

**From: Chief Pharmaceutical Officer  
Mrs Cathy Harrison**



**To: All Pre-Registration Students**

Castle Buildings  
Stormont  
Belfast  
BT4 3SQ

**Tel:** 028 90 523219

**Email:** [cathy.harrison@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.harrison@health-ni.gov.uk)

**Date:** 14 May 2020

Dear Future Pharmacist,

I know that the last few months have been very uncertain and I wanted to write to reassure you that steps are being taken to support you in the coming months as you prepare to begin your career as a pharmacist in Northern Ireland.

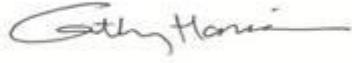
You will be aware that due to the COVID-19 pandemic the UK pharmacy regulators, the General Pharmaceutical Council and the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI) advised that pre-registration students would be unable to complete their examination in June 2020 as originally intended. Subsequently the PSNI advised that it is the intention to hold the examination in Northern Ireland in early August. This means that if you successfully pass the examination and have completed 52 weeks training, you will be able to register with the PSNI by the end of August and commence work as a pharmacist.

To bridge the gap in employment, funding will be provided to your employer to cover your salary for up to two months until you register. The extra two months until the exam will also allow you time to catch up on studies and training that may have been delayed as well as disrupted time with your tutor. You may have questions and worries about the coming months and the Pharmacy Forum are arranging a number of virtual meetings to answer students' questions and offer support and advice. I hope that you will take part in the meetings and there will also be a discussion about the type of professional development and learning support that you'd find useful during your first year as a pharmacist.

Recent events, although difficult at times, have raised the public profile of pharmacists. Later this year when you start work you will find that your skills and expertise are in high demand and greatly valued. You will be joining a proud profession at a time of opportunity for pharmacists.

Thanks for everything that you're doing and please keep doing your best.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Harrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Mrs Cathy Harrison**

Cc Julie Greenfield  
Kathy Burnett  
Trevor Patterson