

MAKING COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHARMACISTS, PHARMACIES AND OWNERS OF PHARMACIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

This leaflet tells you what you can do if you, or someone close to you, is unhappy about the way you have been treated by a pharmacist in Northern Ireland. It is the pharmaceutical society of Northern Ireland's job to ensure that all pharmacists care for you properly. If they don't, we need to hear about it, find out what happened and do something about it.

ABOUT US

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (the Society) is the regulatory and professional body for pharmacists. All pharmacists who practise in Northern Ireland must be registered with the Society. All pharmacies are inspected by the Pharmacy Inspectors of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). The Society is responsible for ensuring that all pharmacists, working in hospitals or community pharmacies, pharmacy owners and pharmacy managers adhere to the Society's code of ethics and the laws relating to medicines and poisons.

A pharmacist's prime concern, wherever they work, must be for the well being and safety of patients and the public.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM A PHARMACIST?

You can expect that pharmacists will:

- Be properly trained, qualified and have up to date knowledge and skills;
- Act in the best interest of the patient and the public;
- Always treat you with respect and dignity;
- Never do anything to harm you;
- Keep their relationship with you on a professional level at all times.

WHAT CAN THE SOCIETY DEAL WITH?

- Complaints about the professional service provided by a pharmacist / pharmacy at all levels of healthcare e.g. a dispensing error, wrong labelling, or out of date medicine supplied;
- Complaints about the conduct of a pharmacist, e.g. unprofessional behaviour;
- Complaints against owners of pharmacies, including companies and pharmacy chains.

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT TO THE SOCIETY

Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the event.
Please send your complaint either:

1. In writing to the

Complaint's Manager
Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland,
73 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1HL or;

2. By email to: <mailto:complaints@psni.org.uk> or;

3. By fax to 02890 439919

Please include:

- ✓ Your name and address;
- ✓ Daytime telephone number on which you may be contacted;
- ✓ Name and address of pharmacy / pharmacist concerned;
- ✓ Brief outline of your complaint;
- ✓ Date of the incident;
- ✓ Whether any harm has been caused;
- ✓ Any other action you have taken to resolve the complaint;

Please do not send any evidence or medicines to the Society

Don't worry if you are unsure about whether to complain or not please telephone (Tel: 028 90326927) and one of our staff will discuss your concerns with you.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU HAVE MADE A COMPLAINT?

- The Society will write to you, within 5 working days of receiving your complaint, to confirm that it has been received;
- The Registrar will carry out an initial screening of your complaint;
- The Registrar may refer the complaint to the Health & Social Care Board or to the DHSSPS Inspectorate;
- A member of the DHSSPS Inspectorate may contact you and make arrangements to discuss your complaint with you, and to obtain any necessary further information or evidence;
- Following investigation your complaint may be referred to the Statutory Committee;
- This may result in an evidential hearing.

WHAT CAN THE STATUTORY COMMITTEE DO?

The Statutory Committee will meet to inquire into the matter and depending on the outcome of the case the Committee may:

- Remove the pharmacists name from the register.
- Take no further action

WHAT CAN THE SOCIETY NOT DEAL WITH?

- Claims for compensation;
- Complaints regarding other health professionals;
- Employment issues e.g. hours of work, contracts;
- Non-medical products e.g. faulty hairsprays etc;
- Contractual issues, e.g. hours of opening, charges for private prescriptions;

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

In the first instance you should speak to the pharmacist regarding your complaint so that your concerns can be dealt with locally if possible.

If your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, and it is about medicines or services you received as a Health Service patient, you can complain to the Health and Social Care Board.

NORTHERN IRELAND HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE BOARD

Belfast Commissioning Group	02890 321313
Northern Commissioning Group	02825 311000
Southern Commissioning Group	02837 410041
Western Commissioning Group	02871 860086

Or email at Complaints.hscb@hscni.net

If you wish to receive advice or assistance with a claim for compensation you must seek professional help from a solicitor or Citizen's Advice bureau.

Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (CHRE)

CHRE is an organisation that promotes best practice and consistency in regulating healthcare professionals by the nine healthcare regulatory bodies, including us.

All decisions of the Society's Statutory Committee are automatically sent to CHRE. If CHRE considers any decision taken by the Society's Statutory Committee to be 'unduly lenient' it has the power to refer it to the High Court. CHRE also now audit all complaints resulting in 'No further action'.

OTHER REGULATORS

We cannot consider complaints against the following groups. The organisations that can consider these complaints are listed below:

Profession	Regulator	Phone	Website
Chiropractors	General Chiropractic Council	020 7713 5155	www.gcc-uk.org
Doctors	General Medical Council	0845 357 8001	www.gmc-uk.org
Dentists	General Dental Council	020 7887 3800	www.gdc-uk.org
Nurses & Midwives	Nursing and Midwifery Council	020 7637 7181	www.nmc-uk.org
Opticians	General Optical Council	020 7580 3898	www.optical.org
Osteopaths	General Osteopathic Council	020 7357 6655	www.osteopathy.org.uk
Pharmacists & Pharmacy Technicians in England, Scotland & Wales	Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain	020 7735 9141	www.rpsgb.org.uk