

Welcome to update

In this edition we look at three ongoing consultations which have implications for pharmacists:

- the Pharmaceutical Society NI's new Code of Conduct for all registrants;
- the Department of Health's consultation on proposals to address the prospect of criminal prosecutions for dispensing errors; and
- proposals that will allow the Pharmaceutical Society NI to fully implement new policies on English language testing for pharmacists from EU countries.

We also provide a recap on mandatory Continuing Professional Development and offer tips to help you navigate the submission process.

This issue also includes useful information on things you should consider if you are thinking of leaving the Register and some Pre-registration reminders.

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Review previous editions

You can read previous editions of our Regulatory Update [here](#)

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New Code of Conduct

The Pharmaceutical Society NI has recently launched a consultation on a new Code of Conduct for all pharmacists in Northern Ireland, to replace the previous Code of Ethics. The new Code of Conduct will underpin all pharmacy regulation in Northern Ireland, will be an integral part of maintaining patient safety and will have an impact on how pharmacists do their job.

'The new Code of Conduct is the single-most important document the Pharmaceutical Society of NI produces. It sets out the professional standards, behaviour and conduct the public can expect from a pharmacist when accessing pharmaceutical care'.



Protecting the public

The Regulator's primary responsibility is to protect and maintain public safety in respect of the profession of pharmacy. This is done by ensuring that registered pharmacists in Northern Ireland are fit to practise, keep their skills and knowledge up to date, and deliver high quality safe care to patients.

In this regard the new Code of Conduct is the single-most important document the Regulator produces. It sets out the professional standards, behaviour and conduct the public can expect from a pharmacist when accessing pharmaceutical care. It underpins the regulatory functions of the organisation and is intended to guide and support pharmacy registrants in their area of practice, professional development and decision-making.

Replacing the Code of Ethics

The existing *Code of Ethics* has been in use for five years and in that time new legislation has been introduced, pharmacy practice has changed and the focus of healthcare regulation throughout the United Kingdom has evolved.

We want your views

An extensive process of reviewing and updating the current *Code of Ethics* has been undertaken with stakeholders; your views are keenly sought on the draft outcome of this work.

The full consultation document and supplementary questionnaire can be accessed online on the Pharmaceutical Society NI website: <http://www.psn.org.uk/publications/consultations/>

Consultation events

Three consultation events have been organised to discuss these proposed changes, places can be booked by clicking on the following links:

- [14 April 2015 at 7.00pm in Belfast](#)
- [23 April 2015 at 7.00pm in Cookstown](#)
- [30 April 2015 at 7.00pm in Belfast](#)

Criminal prosecutions for dispensing errors—developing a defence

Pharmacists, like all health professionals, must be held to account for their actions, however,



the current law means an unintentional dispensing error could lead automatically to a criminal prosecution. This approach has been recognised as outdated and disproportionate. The current law also acts as a disincentive to error reporting; preventing learning from mistakes and potentially increasing the risk to the public.

Regulatory approach

The Department of Health (London) is proposing to provide defences against criminal prosecution where certain conditions exist, whilst retaining the right to prosecute in the case of malicious behaviour or gross unprofessionalism.

It is proposed that primarily the Pharmaceutical Society NI uses its powers to deal with dispensing errors in the future; these include a range of sanctions from advice, through warning and suspension to removal from the register and consequent inability to practise as a pharmacist.

The role of the pharmacist is a very important one; patients rely on their pharmacists to dispense medicines safely and accurately. This is why developing a culture of accountability, honesty and transparency is vitally important.

Your views are important

A UK-wide consultation has been issued on behalf of the four UK health departments, which closes on **14 May 2015**. We would encourage registrants to respond. Consultation documents can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/pharmacy-legislation-on-dispensing-errors-and-standards>

Joint consultation event:

- [Monday 23 March, 7.00pm, Belfast](#)

Delivering English language tests in Northern Ireland

In order to ensure that the Pharmaceutical Society NI can fully implement the policy aims of the UK Government in relations to English language tests for pharmacists, the Pharmaceutical Society NI requires a change to its Regulations (The Registration of Pharmaceutical Chemists (Exempt Persons) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008).

The Mutual Recognition of Profession Qualifications (MRPQ) Directive sets certain time limits concerning the time it takes for a Registrar of a Regulatory body to process applications to the Register for European citizens. In relation to the Pharmaceutical Society NI these time limits are included in the Registration of Pharmaceutical Chemists (Exempt Persons) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008.

