

# Provisional registration for pharmacists – survey findings

November 2020



# Contents

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Background</b> .....                        | <b>1</b> |
| Provisional registration for pharmacists ..... | 1        |
| Risk assessments and other requirements .....  | 1        |
| Survey methodology.....                        | 1        |
| <b>Survey findings</b> .....                   | <b>3</b> |
| Key findings .....                             | 3        |
| Employment and settings .....                  | 3        |
| Risk assessments .....                         | 6        |
| Access to clinical advice and guidance .....   | 7        |
| <b>Next steps</b> .....                        | <b>9</b> |

# Background

## Provisional registration for pharmacists

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the ability of trainees completing the pharmacist pre-registration scheme in 2020 to finish their training as planned, and to sit the registration assessment as originally scheduled. As a response to this, we have introduced provisional registration for these trainees.

The aim of provisional registration is to support and enable trainees to use their education and training to support NHS services and provide patient care effectively, while maintaining standards for entry to the register and protecting patient safety.

The individuals on this register are provisionally entered on Part 1 of the register as a pharmacist for a time-limited period, subject to certain restrictions as set out in **Initial education and training standards for pharmacists: criteria for registering provisionally**. They are required to meet the **standards for pharmacy professionals** including working within the limits of their skills and competence.

## Risk assessments and other requirements

We have produced **information for employers on their responsibilities** if they employ a provisionally-registered pharmacist, which sets out what employers must do to ensure safe and effective care and pharmacy services when employing a provisionally-registered pharmacist.

Employers must complete a risk assessment before a provisionally-registered pharmacist starts work. Employers must also put other requirements in place to support the provisionally-registered pharmacist and protect patient safety. These requirements include that the provisionally-registered pharmacist must practise under the guidance and direction of a senior pharmacist.

## Survey methodology

We sent a survey to all provisionally-registered pharmacists who joined the register on or before 1 October 2020 to enable us to check that employers have fulfilled their obligation to conduct a risk assessment. We also took this opportunity to ask provisionally-registered pharmacists about their employment and the pharmacy settings they work in, whether they have a named senior pharmacist and whether they have access to clinical advice and guidance if they need it. We provided opportunities for provisionally-registered pharmacists to raise any concerns they have on these matters.

We asked respondents to provide us with details about their employers (employer name, address and contact details) to enable us to follow up with employers directly where we are concerned that obligations are not being met.

The survey allowed respondents to tell us about up to two jobs that they work in as pharmacists. However, only 12 respondents reported working in a second job, therefore these data are not presented in detail in this report. Among this group, one risk assessment had not been completed and no concerns were raised in relation to these jobs.

We conducted two iterations of the survey in order to include multiple registrant cohorts. Both surveys were hosted online by Smart Survey, they contained the same set of questions and we sent a reminder email to registrants on both occasions. The first survey was open from 2 – 10 September. We sent it to 2,276 provisionally-registered pharmacists and we received responses from 892 registrants. The second survey was open from 7 – 26 October. This was sent to 196 additional registrants, as well as all those who did not respond to the first survey, and we heard from 329 registrants. **Across both surveys, we invited 2,472 provisional registrants to take part and 1,221 responded, giving a response rate of 49%.**

This report presents tables of grouped frequencies and percentages of responses to questions, combined across the two surveys. Please note that not all percentages add to 100% due to rounding.

# Survey findings

## Key findings

### Response rate

- 1,221 provisional registrants responded out of 2,472 (49% response rate).

### Employment and settings

- 80% (973 out of 1,221) of respondents were employed as pharmacists, with the top two settings being community pharmacy (58%; 564 out of 973) and hospital/secondary care (39%; 378 out of 973).
- 73% (182 out of 248) of those not currently working as pharmacists were looking for a job as a pharmacist.
- 68% (665 out of 973) of respondents worked in the same setting they trained in.

### Risk assessments

- 90% (873 out of 973) of respondents reported that their employers had completed their risk assessment, 3% (26 out of 973) said they hadn't, and 8% (74 out of 973) didn't know.
- Among respondents working in hospital/secondary care, 5% (18 out of 378) had not been risk assessed, compared to 1% (8 out of 564) of those working in community pharmacy.
- Only 2% (18 out of 973) had concerns about their risk assessments.

### Access to clinical advice and guidance

- 97% (942 out of 973) of respondents were informed of who their named senior pharmacist was.
- 98% (956 out of 973) had access to clinical advice and guidance if they needed it.
- Only 1% (13 out of 973) had concerns about their access to clinical advice and guidance.

The following sections present a full breakdown of survey responses. First, we cover employment and settings worked in among respondents, followed by employer risk assessment compliance, and finally access to clinical advice and guidance.

## Employment and settings

Near the start of the survey, respondents were asked if they were currently employed as pharmacists and, if so, the settings they worked in. Those who reported that they were not currently employed as

pharmacists were further asked if they were looking for work as a pharmacist, and then directed to the end of the survey.

