

THE CODE OF CONDUCT

February 2015

ABOUT THE PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland is the regulatory body for pharmacists in Northern Ireland.

Our primary purpose is to ensure that practising pharmacists are fit to practise, keep their skills and knowledge up to date and deliver high quality safe care to patients.

It is the organisation's responsibility to protect and maintain patient and public safety in pharmacy by:

- setting and promoting standards for admission to and retention on the Registers;
- maintaining publicly accessible Registers of pharmacists, pre-registration students and pharmacy premises;
- handling concerns about the fitness to practise¹ of pharmacists, acting as a complaints portal and taking action to protect the public; and
- ensuring high standards of education and training for pharmacists and pre-registration students in Northern Ireland.

All pharmacists and pre-registration students are responsible for their conduct, personal behaviour and professional practice and must be able to justify their actions and decisions.

INTRODUCTION

The Council of Pharmaceutical Society NI is required by the Pharmacy (1976 Order) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012, Schedule 3, Fitness to Practise 1 (1a) to '*set standards relating to the conduct, ethics and performance expected of a registered person*'.

The *Code of Conduct* of the Pharmaceutical Society NI outlines the standard of conduct, practice and professional performance expected of all registrants. It supports the organisation's regulatory policies and procedures including future proposals for introducing a new process for assuring registrants' continuing fitness to practise². The Code of Conduct underpins all other professional standards and guidance documents issued by the regulator.

The *Code of Conduct* is intended to guide and support registrants in their area of practice, professional development and decision-making. The *Code of Conduct* facilitates innovation and development of pharmacy practice whilst ensuring the consistent delivery of professional standards.

This document sets out broad *principles, professional standards and regulatory statements* which apply equally to all registrants.

¹ A statement explaining the purpose of the fitness to practise processes for the nine UK healthcare regulators is published on the website of the Professional Standards Authority at: <http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/default-source/psa-library/140704-purpose-of-ftp-processes-final-statement---for-web.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

² "The concept assuring continuing fitness to practise implies a proactive approach to assuring that practitioners continue to meet standards of conduct, behaviour and competence, in contrast to the more reactive systems that are in place to deal retrospectively with conduct, behaviour or competence when something has gone wrong, also referred to under the rubric of 'fitness to practise'" taken from, *Assuring continuing fitness to practise – a report for the Pharmaceutical Society NI*, January 2014.

There are circumstances where the professional and personal conduct of the registrant will be examined and determined against the *Code of Conduct*. A breach of the *Code of Conduct* may bring a registrant's fitness to practise into question and may lead to a consideration of impairment in relation to the registrant's Fitness to Practise.

All registrants have a responsibility to be conversant with the laws and regulations that affect their professional practice and to comply with them. At all times, the registrant must:

- exercise professional judgement in the best interests of patient and public safety
- uphold the reputation and good name of the profession
- keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date and relevant to their scope of practice
- be accountable for professional practice
- establish and maintain good relationships with others
- be answerable for any acts and/or omissions, regardless of the advice or directions from a manager, employer or another professional, and
- justify their actions when asked to do so.

PATIENT AND PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS

The *Code of Conduct*:

- reinforces to patients and the public that the pharmacy profession has a professional obligation to put their interests first and foremost
- informs the general public of the standards of behaviour and conduct that can be expected from the pharmacy profession
- builds public confidence in the profession, and, importantly
- enhances quality in standards of patient care whilst assuring patient and public safety.

LANGUAGE/TERMINOLOGY

Users of pharmacy services include patients, clients, carers, customers or service users, other healthcare professionals and members of the public.

The *Code of Conduct* uses the term 'patient(s)' to encompass:

- any individual(s) or groups who access or are affected by professional pharmacy services or advice.
- any animal whose owner accesses a veterinary pharmacy service on their behalf.

Throughout this document we use the word '**must**' and where this is used a registrant is expected to comply with the requirements.

The Code of Conduct sets out the professional standards of conduct expected of a registrant in *five principles* of professional practice.

