

## Welcome to Update



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

In this edition, we look at the issues discussed in the Annual Report. We highlight the incorporation of the Guidance on Professional Indemnity into the Pharmaceutical Society NI's website and the new guidance from Academy of Medical Royal Colleges on health professionals acting as an expert or professional witness.

In the fourth of our series introducing our work teams and staff we introduce you to the work of Mark Neale, Head of Public Affairs.

Lastly, as pre-registration trainees reach the first quarter of their training, we have included an update which will be of interest and value to both trainees and tutors.

## What's inside



- P.2 [Annual Report 2018-19](#)
- P.5 [Professional indemnity](#)
- P.5 [Acting as an expert or professional witness](#)
- P.6 [Mark Neale, Head of Public Affairs](#)
- P.7 [Pre-registration update](#)



### Review previous editions

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

### Follow us on Facebook

You can also keep up-to-date with all regulatory news by following us on [Facebook](#)

# Annual Report 2018-19



The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI approved the Annual Report and Accounts for the year 2018-19 at its meeting on Thursday, 19 September 2019. The full report, which will be launched at the AGM on the 17 October 2019, is now available at [www.psni.org.uk/publications/annual-reports-2/](http://www.psni.org.uk/publications/annual-reports-2/). The Council's President, Dr Jim Livingstone and Chief Executive, Trevor Patterson in a joint forward to the report commented:

“Healthcare is changing rapidly and there are growing expectations on all healthcare professionals to deliver better health outcomes for patients - moving beyond simply managing illness towards supporting people to stay well physically, mentally and emotionally. Within this context, professional pharmacy practice is rapidly evolving. It is critically important that pharmacists have the necessary attitudes, behaviours, knowledge and skills that can be applied in their core role as ‘medicine experts’ but also in emerging roles when working with patients and alongside other healthcare professionals in multidisciplinary teams to deliver acute and preventative care.

Events, such as the Inquiry into Hyponatremia Related Deaths and the continuing reports emerging from Muckamore Abbey Hospital, rightly raise concerns amongst the public and patients and correctly ask questions of healthcare organisations including regulators.

In this context, we must be agile, flexible and focused on improvement to ensure we can continue to deliver a regulatory framework that not only protects the public and maintains public confidence in pharmacists and pharmacy but also facilitates and supports professional development and evolution, where appropriate.

In this regard, 2018/19 has been a successful and challenging year. We have sustained progress against our Corporate Strategy 2017-2022 introducing reforms in each of our core regulatory functions of Education, Standards, Registration and Fitness to Practise. The lack of a Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly has, however, continued to hamper aspects of our work and our ability to progress several important projects.

## Meeting PSA Standards

We are pleased that, for the third consecutive year, in our annual performance review, we met all 24 of the Professional Standards Authority's Standards of Good Regulation, demonstrating our ability to deliver high quality pharmacy regulation. (The report and comment from the PSA can be found at this [link](#) )

## Education

Under our responsibilities for Education, we completed a substantial review of our current registration examination which recommended that we introduce reforms to bring us in line with best practice and meet the challenges of the future, the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI (“Council”) approved some immediate reforms to the current examination procedures and agreed a preferred option of developing a joint GPhC/Pharmaceutical Society NI four country final assessment going forward. This latter proposal will be consulted upon in 2019/20.

# Annual Report 2018-19

## Undergraduate education

We worked with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) as they consulted upon new Initial Education and Training Standards which aim to ensure that pharmacists have the knowledge they need and can display the necessary attitudes and behaviours in an evolving healthcare system and profession. We will examine the results of this consultation and how they relate to Northern Ireland in 2019/20.

## Continuing Professional Development

We have continued to make improvements in the quality assurance of our pre-registration training year and have completed the strategic review of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework, the proposals of which will be consulted upon in the second half of 2019.

## Standards

Under our responsibilities to set **Standards** for pharmacists and pharmacies in Northern Ireland, we have continued to progress the review of all documents deriving from the Code. 2018/19 saw Council approve new Guidance in relation to [Raising Concerns \(Whistleblowing\)](#) with an important focus on organisational culture and the importance of pharmacists being able to work in open, honest and learning organisations. New Guidance on [Maintaining Clear Sexual Boundaries with Patients and Carers](#) was also introduced which is important and relevant as the changing role of pharmacists sees more opportunities for clinical patient and professional interaction. Council also approved new Premises Standards in June 2018 to ensure that pharmacies in Northern Ireland operate in a manner that protects the public and puts the patient first. However, these have yet to be implemented as the enabling legislation has not been commenced by a Minister for Health.

## Fitness to Practise

We publicly consulted upon and introduced new Indicative Sanctions Guidance which provides a decision-making framework to help the Statutory Committee make consistent, proportionate and reasonable decisions about what is an appropriate sanction when a pharmacist's Fitness to Practise has been found to be impaired. The [Indicative Sanctions Guidance](#) also introduced new Guidance in relation to serious misconduct such as a breach of sexual boundaries, violence, a failure to raise concerns or uphold the duty of candour towards patients.