Time limits

As the time taken for the applicant to provide evidence of English language competency is outside of the control of the Registrar, the main purpose of these proposed amendment regulations is to introduce provision for the Pharmaceutical Society NI so that the time limits can be suspended during any period when a European applicant has been requested to supply evidence, information or documents about English Language competency, or during any period in which such an applicant has been asked to sit a test and provide evidence about the results. Once such evidence has been provided the time limits for the application process is re-started.

Your views are important

In partnership with the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), we have proposed amendment regulations and are seeking your views.

The consultation will close at noon **27 April 2015**.

Further information on the consultation and how to respond can be found at: <http://www.psni.org.uk/publications/consultations/>

Continuing Professional Development - getting it right

The submission deadline for the CPD year of 2014/15, is midnight 31 May 2015. Here we provide you with a quick reminder of the resources available to help you successfully complete your submission, some timely reminders and helpful tips.

Online submissions

An impressive 99% of registrants recorded their CPD online last year (2013/14) and we aim to repeat this again in CPD year 2014/15. Where possible, we would encourage all registrants to record and submit their CPD portfolio online.

In light of learnings from the online submission process for the first year we have made some subtle changes to the online system. From 1 April 2015 you will notice a change to the 'look and feel' of our CPD online system. Not only will it look different, it will also be more intuitive, easier to navigate and ultimately more user-friendly.

Paper submissions

If you are submitting a paper portfolio you must provide two copies (one original and one anonymised photocopy). Both copies must be received by our offices before **31 May 2015**. If posting, send by recorded delivery.



If you haven't already done so please start recording your CPD cycles for CPD year 2014/15, in readiness for annual submission.

Failure to complete

If you fail to submit a CPD portfolio by the submission deadline without being granted an application for extenuating circumstances you will be considered non-compliant with your statutory CPD requirements. This may result in removal of your registration status in accordance with Articles 5 to 8 of the CPD regulations.

Getting a receipt

Once a portfolio has been received by the Pharmaceutical Society NI, an acknowledgement will be sent either electronically for online portfolios or by post for paper portfolios.



The online acknowledgement will be sent automatically the instant you make your portfolio submission online. If you make a paper submission a postal acknowledgement should reach you within five working days. If you do not receive an acknowledgement make contact with the organisation's offices to report this. Keep the acknowledgement as proof of your portfolio submission.

Help is at hand

Numerous support materials are available online should you wish to avail of these. These include:

- [CPD Assessment Guide](#)
- [CPD Online Manual](#)

Facilitation advice and support is also available via the [Pharmacy Forum](#).

Should you have any questions regarding your statutory CPD requirements or the submission process please refer, in the first instance, to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) in the CPD section of the organisation's CPD website. Or contact the Post-registration Lead at michelle.mccorry@psni.org.uk.

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Thinking of leaving the Register?

One of the ways in which the Pharmaceutical Society NI maintains public safety and confidence in the pharmacy profession is by ensuring all registered pharmacists carry out annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This statutory requirement has implications for those registrants who are thinking of leaving the Register.

If a Registrant applies to leave the Register of Pharmaceutical Chemists of Northern Ireland and has not submitted a CPD portfolio for the current CPD year, they will not be automatically restored to the Register upon a future application.

Options

If you are thinking of leaving the Register you have one of two options in this regard:

1. You can submit a CPD portfolio for the existing CPD year **before** you withdraw from the Register; or
2. You can complete your **outstanding** CPD portfolio on reapplication to the Register.

Registrants should note that on reapplying to enter the Register you will be asked to complete a CPD portfolio for the year in which you left the Register. This is necessary to ensure that pharmacists do not leave the Register as a means of avoiding their statutory CPD requirements. This approach ensures those on the Register are Fit to Practise; maintaining public safety and confidence in the Profession.



Submit if you leave

In the interest of Registrants who are thinking of leaving the Register, but who might potentially apply for restoration at a later date, the Pharmaceutical Society NI recommends that you submit a complete CPD portfolio for the year in which you apply to leave.

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Pre-registration Reminders

Pre-registration 2015-16

Information regarding applications for pre-registration training 2015-16 can be found by visiting the following link:

<http://www.psni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/PR-Application-2015-16.pdf>



The deadline for applications is the 1 May 2015.

Late applications will not be accepted.

Registration examination

The deadline for the June 2015 Registration Examination entry forms is the **1 May 2015**. Any applications received after the 1 May 2015 will be subject to a **£100 late submission penalty**.



If you have any questions about the content of this Newsletter or have feedback the on the Newsletter itself we would like to hear from you. Please contact peter.hutchinson@psni.org.uk