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Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland publish new guidance to pharmacists on prescription collection and/or delivery services

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland has published new professional guidance to pharmacists on the provision of prescription collection and/or delivery services. The guidance is designed to assist pharmacists in delivering high quality, safe, and efficacious care to patients, and supplements the Pharmaceutical Society's existing professional Standards for pharmacists on the matter. The guidance is the result of a wide-ranging consultation with patients and professionals in 2010. The guidance is primarily targeted at ensuring safe delivery of medicines to patients.

Matters covered within the guidance include:

- the pharmacist's professional accountability for systems in operation;
- the need to obtain and record a patient's consent for prescription collection and/or delivery services;
- suggestions on maintaining appropriate audit trails;
- appropriate management of risk in relation to the dispensing and delivery of Controlled Drugs within a prescription collection and/or delivery service;
- ensuring there is contact with patients for the purposes of medicines advice; and,
- collection and/or delivery services within the context of hospital pharmacy.

Commenting on the new guidance, Brendan Kerr, Registrar of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland, said:

"I hope pharmacists in Northern Ireland will find the guidance a useful adjunct to their existing safety and quality frameworks. That is its key purpose. I would also like to place on record my thanks to the members of the public, and the profession who contributed to its development throughout 2010. "

ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The new supplementary guidance is available here:

<http://www.psni.org.uk/documents/766/PSNISUPPGUIDANCEONCOLLECTIONANDELIVERYV1FEB11.pdf>

2. The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland is the regulatory body for pharmacy in Northern Ireland. It protects public safety in pharmacy by:

- setting and promoting standards for pharmacists' admission to the register and for remaining on the register;
- maintaining a publicly accessible register of pharmacists, and pharmacy premises, in Northern Ireland;
- handling concerns about the Fitness to Practise of registrants, acting as a complaints portal and taking action to protect the public; and
- ensuring high standards of education and training for pharmacists in Northern Ireland.

As the professional body it seeks to develop the pharmacy profession in Northern Ireland in the public interest. In future, this role will be conducted by a Professional Forum.

3. Serious patient safety issues can occur in the context of a prescription collection and/or delivery service, without appropriate governance and processes. These risks include, but are not limited to:

- the delivery of incorrect medicines to a patient;
- non-delivery of medicines due to errors in the delivery service;
- inadvertent breach of a patient's confidentiality; and
- patient safety incidents with medicines as a result of reduced clinical governance and oversight by the pharmacist.

4. The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland has pre-existing Professional Standards (a mandatory expectation by the regulator) for pharmacists on prescription collection and/or delivery services within its *Professional Standards and Guidance for the Sale and Supply of Medicines* (see sections 6 and 7). The document is available here:

<http://www.psni.org.uk/documents/313/Standards+on+Sale+and+Supply+of+Medicines.pdf>

f. The new guidance supplements these Standards.