

Ministerial Technicalities

When James McKay broke boundaries by installing the first dispensing robot in Northern Ireland, it turned heads throughout the pharmacy profession and a number of contractors visited the Westminster branch for a preview. Jonathan Lloyd and Helen Murphy followed suit and introduced automation into their own pharmacies, hospital pharmacists began to enhance their existing facilities and now the Health Minister has also emerged as one of pharmacy innovation's plaudits.

Minister Michael McGimpsey made an official visit to McKay Pharmacy recently to watch the robot in action and was suitably impressed with its function, scale and the potential benefits it could offer the patient community. "This new innovation may be a catalyst for the future in the community pharmaceutical industry and comes shortly after I announced the



John and James McKay with Health Minister Michael McGimpsey.

introduction of free prescriptions for all by 2010," the Minister said. "As a first in Northern Ireland for a community pharmacy, this new initiative will deliver a high-quality, controlled prescription dispensing system to customers and I hope this will undoubtedly provide added benefits to members of the public availing of this service." James is confident that the role and value of pharmacy are being increasingly recognised

among Departmental officials and that this visit will help to strengthen relations. "We are delighted that the Minister took time out of his diary to come and visit us and we are very keen to demonstrate the investment into developing our service that we have made," he told NIPinF.

"We believe that the enhancements which we have introduced to our own business are a strategic fit with the Department's own Primary Care strategy which concentrates on treating people in the community setting as close to their homes as possible. Community Pharmacy is very well placed to relieve the current burden that exists on secondary care and acute services. All at McKay Pharmacy were very pleased to have met with the Minister, who made some very encouraging comments about both our technology and our team."



Minister McGimpsey with Glynis Hinds, who has been part of the McKay Pharmacy team for 16 years.