when enacting simple packaging changes. A BROMI-initiated self-certification scheme for leaflet information and variations was awarded an EU Better Regulation Award in 2007 with its principles reflected in proposed new EU legislation. PAGB has continued to work with MHRA and AESGP to ensure proportionate regulation from the EU, most recently on the Medical Devices Regulation.

Centenary of PAGB firsts

Date	First....
June 17th 1919	PAGB meeting
1919	Meeting with Minister for Health
1920	Regulatory challenge: the proposed Patents Medicine Bill
1924	Company suspension (Clement & Johnson) for refusing to amend its Yadil advertising
1926	Name change to PAGB
1936	Self-regulated advertising Code in the world
1938	Medical Advisor – Dr Alfred Cox, past-Secretary of the BMA
1939	Time Government asked PAGB to set up an organisation – the Proprietary Medicines Export Group
1942	Became a Limited Company
1947	Advertising Advisory Panel
1948	British Code of Standards of Advertising Relating to the Advertising of Medicines and Treatments introduced – based on the PAGB Code
1956	Special Committee created to discuss European Free Trade
1959	To author a WHO paper on the control of proprietary medicines
1960	Voluntary 'Keep out of reach of children' label introduced by PAGB members
1965	Survey of the UK population's ailments and how they are managed



The voice of the industry

It became clear from the early days of PAGB that having a single unified voice carried greater weight and reduced duplication of work. Part of this was in reducing the negative impact of potential regulatory changes, but it was also to prove valuable in raising the status of the industry.

Expanding the world

Within its first decade, PAGB was liaising with a wide number of Government, trade association and retailer bodies across the world, including Canada, Australia and South Africa to facilitate a favourable export environment for members.

By the late 1950s, a special PAGB Committee was created to examine European Free Trade. In 1962, PAGB became part of a Working Party set up by the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, which comprised Governments, manufacturers and trade associations of 17 countries. This had established that a major obstacle to freer trade was due to the differences in domestic legislation of pharmaceuticals and there was a view to harmonising procedures for registration. This pan-European work prompted manufacturers across Europe to create the Association Européenne des Spécialités Pharmaceutiques Grand Public (AESGP) in 1963.

It was to be another 10 years before the UK joined the European Economic Community, marking *"a new era of opportunity for the development of the British proprietary medicines business in Europe"*. Over 40 years later, the industry once again faces a period of uncertainty as it prepares for the UK's departure from the European Union.

Pharmacy partnerships

Much of PAGB's role in acting on behalf of industry involves working with other stakeholders to raise awareness of the benefits of OTC products and self care. Partnership with pharmacy has been integral since the very first days of the Association, with the first chairs also leaders of pharmacy bodies.

PAGB and pharmacy organisations have fought the loss of Resale Price Maintenance (RPM) on medicines several times during the twentieth century. Moves to drop RPM were first raised in the late 1940s, then again in 1952, discussed throughout the 1960s, and again in the late 1990s. Although RPM was finally lost in 2001, PAGB's work ensured that, for over 50 years, medicines were not treated as ordinary items of commerce and their sale helped to subsidise a significant number of vulnerable pharmacies that may otherwise have ceased to trade.

PAGB worked with pharmacy organisations to commission a review of pharmacy protocols for switched products and created the award-winning Treat Yourself Better campaign in 2014 to drive consumers to pharmacy for winter health advice and promote antibiotic stewardship which was the forerunner to NHS England's Stay Well this Winter and Help Us Help You campaigns that PAGB has been a partner in.

Every customer entering a pharmacy today and self-selecting a GSL (general sale list) medicine has PAGB to thank. These medicines are there due to ground-breaking work between PAGB, the National Pharmacy Association, the Weldrick Group and Whitehall Laboratories on a pilot of open display of GSL products in the pharmacy. Positive customer response to what they perceived as greater medicine choice and more scope to seek pharmacist advice prompted a change in the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Code of Ethics to allow open GSL display.

