Emergency registration

Purpose
To review and agree revised arrangements for temporary registration and annotation of the register in the event that an emergency is declared.

Recommendations

The Council is asked to agree

i. the revised groups of persons set out in the attached policy in section 3.1 and 3.2 until the next annual review.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Under article 34 of the Pharmacy Order 2010, the GPhC has the powers to register fit, proper and suitably experienced people on a temporary basis to act as pharmacists and pharmacy technicians if an emergency is declared by the Secretary of State. In addition, under article 35, the GPhC has powers to annotate the entries of registrants in Part 1 and Part 2 of the register. These powers will cease when the emergency ends.

1.2 In the event an emergency is declared, the GPhC will need to be able to quickly and easily identify a pool of appropriately qualified and competent people who could be called upon to stand in for registered pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. Complex rules or procedures that take time to understand and implement would be undesirable, and likely to fail in the event an emergency is declared. Employers, registrants, potential registrants and the public need to understand who will be called upon and the limits to their responsibilities.

2.0 Key Considerations
Emergency Registration

2.1 At the Council meeting in April 2010 when the Policy was initially considered, Council requested to be given the opportunity on an annual basis to review the groups of persons which the Registrar considers are fit, proper and suitably experienced to be temporarily registered as pharmacists or pharmacy technicians and to be temporarily annotated as prescribers upon the declaration of an emergency by the Secretary of State. The policy was considered once again in November 2011 for further review by the end of 2012.

2.2 The groups are listed in descending order of priority with the aim of ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of persons who can be temporarily registered as pharmacists or pharmacy technicians to maintain pharmacy services in the interests of public and patient safety depending on the nature, extent and duration of the declared emergency.

2.3 In September 2012 Council approved an amendment to the criteria for permanent registration and introduced the requirement for the submission of a portfolio of evidence for those previously registered and returning to the register after one year. This should not affect the emergency registration criteria of a two year deadline as temporary registration will only be for the duration of the emergency. The requirement to evaluate the portfolio would significantly increase the time to process the entry to the register which would be undesirable in the event of an emergency.

2.4 The main change is the loss of the group of former registrants previously on the RPSGB non-practising register as these former registrants no longer meet the two year criteria.

2.5 As a consequence of Rule 14(6) of the GPhC (Registration Rules) Order of Council 2010\(^1\) applicants for voluntary removal must complete a fitness to practise declaration. This declaration is not held for those who decide to come off the register through inaction and as a result a risk assessment to ensure that their removal was in the public interest is not undertaken. Therefore it is proposed that previous registrants falling into this category are listed as a lower priority.

2.6 Post MPharm pre-registration trainees has been amended to include the requirement for a recent satisfactory progress report and no fitness to practise impairment.

2.7 Appendix 2 contains statistics to assess the impact of these changes.

- This would provide a potential current total pharmacist pool of 4600, but allowing for the loss of the previous total non – practising register of 6300 would result in an effective net loss of 1700. It should be borne in mind that many would not have been eligible due to time off the register (unfortunately this cannot be quantified). Additionally, these figures do

\(^{1}\) The Registrar must not grant an application under this rule unless

- the Registrar is satisfied that there are no ongoing investigations or outstanding proceedings relating to the registrant’s fitness to practise; or
- in cases where there are investigations or proceedings, the Registrar considers that the public interest would be best served by granting the application.
not include current pharmacy technician entrants on part 2 of the register as these would be called upon last.
• The potential current total pool of pharmacy technicians would be 7800.

2.8 All candidates for emergency registration must declare that their fitness to practise is not impaired.

3.0 **Equality and diversity implications**

3.1 The GPhC policy excludes former RPSGB and GPhC registrants who have not been registered within the past two years. This policy might have an indirectly discriminatory impact with respect to the age of former pharmacists; although the drawing of this line is necessary in public safety terms to ensure that current knowledge and practice is maintained.

4.0 **Communications implications**

4.1 The implementation of this policy includes the requirement for a communication strategy to provide information to registrants, patients and the public and others about temporary registration before, during and after an emergency. This discrete communications strategy would need to include a reminder to temporary registrants of the ethical and professional obligation to work within their competence.

5.0 **Resource implications**

5.1 The implementation of the policy can be met within current resources

6.0 **Risk implications**

6.1 There is a risk to the health, safety and well being of members of the public if the GPhC does not identify fit, proper and suitably experienced people to act as pharmacists and pharmacy technicians during an emergency.

**Recommendations**

The Council is asked to agree

i. the revised groups of persons set out in the attached policy in section 3.1 and 3.2 until the next annual review.

