



Strategic plan  
2017-20:  
year three



# **General Pharmaceutical Council**

## **Strategic plan 2017-20: year three**

Strategic plan presented to Parliament and the Scottish Parliament Pursuant to Paragraph 8 of Schedule 1 to the Pharmacy Order 2010

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# Foreword to year three

**December 2018**

Since 2017 we have been working to deliver the aims set out in our three-year strategic plan. This plan describes our ambition to support and improve the delivery of safe, effective care in pharmacy, and also describes our strategic approach and operating principles for achieving that ambition.

During the last twelve months – the second year of the strategic plan – we have made significant progress under our three key goals, which are to make sure:

- the pharmacy team have the necessary knowledge, attitudes and behaviours
- registered pharmacies deliver safe, effective care and services, and
- pharmacy regulation is efficient and effective

Here are some of our achievements under our key goals:

- We successfully introduced revalidation for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, including the creation of a new online portal enabling them to manage their records efficiently and effectively alongside their annual registration renewal applications.
- We implemented new standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians, and new criteria for registration as a pharmacy technician.
- We consulted on developing our approach to regulating registered pharmacies, including proposals to publish inspection reports for the

first time, and are using what we heard to help develop and refine our approach.

- We developed, consulted on and launched guidance for pharmacy owners which sets out what pharmacy owners are expected to do to ensure a safe and effective pharmacy team.

We are continuing to make good progress in achieving the aims set out in our strategic plan. But as we prepare to enter the final year of this strategic plan, and look ahead to the future, we are conscious of significant challenges facing society in general which will impact on pharmacy and on pharmacy regulation too. Just a few of these challenges are highlighted below.

Economic uncertainty and funding challenges – seen in the wider NHS – are also affecting pharmacy services. The decision to exit from the European Union continues to cause uncertainty and the extent of its impact on pharmacy and pharmacy regulation is not at all clear. We need to be ready to respond effectively to any future developments.

There may also be fundamental changes coming to the way the economy operates, because of the effects of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning. These may bring benefits which were not previously considered possible. However, change of this kind will also bring risks and challenges. We will also need to consider how these changes will affect people using pharmacy services, and make sure that we are working with pharmacy professionals and pharmacy owners to mitigate these risks.

We have known for some time that financial pressures, population changes and public health challenges mean our health services will have to adapt. Governments across Great Britain believe pharmacy is part of the solution and there is a significant opportunity for pharmacy to develop



and take on a greater role in helping people to maintain and improve their health and wellbeing in the future. In the next 20 years we expect the percentage of the UK's population aged over 65 to rise from 18% to 24%. This will put more pressure on our health and care system, to an extent we have never seen before. We also face ongoing public-health challenges, which pharmacy is well placed to play a major part in tackling.

Decisions about how the sector should change are primarily for governments, commissioners and the sector itself to make. But it is clear that the way pharmacy services are delivered will change significantly, with pharmacists and pharmacy technicians more likely to work in multidisciplinary teams, and pharmacy services looking to make use of new technology, for example. As a regulator, we know we will also have an important role to play – working with governments, patients, pharmacy professionals, employers and others. We recognise that this means very close collaboration with other regulators – both of healthcare professions and systems. We continue to support the work underway to make changes to legislation relating to pharmacy and pharmacy regulation, and are committed to working effectively with others so that these changes are optimally designed to protect patients and encourage improvement in the quality of pharmacy practice.

The pace of change in pharmacy is increasing, and it has prompted us to begin to work on a longer-term plan. We are currently developing a 10-year vision and strategy, which will enable us to make sure that we are fit to deliver efficient, responsive regulation which is relevant to the changing healthcare environment. We will focus more of our efforts on proactively anticipating and responding to issues, and tailoring our regulatory responses to achieve the desired results in the best and quickest way.

This means that the coming third year of this strategic plan will be a transitional period as we continue to set our longer-term goals and develop our plan to achieve these. We will need to keep our strategy under close review to make sure we are adapting quickly to the challenges described and are enabling responsible innovation that is focused on delivering improved outcomes for patients.

We also know that we are uniquely placed to use our privileged position to capture and share data, research and information. We can use this to:

- provide assurance to patients and the public
- help us better understand risk in pharmacy, and
- enable and encourage improvement in the sector

We aim to use data more effectively to evaluate the impact of our regulatory work.

