

Strategic Plan

2013 - 2016

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Who we are

Who we are

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the independent statutory organisation accountable for the regulation of pharmacy professionals and registered pharmacies in England, Scotland and Wales. The GPhC was set up by the Pharmacy Order 2010.

The GPhC is governed by a council of 14 appointed members. Half are lay people and half are pharmacists or pharmacy technicians.

Our mission

We promote and maintain the safety and health of pharmacy service users.

Our vision

We aim to be trusted by patients and respected by registrants, regulating effectively in a way which delivers value for money.

Our values

In all our work we aim to:

- put patients' safety and health first
- be focused on improvement
- be responsive to change
- develop policies which are inclusive
- be independent and fair
- demonstrate respect for others
- ensure that regulation is proportionate.

Our council has adopted the Nolan principles of public life and has undertaken to apply these principles in exercising its role as our governing body.

Our functions

The principal functions of the GPhC as set out in the Pharmacy Order 2010 are:

- to establish and maintain a register of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and premises at which a retail pharmacy business is, or is to be, carried on
- to set and promote standards for the safe and effective practice of pharmacy at registered pharmacies
- to set requirements by reference to which registrants must demonstrate that their fitness to practise is not impaired
- to promote the safe and effective practice of pharmacy by registrants (including, for example, by reference to any code of conduct for, and ethics relating to, pharmacy)
- to set standards and requirements in respect of the education, training, acquisition of experience and continuing professional development that it is necessary for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to achieve in order to be entered in the register or to receive an annotation in the register and to maintain competence, and
- to ensure the continued fitness to practise of registrants.

The context in which we work

Pharmacy professionalism is becoming ever more important as pharmacy practice continues to develop and diversify. These changes bring with them the potential for greater benefits for pharmacy service users, through pharmacy's enhanced clinical contribution to health and wellbeing, and to public health. In parallel with these developments in pharmacy, we need to be alert to any new or increased risks which regulation needs to address. Regulation cannot, and should not attempt, to deal explicitly with each of the ever-widening range of issues which pharmacy professionals encounter in their work. The main day to day safeguard for patients and the public is the professionalism of individual registrants. A system of proportionate and effective regulation provides essential underpinning for:

- individual registrants' capacity and confidence positively to embrace and live up to their professional responsibilities and
- pharmacy's collective commitment to professionalism.

The organisation of health and care services, and of education and training for health professionals, continues to develop in different ways in each of the countries of Great Britain. As the regulator we need to recognise this whilst ensuring consistent standards and outcomes for patients.

Patients and those who speak for them have called for much more efficient and effective integration of the health and care services they receive; in parallel we see a dramatically increased expectation on the part of patients that regulation (including the regulation of individuals and of organisations having a corporate responsibility for providing services) will be visibly better integrated, to minimise

regulatory gaps and overlaps, in terms of safety and standards.

Technological advances, resulting in new medicines and systems for their supply and administration, and patients' increasing knowledge and awareness of medicines, create opportunities for patients which regulation must not needlessly stifle, but also new risks which pharmacy professionals and service providers must manage effectively.

Our work to develop and update this strategic plan has benefited from the learning we have gained in the two years since we began work, as well as from our understanding of the direction of regulation policy nationally, including Enabling Excellence, and at European and international levels.

We expect that all regulators will rightly continue to be scrutinised and held accountable both for their performance and achievement of their objectives, and in relation to their efficiency and cost-effectiveness. No regulatory body in any field can presume that the policy or business case for regulation is self-evident, and we do not take public, professional or political support for pharmacy regulation for granted. We are committed to carrying out the task which the legislation sets for us in a way which adds – rather than subtracts – value to pharmacy and to healthcare more widely.

Above all, our strategic plan reflects the overriding priority we give to the delivery of our ongoing core functions – effective and efficient delivery of our objectives as set out in legislation – together with the ongoing development and improvement work required of a modern regulator.