PRINCIPLE 1: PUT THE PATIENT FIRST
1.1 TREAT THOSE IN YOUR CARE WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY
1.2 UPHOLD THE DUTY OF CANDOUR AND RAISE CONCERNS APPROPRIATELY
1.3 MAINTAIN AND PROTECT CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION
1.4 OBTAIN PATIENT CONSENT

PRINCIPLE 2: SAFETY AND QUALITY
2.1 PROVIDE SAFE, EFFECTIVE AND QUALITY CARE
2.2 MANAGE RISK

PRINCIPLE 3: MAINTAINING TRUST
3.1 ACT WITH HONESTY AND INTEGRITY
3.2 MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES
3.3 USE SOCIAL NETWORKING AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION APPROPRIATELY
3.4 BE OPEN AND HONEST ABOUT LEGAL OR DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

PRINCIPLE 4: COMMUNICATIONS, PARTNERSHIP AND TEAMWORK
4.1 COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY
4.2 ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH PATIENTS
4.3 WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH COLLEAGUES
4.4 SUPERVISE AND DELEGATE EFFECTIVELY

PRINCIPLE 5: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCE
5.1 MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCE
5.2 APPLY KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE
5.3 RECORD, STORE AND PROCESS DATA CLEARLY AND ACCURATELY

PRINCIPLE 1: PUT THE PATIENT FIRST³

The care of the patient must be your prime concern and must come before all other considerations. You must always work with patients and other users of pharmacy services to achieve their healthcare goals.

If you have concerns about patient safety you have a duty to raise your concerns.

Patients and other users of pharmacy services must feel supported if something goes wrong and be offered an appropriate remedy.

You must:

STANDARD 1.1: TREAT THOSE IN YOUR CARE WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY
1.1.1 Consider and act in the best interests of the users of pharmacy services.
1.1.2 Act always with integrity, sensitivity and understanding.
1.1.3 Respect diversity in the cultural differences, beliefs and value-systems of others.
1.1.4 If, for any reason, you are unable to provide a professional service you have a professional responsibility to refer the user of pharmacy services to an alternative provider for the service they require.
STANDARD 1.2: UPHOLD THE DUTY OF CANDOUR⁴ AND RAISE CONCERNS APPROPRIATELY
1.2.1 Contribute to and foster a culture of openness, honesty and learning.
1.2.2 Make sure there is an effective complaints procedure readily available for users of pharmacy services and follow that procedure at all times.
1.2.3 Respond quickly and appropriately to any complaint about the care or service you provide and escalate where appropriate.
1.2.4 When something goes wrong, explain fully to the users of pharmacy services the short and long term effects of what has happened: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• offer an appropriate remedy, for example, an apology.• provide support to put matters right, if possible.
1.2.5 Be open and honest with users of pharmacy services, colleagues, employers and where appropriate contact the relevant organisations when something goes wrong.

³ This is one of the key recommendations from *the Report of the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry* (the *Francis Report*, 2013), <http://www.midstaffpublicinquiry.com/>

⁴ "Uphold your professional duty of candour by being open and honest with patients (and, where appropriate, the patient's advocate, carer or family) when something goes wrong with their treatment or care which causes, or has the potential to cause, harm or distress." Taken from the joint statement on 'candour' issued from the Chief Executives of eight out of nine UK healthcare professionals statutory regulators, published 13 October 2014.

1.2.6 Make sure if you employ, manage or lead staff that there is an effective procedure in place that allows staff to raise concerns openly and safely without fear of reprisals.
1.2.7 Raise concerns if you become aware of a colleague or other health care professional whose actions, working practices, professional performance or health may compromise patient safety.
1.2.8 Co-operate with any investigation into the fitness to practise of either yourself or another healthcare professional.
1.2.9 Abide by any undertakings you give and/or any restrictions placed on your practice.
STANDARD 1.3: MAINTAIN AND PROTECT CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION
1.3.1 Respect the confidentiality of information, professional or otherwise, acquired in the course of professional practice and only use it for the purposes for which it is given and in compliance with current legislation.
1.3.2 Maintain systems which ensure security of information and prevent unauthorised access to it.
1.3.3 Ensure that all who have access to patient or other service user's information know and maintain its confidential nature.
1.3.4 Ensure that confidential information is not disclosed without consent, except where legally permitted or in exceptional circumstances.
STANDARD 1.4: OBTAIN PATIENT CONSENT
1.4.1 Involve the patient or their carer in decisions about their care.
1.4.2 Respect the right of patients to refuse to take their medicines or to receive treatment or care.
1.4.3 Ensure you record, where appropriate, patient consent either in writing or electronically before providing a professional service and at appropriate intervals during the service provision.

PRINCIPLE 2: SAFETY AND QUALITY

Patient safety is essential and at the heart of quality patient care.

Deliver high quality patient-centred care in a managed and safe environment by having working systems which are effective, simple and clear. Proactively identify potential areas of risk in your practice and utilise learnings when things go wrong.

Ensure that all roles and responsibilities for functions related to the safety and quality of pharmacy services are clearly defined and governed.