*Terry Orford, Head of Customer Services
General Pharmaceutical Council
terry.orford@pharmacyregulation.org, tel 020 3365 3608
18 October 2012*
Appendix 1

Policy on temporary registration arrangements in the event of an emergency involving loss of human life or human illness

1.0 Introduction

1.1 We have powers to register temporarily fit, proper and suitably experienced people to act as pharmacists and pharmacy technicians if an emergency is declared by the Secretary of State. We also have powers to annotate the entries of registrants in Part 1 and Part 2 of the register during an emergency. These powers will cease when the emergency ends.

1.2 During an emergency the General Pharmaceutical Council’s operating capacity could be seriously compromised, so it is essential that preparations are made in advance to allow us to bring suitable additional people onto the Register rapidly and efficiently in an emergency.

2.0 Purpose of policy

2.1 Under article 34 of the Pharmacy Order 2010, the Registrar may temporarily enter in Part 1 (pharmacists) or Part 2 (pharmacy technicians) of the Register persons or specified groups of persons considered fit, proper and suitably experienced during an emergency.

2.2 Under article 35 of the Pharmacy Order 2010, the Registrar may temporarily annotate entries in Part 1 (pharmacists) or Part 2 (pharmacy technicians) of the Register persons or specified groups of persons considered fit, proper and suitably experienced during an emergency.

2.3 The purpose of this policy is to identify the persons or specified groups of persons considered fit, proper and suitably experienced to be temporarily registered or annotated during an emergency.

3.0 Policy statement

3.1 Under article 34 of the Pharmacy Order 2010, and upon the declaration of an emergency by the Secretary of State, the Registrar may register the following groups in Part 1 (pharmacists) for the duration of the emergency in descending order of priority

- Former registrants on Part 1 of the Register (pharmacists) who were voluntarily removed within the last two years and whose fitness to practise is not impaired
- Post-MPharm pre-registration trainee pharmacists with recent satisfactory progress reports and whose fitness to practise is not impaired
- Former registrants on Part 1 of the Register (pharmacists) who were removed for non renewal of registration within the last two years and
whose fitness to practise is not impaired
• Registrants on Part 2 of the Register (pharmacy technicians)

3.2 Under article 34 of the Pharmacy Order 2010, and upon the declaration of an emergency by the Secretary of State, the Registrar may register the following groups in Part 2 (pharmacy technicians) for the duration of the emergency in descending order of priority
• Former registrants on Part 2 of the Register (pharmacy technicians) who were voluntarily removed within the last two years and whose fitness to practise is not impaired
• Post-MPharm pre-registration trainee pharmacists with recent satisfactory progress reports and whose fitness to practise is not impaired
• Former registrants on Part 2 of the Register (pharmacy technicians) who were removed for non renewal of registration within the last two years and whose fitness to practise is not impaired
• Pharmacy students who are undertaking year 3 or 4 of the MPharm

3.3 Under article 35 of the Pharmacy Order 2010, and upon the declaration of an emergency by the Secretary of State, the Registrar may annotate the following groups as prescribers for the duration of the emergency
• Registrants in Part 1 of the Register (pharmacists)

4.0 Application of policy

4.1 We will maintain up to date data on former registrants who fall under the categories listed above from which to prepare the temporary registers. This information will be updated on a rolling basis but will remain unpublished until such time as an emergency is declared.

4.2 The implementation of this policy will include an operations strategy to publish, maintain, review and close the temporary registers if an emergency is declared and a communication strategy to provide information to registrants, patients and the public and others about temporary registration before, during and after an emergency

5.0 Measurement and evaluation

5.1 After an emergency, we will hold a review on the implementation of this policy and seek feedback from staff, registrants, patients and the public and other stakeholders.

5.2 The policy will be evaluated on an annual basis to review if the persons and groups identified are still considered fit, proper and suitably experienced to be temporarily registered or annotated during an emergency.

5.3 The policy will be reviewed if there are any amendments or additions to the categories of annotation to Part 1 or Part 2 of the Register.

Terry Orford
Head of Customer Services
Statistics on impact of change of criteria

Former total pharmacist registrants on RPSGB non-practising register no longer eligible 6300
Pharmacists removed from register for non renewal since Jan 2011 909
Pharmacy technicians removed from register for non renewal since Jan 2011 257
Pharmacists voluntarily removed from register since Jan 2011 804
Voluntary removal applications from pharmacists to be approved (to date) 170
Pharmacy technicians voluntarily removed from register since Jan 2011 262
Voluntary removal apps from pharmacy technicians to be approved (to date) 40
Number of current pre-registration trainees (2012/13 cohort) 2731
Estimated numbers in 4th year of MPharm 3624
Estimated numbers in 3rd year of MPharm 3905