

Welcome to update



Welcome to the second edition of our regulatory update in 2019.

In this edition, we introduce the revised Guidance on Raising Concerns and the newly published updated Guidance on Maintaining Clear Sexual Boundaries with Patients and Carers for pharmacists in Northern Ireland. We highlight the joint statement from nine healthcare regulators on reflective practice.

In the third of our series introducing our work teams and staff we introduce you to the work of the Registrar. We remind pharmacy employers and superintendents of the importance of checking the Register and we remind pharmacists of the need to update the Register if their personal details change.

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Review previous editions

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Updated Guidance on Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing)



The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI published updated [Guidance on Raising Concerns \(Whistleblowing\)](#) for pharmacists on 15 June 2019. The work forms part of our ongoing review of our Standards and Guidance documents, which support pharmacists in Northern Ireland to comply with the [Professional Standards of Conduct, Ethics and Performance \(2016\)](#), (the Code).

An individual is raising a concern (whistleblowing) when they bring to the attention of someone in authority a danger, risk, malpractice or wrongdoing within their place of work, which affects others. Those who raise a concern often do so to protect people receiving care, staff and the organisation itself from harm, before it is too late.

Pharmacists in Northern Ireland have a professional duty to raise concerns when they believe standards of care, practices or behaviour fall below acceptable levels and potentially place the public at risk. The revised Guidance aims to help pharmacists, employers and managers understand this duty better and provides guidance about how to go about raising concerns appropriately.

The importance of the ability of pharmacists and other healthcare workers to raise concerns and to have them fully addressed, has again been shown by recent inquiries, such as those into Hyponatremia related deaths and the Gosport Memorial Hospital. These inquiries have highlighted the important role organisational culture plays in empowering healthcare professionals and pharmacists to raise concerns in their place of work.

The updated Guidance recognises that it is sometimes difficult to raise concerns either because of organisational culture, personal bullying or harassment or the potential for negative consequences for the Whistleblower.

Commenting on the publication of the revised Guidance, Dr Jim Livingstone, the President of the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI stated:

“Fostering a culture of openness, honesty and learning is vital to protect patients, whether it be in a single community pharmacy or within a Trust. For this reason, our revised document provides enhanced guidance on the responsibilities of employers and managers. Ensuring that pharmacists can speak openly and freely about their genuine concerns and not fear reprisal is crucial to protecting patients and stopping potentially small issues escalating into major incidences.”

“I would like to thank our stakeholders for engaging with us in revising this important document and I would urge that all pharmacists, healthcare managers and employers in Northern Ireland read and apply the Guidance”.

Updated Guidance on maintaining clear sexual boundaries with patients and carers for pharmacists in Northern Ireland

The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI has published updated [Guidance on Maintaining Clear Sexual Boundaries with Patients and Carers](#) for pharmacists in Northern Ireland on 4 July 2019. The work forms part of the regulator's ongoing review of its Standards and Guidance documents, which support pharmacists in Northern Ireland to comply with the [Professional Standards of Conduct, Ethics and Performance \(2016\), \(the Code\)](#).

Whilst indications are that pharmacists maintain high standards in this area, pharmacists have a professional duty to continue to maintain clear sexual boundaries with patients and carers to ensure that standards of care, practices and behaviour do not potentially place the public at risk. The revisited Guidance aims to help pharmacists to continue to meet their obligations under the Code in what can be a complex area.

The revised Guidance, which can be found [here](#), is effective immediately. It was developed after engaging with pharmacy and other stakeholder groups in Northern Ireland.

All pharmacists, pre-registration trainees, managers and employers in Northern Ireland should read and apply the Guidance.

Commenting on the publication of the revised Guidance, Dr Jim Livingstone, the President of the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI stated:

“The vast majority of healthcare professionals, including pharmacists, work with dedication and integrity and are committed to providing the best possible patient care. However, in a small minority of cases, inquiries have shown that patients and carers can be seriously harmed when healthcare professionals breach sexual boundaries. In addition to the direct harm that can be suffered by patients and carers, the reputation of the pharmacy profession and the trust the public has in the pharmacy profession, may be severely damaged by such incidents.

The evolving clinical role of pharmacy in Northern Ireland will continue to develop in a way that involves more direct consultancy with patients and carers, which increases the potential for sexual boundaries to be breached, making this updated guidance timely and important.

This Guidance will also be of interest of patients and service users as it outlines the standards they should expect from their pharmacist in relation to maintaining clear sexual boundaries”.

Regulators unite to support reflective practice across healthcare

The Chief Executives of Pharmaceutical Society NI and eight other healthcare regulators have signed a joint statement which stresses the benefits and importance of good reflective practice for health professionals and teams in the healthcare sector. The joint statement can be downloaded from this link [Benefits of becoming a reflective practitioner](#)

Reflection is the process whereby healthcare professionals assess their professional experiences – both positive and where improvements may be needed – recording and documenting insight to aid their learning and identify opportunities to improve.

Reflection allows an individual to continually improve the quality of care they provide and gives multi-disciplinary teams the opportunity to reflect and discuss openly and honestly.

The joint statement comments that reflection plays an important role in healthcare work in fostering improvements in practices and services and assuring the public that health and care professionals are continuously learning and seeking to improve.