Ensure that your practice reflects on the principles and values espoused in Quality 2020⁵.

You must:

STANDARD 2.1: PROVIDE SAFE, EFFECTIVE AND QUALITY CARE
2.1.1 Promote the safe, effective and rational use of medicines, medicinal products and therapies.
2.1.2 Effectively control the sale or supply of medicinal and related products paying particular attention to those with a potential for abuse or dependency.
2.1.3 Be satisfied that appropriate standard operating procedures (SOPs) exist, are adhered to, monitored and revised as appropriate, and that clear lines of accountability and verifiable audit trails are in place.
2.1.4 Ensure that both you and those you employ or supervise have an appropriate level of language competence or skills.
2.1.5 Ensure that workload or working conditions do not compromise patient care or public safety.
2.1.6 Make sure that your actions do not prevent others from complying with their legal or professional obligations, or present a risk to patient care or public safety.
2.1.7 Ensure that all professional activities undertaken by you, or under your control, are covered by appropriate professional indemnity arrangements.
2.1.8 Purchase medicines only from suppliers and sources known to be reputable to ensure the safety, quality and efficacy of products supplied to patients.
2.1.9 Ensure you have the facilities, equipment and materials necessary to provide services to professionally acceptable standards.
2.1.10 Ensure that patients have safe and timely access to their medicines and pharmaceutical care.
2.1.11 Ensure that all patient consultations take place in an appropriate environment.
2.1.12 Take appropriate action to provide care and reduce risks to users of pharmacy services, taking

⁵ Quality 2020 can be accessed at http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/quality_2020_-_a_10-year_quality_strategy_for_health_and_social_care_in_northern_ireland.pdf

into account your competence and other options for assistance or care available.
2.1.13 Avoid treating yourself or anyone with whom you have a close personal relationship except for minor ailments or in an emergency.
2.1.14 Ensure you are aware of and adhere to all relevant regulations, standards and guidance which apply to your pharmacy practice.
STANDARD 2.2: MANAGE RISK
2.2.1 Undertake regular risk assessment in relation to your professional services.
2.2.2 Apprise staff of medication safety issues, identify areas of high-risk practice and implement procedures and processes to minimise medication safety risks or issues.
2.2.3 Take prompt action to prevent, minimise, resolve and follow up any issues that might arise in your practice including medicines related problems.
2.2.4 Keep abreast of medication safety alerts and other publications to ensure the safety and quality of pharmacy services.
2.2.5 Contribute appropriately to 'near-miss' and error reporting systems.

PRINCIPLE 3: MAINTAINING TRUST

Your professional values, behaviours, and relationships must be above reproach at all times and justify the trust patients and the public put in you as a professional.

You must:

STANDARD 3.1: ACT WITH HONESTY AND INTEGRITY
3.1.1 Demonstrate high standards of personal and professional conduct at all times both inside and outside your work environment.
3.1.2 Maintain proper and appropriate relationships with individual patients. Take special care when dealing with vulnerable individuals, both adults and children.
3.1.3 Ensure that your professional judgement is not impaired by personal or commercial interests, incentives, targets or similar measures.
3.1.4 Maintain public trust and confidence in your profession by acting with honesty and integrity in your dealings with others. This applies to your professional, business and education activities.
3.1.5 Provide information, whether written or spoken, accurately and unambiguously. Do not make claims that cannot be justified.
3.1.6 Honour commitments, agreements and arrangements for the provision of professional services.
3.1.7 Conduct research and development with integrity and obtain any necessary approval from the appropriate authorities.
STANDARD 3.2: MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES
3.2.1 Maintain clear professional boundaries at all times with the users of pharmacy services.
3.2.2 Ensure that patient care and public confidence are not compromised by any real or perceived conflicts of interest. This prevents the reception of gifts, favours, hospitality or referrals that may compromise, or be perceived to compromise, professional judgement. Declare any personal or professional interests to those who may be affected where appropriate.
STANDARD 3.3: USE SOCIAL NETWORKING AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION APPROPRIATELY
3.3.1 Ensure appropriate and responsible use of social networking sites and other forms of electronic communication.
STANDARD 3.4: BE OPEN AND HONEST ABOUT LEGAL OR DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS
3.4.1 Promptly inform the regulator, your employer and other relevant authorities of any

circumstances that may call into question your fitness to practise or bring the pharmacy profession into disrepute.

PRINCIPLE 4: COMMUNICATION, PARTNERSHIP AND TEAMWORK

Good communication is at the heart of effective working relationships with the users of pharmacy services, colleagues and other healthcare professionals; this builds confidence and respect across all areas of the healthcare team. The most important part in effective team working is that you respect each other's roles and understand what you are accountable for.