About this strategic plan

About this strategic plan

This strategic plan summarises what we are aiming to achieve over a three year period, and why. This strategy is complemented by a three year corporate plan setting out how we are going to achieve these aims and fund the work.

Our first statutory strategic plan, covering the period 2012 to 2015, was laid before Parliament and the Scottish Parliament in September 2011. As required by the Pharmacy Order we have now updated our strategic plan one year on. The plan now covers the period from 2013 through to 2016. By updating our strategic plan annually, in keeping with the legislation, we ensure that our strategic plan is reviewed regularly and remains current.

Our key priorities

We have identified five key priorities for action over the next three years, as follows:

1. Deliver our core regulatory services in a way that is fit for current and future purpose
2. Strengthen our capability to measure and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our operational performance
3. Communicate and engage effectively with key stakeholders
4. Anticipate and respond to developments in pharmacy and healthcare
5. Make sure that we have the right people in place, with the right culture and organisational policies and procedures

These five key priorities will drive our corporate and business planning for the next three years. In all the work we do to achieve these priorities we will maintain our focus on regulating in ways which promote and underpin professionalism on the part of individual registrants, and the pharmacy professions collectively. Our main objectives under each strategic priority for the next three years are:

1. Deliver our core regulatory services in a way that is fit for current and future purpose

- a. Deliver our statutory functions efficiently and effectively
- b. Review and where necessary transform our fitness to practise and enforcement procedures, including the regulation of registered pharmacies, developing an increasingly effective, efficient, proportionate regulatory approach
- c. Building on the GPhC's commitment to revalidation and the principles which we have agreed, develop our plans to provide the public with enhanced positive assurance of the continuing fitness to practise of GPhC registrants
- d. Influence the concept and design of an overarching new legislative framework for health professional regulation and be ready to exploit the opportunities which the new framework will offer as and when it emerges
- e. Contribute to the development of regulatory policy nationally in ways which promote GPhC regulatory values

2. Strengthen our capability to measure and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our operational performance

- a. Implement necessary new information and administration systems to support our drive for improved efficiency and a better experience for those who use our services
- b. Establish new service and efficiency standards – and measurable efficiency improvement objectives - and report regularly against these
- c. Maintain and continue to improve our governance and assurance arrangements

3. Communicate and engage effectively with key stakeholders

- a. Reach out to patients, carers, families and communities in order:
 - to enable them to help us shape the development of standards in pharmacy in ways which reflect their priorities
 - to inform them about the standards they can expect of pharmacy professionals and registered pharmacy premises and
 - to support them to take effective steps when they have concerns about safety
- b. Make it easy for pharmacy professionals, pharmacy owners and pharmacy and healthcare organisations:
 - to keep themselves up to date with, and to help us shape, standards which promote professionalism and professional responsibility, and
 - to take effective steps when they have concerns about safety
- c. Work closely with other regulators, professional bodies and others to simplify and streamline public and patient access to information about regulation, to eliminate gaps in public protection, and to minimise the inefficiencies and confusion caused by regulatory overlaps
- d. Ensure that all our work takes full account of the context across Great Britain, including policy, legal and health service differences between the home countries

4. Anticipate and respond to developments in pharmacy and healthcare

- a. Actively keep under review the available evidence and information about risk in pharmacy and regulate accordingly
- b. Strengthen our horizon-scanning to inform all our policy development work and the development of our regulatory operations
- c. Use our resources and networks to influence positively the development of pharmacy and healthcare in line with our regulatory aims and values

5. Make sure that we have the right people in place, with the right culture and organisational policies and procedures

- a. Build a GPhC culture which embodies the Council's values in practical terms, demonstrating in our organisation the professionalism we expect of GPhC registrants
- b. Review and where necessary change our management policies and procedures so that they promote this culture
- c. Develop the organisation in suitable accommodation that meets the current and anticipated future needs of the organisation

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