The statement reinforces that reflection is a key element of development and educational requirements and, in some professions, for revalidation as well. It also makes clear that patient confidentiality is vital, and that registrants will never be asked by regulators to provide their personal reflective notes to investigate a concern about them.

Guidance is given on how to get the most out of reflection, including having a systematic and structured approach with proactive and willing participants. It makes clear that any experience, positive or negative and however small – perhaps a conversation with a colleague – can generate meaningful insight and learning. Multi-disciplinary and professional team reflection is viewed as an excellent way to develop ideas and improve practice.

The statement also reinforces the regulators' continued commitments to reflection across their own organisations and highlights the pivotal role it plays in changing and improving their work.

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The statement was signed by the Chief Executive Officers of the General Chiropractic Council, General Dental Council, General Medical Council, General Optical Council, General Osteopathic Council, General Pharmaceutical Council, Health and Care Professions Council, the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland

Reflective Practice and Code Principle 5

PRINCIPLE 5

MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP YOUR KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCE

Principle 5 of the Pharmaceutical Society NI's [Professional Standards of Conduct, Ethics and Performance \(2016\), \(the Code\)](#) encourages Pharmacists in Northern Ireland to reflect continually on their practice and act on feedback to improve their practice. This reflection, learning aims activities and outcomes should be recorded as part of the mandatory annual CPD submission.

Advice on the 4 stages of reflection can be accessed through this link

<https://www.psni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/A-guide-to-Recording-CPD-May2017.pdf>

Further CPD support materials/information are available on line, including:

[CPD Assessment Guide](#)

[CPD Online Manual](#)

[CPD Frequently Asked Questions](#)

In addition, CPD assistance and support can be sought from professional bodies such as [The Pharmacy Forum NI](#).

If you require further assistance, please contact the CPD Department by email at cpd@psni.org.uk

Newsletter Feedback

Following the last edition a suggestion was made by a reader that the newsletter should be more web friendly. In this edition we have tried, where possible, to have the articles in a single column which should aid web reading. Let us know what you think. Other changes are coming in the next edition.

As always we would welcome your feedback on this Newsletter to make it as effective as possible. If you have any feedback or suggestions please contact Simon McClenahan:

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The Registrar



In the third of our series on the Pharmaceutical Society NI's work teams, we will focus on the role of the Registrar, Mr Brendan Kerr. Brendan was appointed to the role by the Department of Health in 2006 following a 24-year career in community pharmacy. While the majority of his responsibilities are detailed in legislation, in general terms his main roles are to:

- Make and maintain the register of pharmacists and pharmacies (the role of the registration team will be covered in the next newsletter).
- Ensuring standards are achieved through the accrediting of pharmacy courses and approving training through the pre-registration team (see April's newsletter) and the Continuing Personal Development (CPD) team.
- To take action when standards are not met to ensure public safety and maintain public confidence in the profession. In cases related to health, this work can include supporting pharmacists to regain their health will ensuring public safety is maintained.
- Work with partners, including the Department of Health NI and other regulators to share best practice and engage with Government on proposals for regulatory reform.
- Engagement with pharmacists, pharmacy trainees and other stakeholders to explain the role of the NI pharmacy regulator to ensure public safety and maintain and improve good standards.

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Looking to the future for his role, the Registrar stated:

“It is an exciting time for pharmacy with many emerging and developing roles, including pharmacist prescribers, GP practice pharmacists, clinical pharmacists and pharmacists in the community. These new roles provide enhanced services to the public and greater opportunities for multidisciplinary working across the health service.

“The Pharmaceutical Society NI will engage with the public, pharmacists and others to ensure that pharmacy regulation continues to protect the public, whilst being agile and proportionate so as not to stand in the way of innovative developments to provide enhanced services to the public. We will be focusing on continuous improvement in how we regulate, with emphasis on education and standards to ensure that we can meet these challenges and maintain public confidence in the pharmacy profession in Northern Ireland.”

Check the Register

It is the duty of every pharmacy employer or Superintendent to check on the current registration status and any conditions on practice of all pharmacists including locums they employ or proposed to employ. Any condition on practice is marked against the registrant's name on the Register. Failure to make regular checks may compromise the safety of the public in the event that unregistered persons are engaged in the capacity of a pharmacist or that registrants with conditions on their practice are not complying with these.

Annual pharmacist registration each year is in June and those failing to pay their fees are removed annually around the 14 August.

All employers should, as a minimum, check that their pharmacist employees are registered:

1. On initial engagement;
2. As soon as possible after 14 August each year;
3. Each time on engaging a locum, regardless of how often they have worked for the organisation; and
4. If they have any concerns about their registration status and at intervals throughout the year.

Pharmacists can request to be removed from the Register during the course of the year. It cannot be assumed that because a person was registered at one point in the registration year that they remain registered.

The Register can be found at this [link](#)

Keeping the Register up to date

It is essential for registrants to keep information up to date on the Register. This helps to ensure the receipt of all postal and email regulatory information from the Pharmaceutical Society NI. This applies equally to data on premises.

All registrants can update their address & email with the Pharmaceutical Society NI by writing to registration@psni.org.uk and stating their full name, registration number and the data they wish to change.

To change a name, please see the advice on the registration section of the website:

<http://www.psni.org.uk/registration/pharmacist-registration/>