

## STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides information to pharmacists in Northern Ireland on changes to doctors prescribing rights, effective from 16 November 2009<sup>1</sup>.

### 1. BACKGROUND

The General Medical Council (GMC), the regulatory body for doctors in Northern Ireland, has introduced a new “**licence to practise**” for doctors. This is **in addition** to the current legal requirement for them to be registered with the GMC and forms part of the mechanism for introducing revalidation, or “relicensing”, requirements upon doctors.

### 2. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME AS A PHARMACIST?

Doctors must now be licensed to undertake any form of medical practise for which UK law currently requires them to hold GMC registration – **including writing prescriptions**. The licensing requirement applies equally to all doctors, whether full time, part time, private, in the NHS or locum.

Doctors may, however, register with the GMC but not hold a licence to practise, so long as they continue to fulfil CPD requirements and desist from medical practise

Therefore, pharmacists who wish to check both the registration status and whether a doctor holds a licence to practise, should refer to the relevant section of the General Medical Council website:

[http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/medical\\_register.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/medical_register.asp)

### 3. THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION

Prescriptions presented to pharmacists that originate from other EEA countries will not need to have been issued from a doctor registered and licensed with the GMC. However, when dispensing such prescriptions, pharmacists should ensure they abide by the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland's guidance on this matter. The guidance includes a description of the legal requirements upon pharmacists on dispensing EEA prescriptions:

<http://www.psni.org.uk/documents/430/Dispensing+European+Economic+Area+prescriptions+2009-05.pdf>

Further information, guidance or advice on the professional or legal obligations of the pharmacy profession in Northern Ireland can be obtained by contacting the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland on 028 9032 6927 or by e-mail [info@psni.org.uk](mailto:info@psni.org.uk).

<sup>1</sup> The Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) Order 2002 SI 2002/3135  
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2002/20023135.htm>