Be a role model for other registrants and for colleagues in the broader multi-professional healthcare team.

You must:

STANDARD 4.1: COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY
4.1.1 Listen to the users of pharmacy services and respond to their need(s).
4.1.2 Ensure that information is relevant and appropriate and ensure as far as possible that the users of pharmacy services are given the opportunity to speak to the appropriate professional.
4.1.3 Ensure that reasonable steps are taken to meet the users of pharmacy services language and communication needs.
4.1.4 Build positive relationships with users of pharmacy services, colleagues and other healthcare professionals.
4.1.5 Demonstrate effective communication skills to resolve any issues or problems.
STANDARD 4.2: ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH PATIENTS
4.2.1 Take all reasonable steps to provide information that the patient (and/or their carer) requires about their treatment and care, in a way that they can understand so they are supported to use or take their medicines properly.
4.2.2 Ensure that the patient (and/or their carer) is involved in decisions about their treatment and care.
4.2.3 Encourage patients to be knowledgeable about their medicines.
4.2.4 Assess and take steps to address factors that may support patients in obtaining or taking their treatment.
STANDARD 4.3: WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH COLLEAGUES
4.3.1 Treat colleagues in a professional manner at all times.
4.3.2 Work effectively as part of the pharmacy team and the multi-professional healthcare team.
4.3.3 Understand the organisational and management structure of your place of work.

4.3.4 Work effectively within the governance arrangements of the organisation in which you work.

4.3.5 Be aware of how your conduct and behaviour may influence and impact on others within and outside the team.

4.3.6 Subject to *paragraph 1.3.1 (above)* ensure that information is shared appropriately with other health and social care professionals involved in the care of the patient and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

4.3.7 Work in partnership with other health and social care professionals to manage the treatment and care of users of pharmacy services and signpost or refer to other relevant organisations where appropriate.

STANDARD 4.4: SUPERVISE AND DELEGATE EFFECTIVELY

4.4.1 Take responsibility for all work carried out by you or others under your supervision.

4.4.2 Ensure that individuals to whom you delegate tasks are competent and fit to practise and have undertaken, or are in the process of undertaking, the training required for their duties.

4.4.3 Ensure the provision of a high standard of professional service by you or those working under your direct supervision.

4.4.4 Contribute to the development, education and training of colleagues and students, sharing relevant knowledge, skills and expertise.

4.4.5 Take all reasonable steps to ensure that those persons you employ or supervise comply with all legal and professional requirements and best practice guidance.

4.4.6 Be honest and objective when appraising the performance of others.

4.4.7 Provide honest and accurate information when writing reports.

4.4.8 Support others with performance or health issues with due regard for patient and public safety.

PRINCIPLE 5: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCE

The greatest benefit to patient safety will be achieved by keeping your knowledge, skills and competence up to date throughout your working life. Lifelong learning enables you to keep abreast of change in your area of professional practice and is essential for the safe and effective practice of pharmacy.

Reflect continually on your practice and when necessary translate that reflection into action. Maintain a professional development portfolio recording your reflections, learning aims and outcomes.

Apply new knowledge, skill and experience in order to maintain the highest standards of professional practice and patient-centred care.

You must:

STANDARD 5.1: MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCE
5.1.1 Practise only when you are competent and fit to do so.
5.1.2 Identify development needs and undertake continuing professional development (CPD) relevant to your area of practice and maintain appropriate records.
5.1.3 Keep your knowledge and skills up to date, evidence-based and relevant to your scope of practice.
STANDARD 5.2: APPLY KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE
5.2.1 Apply your knowledge and experience appropriately to your area of practice
5.2.2 Ensure the clinical appropriateness of medicines supplied to patients and members of the public.
5.2.3 Ensure you deliver patient-centred pharmaceutical care based on best practice.
STANDARD 5.3: RECORD, STORE AND PROCESS DATA CLEARLY AND ACCURATELY
5.3.1 Complete records promptly or as soon as practically possible after the patient intervention or activity has occurred.
5.3.2 Do not tamper with patient records in any way.
5.3.3 Ensure all entries in any record are accurate, clearly and legibly written and attributable.
5.3.4 Keep all records securely and in an organised manner and for the appropriate period of time.

STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

The Pharmaceutical Society NI has issued the following documents to underpin the *Code of Conduct*:

Glossary of terms

Scope of practice: describes the areas of practice in which you have the knowledge, skills and experience to practise safely and effectively in the best interests of patients.