



Thursday 16th July 2009

**NEW PHARMACY LEGISLATION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
VITAL TO CONTINUING PROGRESS IN PROTECTING
PATIENT SAFETY**

The Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (CHRE) has once more recommended that new legislation be introduced to modernise the regulatory framework for pharmacy in Northern Ireland.

In its annual performance review of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the CHRE found that the Northern Ireland pharmacy regulator had made "significant progress" in 2008/09, "even though its legislation still limits its ability to perform its functions better".

The CHRE also praised the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland for a number of innovative initiatives undertaken in 2008/09, including:

- Regular updates provided to complainants during fitness to practise proceedings;
- A requirement that all potential registrants sign a personal declaration that they will comply with a Code of Ethics;
- The "significant amount of work undertaken" to engage Northern Ireland pharmacists and the public in its work
- The construction of a Complaints Allocation Panel to ensure co-ordination between the pharmacy regulator, the pharmacy inspectorate and employers on pharmacy Fitness to Practise matters
- The independent appointment and training of Fitness to Practise panel members;
- Initiatives to encourage information-sharing and harmonisation of regulatory approaches with its counterpart in the Republic of Ireland.

Commenting on the Performance Review, Trevor Patterson, Director of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland, said: *"I am pleased that the non-statutory improvements introduced to pharmacy regulation in Northern Ireland in the last year have been recognised and praised by the CHRE. The next piece of the jigsaw is achieving a new legislative framework for pharmacy regulation in Northern Ireland, something we're working closely with Department of Health officials in Belfast to achieve. The Assembly has voted unanimously for that to happen, and I hope we can provide it to them within the year."*

ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland is the regulatory body for pharmacy in Northern Ireland. Its principal objective is the protection of patient safety in the provision of pharmacy services in Northern Ireland.
2. The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland is working with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to develop legislation that will introduce:
 - A fully appointed Governing Council, made up of 50% lay and 50% pharmacist membership
 - Completion of Continuing Professional Development as a mandatory condition of registering as a pharmacist in Northern Ireland
 - New powers for the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland's Fitness to Practise Committee to impose a wider range of sanctions against pharmacists whose conduct or performance has brought their registration into question
3. On the 27 May 2008 the Northern Ireland Assembly voted unanimously for new pharmacy regulation for Northern Ireland. A transcript of the debate is available here:
<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/reports2007/080527.htm#10>
4. The full CHRE Performance Review 2008/09 is available to view here and was published on 3rd July 2009:
http://www.chre.org.uk/img/pics/library/090702_Peformance_Review_Report_2008-09_1.pdf