1972	Associate membership introduced Self Care Panel meeting with doctors and sociologists
1975	Joint public safety campaign with Health Education Council Voluntary introduction of child resistant closures by PAGB members
1978	Joint self care symposium with Health Education Council
1980	Publication on the economics of self-medication
1981	Involvement in developing PIP codes
1981-82	Proposed amends to the Medicines (Prescription Only) Order 1980 to suggest criteria for POM to P switches
1982	Project to help people with poor literacy understand their medicines labels
1983	POM to P switch of Nurofen and Imodium/Arret
1987	Survey in the world on products and packaging
1989	Joint self care conference with DH
1990	Special Committee created to discuss European Free Trade
1991	Food supplements Code
1992	Joint symposium with the Medicines Control Agency on POM to P
1993	OTC Directory for doctors
1996	OTC training programmes launched for doctors and pharmacist

"The Prime Minister said... 'The tide is right and the time is right and the winds are right' for entry into Europe, the pharmaceutical industry has regarded the time as being right for some years."

– PAGB 1966-67



Empowering self care

PAGB's focus on self care has, single-handedly at times, created an environment where it has become a standard pillar of NHS care enshrined within Government documents. It is something that would have been hard to envisage at PAGB's inaugural 1972 meeting of the Panel on Self Care. Ongoing work in that decade resulted in the first self care book and culminated in a 1979 Royal Commission report advocating the move towards greater self care.

PAGB realised in the 1980s that there was a need to gather data on self-medication, self care and consumer behaviour in order to understand how to prompt change. Pioneering work on the economics of self-medication was published in 1980

and, in 1987, PAGB research produced the most comprehensive analysis of how people managed their own health: The Everyday Healthcare Study. This found that although people suffered, on average, five ailments in any two weeks, they were able to discriminate between those that were serious and the majority were managed through self care.

PAGB has repeated this work multiple times and continues to show that further work is required to embed

the principles of self care among both consumers and healthcare professionals: 2008 PAGB research found that 57 million GP consultations for minor ailments accounted for an hour of GP time each week. Educating GPs on the benefits of self care and the availability of suitable products has been essential work over the past 25 years; PAGB launched its first OTC Directory of products to GPs in 1993 and working with NHS managers, patient representatives and the Royal College of General Practitioners developed an e-learning module to support practitioners to conduct self care aware consultations to educate their patients on self care for minor ailments. NHS England has commissioned the Self Care Forum to update this work in 2019, partnering with Health Education England.

PAGB has always preferred to work collaboratively and has actively sought like-minded individuals to help make progress happen. An integrated approach to self care has been fundamental with joint PAGB and NHS self care conferences held to mark the latter's

"Throughout its history PAGB and its member companies have worked to positively shape the environment and ensure people have access to effective self care products. That is a strong foundation to take us into our next 100 years. There will be challenges in the coming years, but as PAGB, we will continue to work hard to shape our future, together."

- John Smith, PAGB Chief Executive (2015-)

significant anniversaries in 1998 and 2008. In 2011, PAGB and the Department of Health founded the Self Care Forum which became a coalition of individuals passionate about embedding self care into everybody's everyday life. At its inaugural meeting, then Health Minister, Paul Burstow invited the Self Care Forum to take over the running of the NHS' Self Care Week, a national awareness week that has gone from strength to strength each year.

Our work to promote self care is ongoing. PAGB's 2019 Self Care White Paper calls for the implementation of a national strategy with policies that will empower more people to self care more of the time.

Summary

Looking back over PAGB's first century it is clear that the original members were incredibly forward-thinking. While the initial objective was to improve advertising standards so consumers could trust the products they purchased, they also understood the imperative to make the environment favourable for manufacturers to do business. PAGB's work in raising self-regulatory standards, providing a world-class service for its members, acting as a unified voice for industry and encouraging people to take care of their own health has not only served the organisation well, but also people and Government too.

Centenary of PAGB firsts

1998	Diploma in OTC Healthcare for industry sales representatives Launch of Consumer Health Information Centre (CHIC)
1999	Research with RCGP to examine self care at the primary care interface Health Supplements Information Service (HSIS) launch
2000	DH NHS plan highlights self care as first level of care
2004	Provided the secretariat for the All Party Group on Primary Care and Public Health (until 2015) Self care continuum presented at the AESGP annual conference
2011	Self Care Forum founded with DH
2012	Online course on minor ailments for GPs and practice nurses
2015	Qualitative research to identify A&E visits for minor conditions
2019	Medical Devices Consumer Code introduced PAGB celebrates a centenary of consumer healthcare

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PAGB Representing the
Consumer Healthcare
Industry since 1919
Then. Now. Tomorrow.