These ambitions are very much in line with the direction of public policy on professional regulation. Our strategy is designed to be able to adapt and respond to the challenges we face and to make good use of the opportunities that arise, and we will be developing our longer-term plan to do the same.



**Nigel Clarke**  
Chair



**Duncan Rudkin**  
Chief Executive  
and Registrar

# What we do

People receive safe, effective care and have trust in pharmacy because of the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of people working in pharmacy.

We have an important part to play. We:

- promote professionalism within pharmacy
- assure the quality of pharmacy, including its safety
- support improvement in pharmacy

We have a number of ways in which we do this. These include:

- registering and listing publicly the pharmacy professionals and pharmacies that provide care to patients and the public
- setting and promoting the standards required to enter and remain on our register
- receiving assurances, in a number of ways, that pharmacy professionals and pharmacies continue to uphold our standards – and acting appropriately when they do not
- sharing with others what we learn through our work
- investigating concerns about the people or pharmacies we register and taking proportionate action to protect the public and promote our standards



# Our strategic aim

Support and improve the delivery of safe, effective care and uphold trust in pharmacy by ensuring:

## **1. the pharmacy team have the necessary knowledge, attitudes and behaviours**

The pharmacy team are equipped to work flexibly alongside other health and care professionals to respond with confidence to the changing needs of people and populations needing care. As a result, the best use is made of the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of every member of the pharmacy team to deliver pharmacy services and improve them. That improvement will partly be brought about by the work we do including support for the continuous learning and development of the whole pharmacy team.

## **2. registered pharmacies deliver safe, effective care and services**

We focus on outcomes for patients, rather than on bureaucratic rules and enforcement. We will keep improving the way we regulate pharmacy so that we make the best use of our powers and systems to assure and improve the quality of pharmacy practice. We will adapt the way in which we regulate, being truly flexible, proportionate and responsive, and use the best available evidence to support our work.

## **3. pharmacy regulation is efficient and effective**

We continue to develop and improve the skills and knowledge of our staff, and the systems they use, so that we are delivering regulation that is both efficient and effective. Our regulatory operations will increasingly use data and intelligence. We will look to develop more effective partnerships with other regulatory agencies, providers and commissioners of care as well as with representative bodies. And we will modernise our own internal systems so that they are better able to serve the needs of registrants and the public and deliver proportionate regulation.

# Our strategic approach

The strategic aim we have set ourselves, and the level of ambition we have committed to, means that we need to work differently. We need to move away from abstract concepts of 'professional' and 'system' regulation to instead regulate in the most proportionate and effective way possible. We will focus on the key operating principles below.

## Promote professionalism

We believe the professional knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of the people working in pharmacy offer the best assurance to people using pharmacy services. Our most effective role is in helping to promote an environment in which professionalism can flourish, and that the standards expected of pharmacy reflect this.

## Be person-centred

At the heart of everything we do is the recognition that everyone is an individual, and has differing needs which we must understand and take account of in our work. This applies to everyone – including people using pharmacy services, people working in pharmacy, people working in the wider health and care sector and people in our own organisation.

## Focus on outcomes

We will continue to focus on the outcomes we want to achieve on behalf of the people using pharmacy services. This will mean we can give the people working in pharmacy the flexibility to innovate and adapt in a way that improves quality.

## Promote learning and improvement

We will work to continuously improve the quality of pharmacy. We will collect information from our work, and the work of others, so that we can share learning and promote improvement. And we will make sure that we also improve ourselves and work in the most efficient and effective ways.

## Collaborate

We are one part of a wider system that ensures people receive safe and effective care from pharmacy, and ensures that public trust in pharmacy is maintained. If we are to be successful, we must work alongside the people using pharmacy, the leaders of pharmacy, other regulators, and the wider health and care sector.

## Recognise the contribution of the whole pharmacy team

People receive safe and effective care when the skills, knowledge and contributions of everyone in the pharmacy team are used to their best effect. We will work in a way that recognises the whole pharmacy team's role in quality and improvement.

This strategy is our commitment to work with the people using pharmacy services, people working in pharmacy, and others, to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of people in Great Britain.





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