## Registration

We have revised our suite of registration and retention forms to make them easier to navigate and process. We have also made improvements in how we communicate with pharmacists in Northern Ireland.

We are pleased with this progress which has seen several reforms finalised in some areas whilst, in others, we have laid important foundations for completion in 2019/20. We have continued to meet the vast majority of our Key Performance Indicators across the organisation, have continued to improve our procedures and have introduced new ICT and Human Resources Strategies in year. Fitness to Practise cases subject to external investigations have again caused some delays in 2018/19.

# Annual Report 2018-19

There were, however, a number of areas where we have made more limited progress.

## Governance

Council's review of its Governance structures had to be suspended in 2018 as Council was reduced from 14 to 8 members for most of the year. This was a result of the Department of Health's inability to appoint new Council members in the absence of a Minister for Health and appropriate covering legislation. New Council members were appointed in March 2019. However, the reduced numbers placed significant pressure on the organisation and Council in particular throughout 2018/19.

## Premises Standards, Knowledge of English Language Regulations

The absence of a Northern Ireland Executive and Minister for Health has also delayed progress in relation to the implementation of **Premises Standards, Knowledge of English Language Regulations**, progress towards separating our regulatory and professional representation functions and may impede the consideration of potential registration of pharmacy technicians.

## Brexit

Looking forward, the uncertainty and potential impact of Brexit continues to pose challenges - in particular the implications of a 'no-deal' on our ability to recognise qualifications from EU applicants to our Register in the future. In the interim, we have secured legislation that will allow us to continue recognising qualifications from EU countries for two years from exit date unless, with the approval of the Department of Health NI, we decide that any particular qualifications should no longer be recognised. We continue to keep a watching brief on this situation and are fully engaged with Government in both London and Belfast on the issue and the potential legislative implications of a 'no deal' scenario.

## Regulatory Reform

The Department of Health and Social Care in London is continuing to develop its thinking for reforming the powers of the nine healthcare regulators in the UK and we will continue to work with them and the Department of Health Northern Ireland to ensure, as far as is possible, that the lack of a Northern Ireland Assembly does not inhibit our ability to benefit from these reforms.

## Conclusion

We consider that workforce planning issues, online and technological innovations and the evolving roles within pharmacy will continue to be major considerations for the Department of Health, the healthcare system and regulators going forward. We will continue to work with the Government to progress a consultation on the registration of pharmacy technicians and ensure that pharmacists coming onto our Register and those already on our Register have the right skills, attitude and behaviours to deliver high quality care and protect the public in what is a changing and dynamic healthcare system. We will also continue to work with our partners in other regulators, professional and systems, to ensure we continue to meet the challenges of protecting the public and enabling innovation within the healthcare system and amongst professionals."

## Professional indemnity

The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI has determined that the Guidance document on *Professional indemnity cover for pharmacists in NI including frequently asked questions – Professional indemnity and your registration* dated June 2014 should be discontinued and the relevant information placed in the pharmacist registration and retention section of our website. All the relevant information pharmacists may require and a frequently asked questions section can be accessed through this [link](#).

## Acting as an expert or professional witness

At its meeting in July 2019, the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI agreed that the new Guidance on the role of expert or professional witnesses, published by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AMRC) on 16 May 2019, is consistent with the Pharmaceutical Society NI Code (Professional standards of conduct, ethics and performance for pharmacists in Northern Ireland, 2016) and its related Standards and Guidance documents.

The AMRC Guidance was drawn up in response to recommendations in the Williams Review into the issues relating to gross negligence manslaughter in healthcare, published in June 2018. This Guidance outlines what is expected of healthcare professionals when called as expert witnesses to speak or give written submissions at an investigation or court trial. It includes the principles, standards of conduct and boundaries which healthcare professionals should observe when asked to serve as an expert witness. It also seeks to guide professionals on responding to a range of different witness scenarios.

The guidance highlights the breadth of experience which healthcare professionals can gain from being an expert witness and provides comprehensive context and support for professionals who have not previously appeared as an expert witness. Additionally, it gives those professionals who are already experienced in the role added insight into acting in a range and variety of expert witness hearings.

The AMRC Guidance outlines the implications for expert witnesses of appearing before different types of courts and hearings and is consistent with the requirements of the Code. The new Guidance is available at this [link](#).

### Newsletter Feedback

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:

[Simon.McClenahan@psni.org.uk](mailto:Simon.McClenahan@psni.org.uk)

Telephone: 02890326927

## Mark Neale, Head of Public Affairs



Mark.Neale@psni.org.uk  
telephone 028 9032 6927

In the fourth of our series on the Pharmaceutical Society NI's staff, we will focus on the work of the Head of Public Affairs, Mr Mark Neale. Mark joined the senior management team in 2007 following a career as a microbiologist, in quality management and as Ministerial Special Advisor. Mark is responsible for several diverse areas of the organisation's activities and, together with other members of the senior team, ensures that the best information is presented to Council for scrutiny and decision and that Council's decisions are enacted.

Mark's main roles include:

- The management of all organisational communication activities including proactive engagements and consultations with the public and the profession and ensuring effective liaison with the media and politicians to further our regulatory objectives;
- Ensuring that the Standards and Guidance for pharmacists continue to assure public safety and uphold the reputation of the profession;
- Working with colleagues to support Council in the development and fulfilment of its Corporate Strategy.
- Oversight of the adjudication function of the organisation;
- Working with partners including the Department of Health NI and other regulators to develop, share and implement regulatory best practice and engage with Government on proposals for regulatory reform; and
- Data Protection Officer for the organisation ensuring compliance with legislation and best practice in data protection practice.

Commenting on his role, Mark stated:

**“This is an interesting and busy time for the organisation as we are carrying out a review of our Standards and Guidance for pharmacists. We are working closely with the public, the profession and others to ensure that our Standards and Guidance continue to ensure the safety of the public and uphold the reputation of the profession and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people and organisations who have engaged with us during this process.”**

**Looking to the future, Mark commented, 'The newly emerging and developing roles for pharmacists while creating opportunities for enhanced services to the public, also create challenges to ensure that our Standards and Guidance remain relevant. The organisation has introduced an improved Horizon Scanning system to identify these trends earlier and we have enhanced our stakeholder engagement in order to ensure that we continue to maintain public safety and confidence in the pharmacy profession in Northern Ireland.'”**

## Pre-registration update

As the current group of pre-registration trainees reach the first quarter of their training, the following updates will be of interest and value to trainees and tutors alike.

### Tutor update

#### Trainee feedback on tutors

Tutors for 2018-19 will shortly receive feedback from their trainees to help them reflect on their performance as a tutor, to identify what has gone well and to help identify potential areas for personal development. We anticipate that this approach will increase engagement in this important aspect of quality assurance and will benefit tutors and future trainees alike.

#### Why do we request trainee feedback?

We are tasked with maintaining patient safety, upholding the reputation of the pharmacy profession and maintaining professional standards. Within this framework, trainee feedback forms part of the quality assurance arrangements that we undertake to encourage best practice, identify important issues and improve the quality of training for pre-registration trainees. The Pharmaceutical Society NI is also required to ensure that tutors remain fit for purpose and can effectively undertake the important role of being a tutor.

#### What's involved?

The feedback process asks trainees to reflect on what went well, what went less well and to provide their ideas about what tutors could aim to do differently with future trainees.

Trainees are also asked to rate tutor performance in the following four areas (range: Strongly agree to Strongly disagree):

- Being a trainer and a coach
- Providing feedback
- Being an assessor
- Providing support

#### What do tutors need to do?

We are asking tutors to review their trainee feedback. Tutors are asked to reflect on what they feel went well, what went less well, what could be done differently with future trainees and to reflect on any areas for personal development. Tutors will be provided with a Tutor Development Plan to help with this.

Further information about the trainee feedback process will be sent to tutors in due course.

## Pre-registration update

### E-portfolio

The purpose of the online e-portfolio and the performance standards is to ensure that trainee pharmacists are consistently demonstrating their increasing competency throughout the year.

**TRAINEES** are asked to achieve 25% completion of performance standards by the first 13-week appraisal and work towards 50% completion by their 26-week appraisal.

**TUTORS** are required to verify enough learning cycles so that their trainee can meet the expected levels of completion. This is because the % completion score is based entirely on cycles that are verified by the tutor.

### Appraisals

The appraisal process is aimed at providing motivation and encouragement to trainees alongside identifying areas that require improvement and many trainees will have had their 13-week appraisal already. Currently, appraisals are being reviewed by the Pharmaceutical Society NI and, to date, appraisals submitted show good engagement between tutors and trainees.

### Protected development time

Protected development time is a mandatory part of the pre-registration year and it is a requirement for all tutors to provide trainees with this time during their training.

The standards for pre-registration training state that:

“A tutor must ensure that the pre-registration trainee will have onsite Personal Protected Professional Development time, agreed through discussion between trainee and their tutor. Training needs should be reviewed regularly. A minimum of the equivalent of four hours per working week must be dedicated to Personal Protected Professional Development Time.”

As part of the annual review of pre-registration training, trainees are asked if they have received four hours per week protected time for study and development.

### Pre-registration Business Management Training day

Trainees must attend a business management training day as part of the compulsory requirements for pre-registration training. The course is aimed at exploring the essential business management skills required for professional pharmacy practice regardless of the sector they may eventually work in. The course is also about signposting trainees to areas of future personal development and to give them some ‘think time’ away from training about their future careers.

Courses are available on the following dates:

**Tuesday, 29 October 2019**

**Tuesday, 12 November 2019**

**Tuesday, 26 November 2019**

Trainees are reminded that they are required to book a place on the course via the event section on the Society’s website: <https://www.psni.org.uk/events/>