**Table 1: Current employment as a pharmacist**

*Base: all respondents (n = 1,221)*

| Are you currently employed as a pharmacist? | Count        | %           |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| Yes   | 973          | 80%         |
| No  | 248          | 20%         |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>1,221</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Out of all respondents, 80% reported they were currently employed as pharmacists (Table 1).

**Table 2: Current employment in a second job as a pharmacist**

*Base: Those currently working as pharmacists (n = 973)*

| Are you employed as a pharmacist by another company or organisation? | Count      | %           |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Yes  | 12         | 1%          |
| No   | 961        | 99%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>973</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Almost all respondents were only employed in one job as a pharmacist (99%), with only 1% reporting that they held a second job (Table 2). Due to these small numbers, data relating to respondents' second jobs are not included in this report.

**Table 3: Looking for work as a pharmacist**

*Base: Those not currently working as pharmacists (n = 248)*

| Are you currently looking for employment as a pharmacist? | Count      | %           |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Yes   | 182        | 73%         |
| No  | 66         | 27%         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>248</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Among respondents who were not currently employed as pharmacists, 73% reported that they were looking for work as a pharmacist (Table 3).

**Table 4: Setting(s) worked in**

*Base: Those currently working as pharmacists (n = 973)*

| What setting do you currently work in?     | Count      | %           |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Community pharmacy (excluding online only) | 564        | 58%         |
| Hospital / secondary care                  | 378        | 39%         |
| GP practice / primary care                 | 17         | 2%          |
| Multiple settings                          | 10         | 1%          |
| Online only pharmacy                       | 3          | 0%          |
| Prison                                     | 1          | 0%          |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>973</b> | <b>100%</b> |

The two most common settings worked in by respondents were community pharmacy (excluding online; 58%) and hospital/secondary care (39%;

Table 4). A small number reported working in multiple settings (1%), which was generally a combination of community pharmacy (excluding online only) with hospital or GP practice.

**Table 5: Settings of training compared to settings worked in**

*Base: Those currently working as pharmacists (n = 973)*

| Are you employed in the same setting(s) in which you completed your pre-registration training? | Count      | %           |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Yes  | 665        | 68%         |
| No   | 308        | 32%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>973</b> | <b>100%</b> |

We asked respondents if they were employed in the same settings they were trained in - 68% said they were, but 32% of respondents were working in settings that were different to their training (Table 5).

## Risk assessments

**Table 6: Employer risk assessment compliance**

Base: Those currently working as pharmacists (n = 973)

| Has this employer completed your risk assessment? | Count      | %           |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Yes   | 873        | 90%         |
| No  | 26         | 3%          |
| Don't know  | 74         | 8%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>973</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Table 6 shows that the vast majority of respondents said that their employers had completed their risk assessment (90%) in their main job. However, 3% said they hadn't, and 8% didn't know.

**Table 7: Employer risk assessment compliance by setting**

Base: Those currently working as pharmacists (n = 973)

| Has this employer completed your risk assessment? | Yes        |            | No        |           | Don't know |           | Total      |             |
|---|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
|   | Count      | %          | Count     | %         | Count      | %         | Count      | %           |
| Community pharmacy                                | 527        | 93%        | 8         | 1%        | 29         | 5%        | 564        | 100%        |
| Hospital / secondary care                         | 321        | 85%        | 18        | 5%        | 39         | 10%       | 378        | 100%        |
| GP practice / primary care                        | 14         | 82%        | 0         | 0%        | 3          | 18%       | 17         | 100%        |
| Multiple settings                                 | 9          | 90%        | 0         | 0%        | 1          | 10%       | 10         | 100%        |
| Online only pharmacy                              | 1          | 33%        | 0         | 0%        | 2          | 67%       | 3          | 100%        |
| Prison  | 1          | 100%       | 0         | 0%        | 0          | 0%        | 1          | 100%        |
| <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>873</b> | <b>90%</b> | <b>26</b> | <b>3%</b> | <b>74</b>  | <b>8%</b> | <b>973</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Table 7 shows employer risk assessment compliance by the different settings worked in by respondents. Employers of respondents working in community pharmacy had the highest level of compliance (93%), while employers in hospital/secondary care (85%), GP practice (82%), and multiple settings (90%) had lower levels (NB. the numbers for online only pharmacy and prison are too small to draw meaning from). However, lower levels of compliance were generally due to respondents saying that they did not know whether their employer had conducted the risk assessment. Only 5% of respondents working in



hospital/secondary care said that they had not had a risk assessment, and 1% in community pharmacy. No respondents working in GP practice or across multiple settings reported they had not had one.

**Table 8: Concerns about risk assessments**

*Base: Those currently working as pharmacists (n = 973)*

| Do you have any concerns about your risk assessment? | Count      | %           |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Yes  | 18         | 2%          |
| No   | 955        | 98%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>973</b> | <b>100%</b> |

A small number of respondents said they had concerns about their risk assessment (2%; Table 8). These respondents were asked to tell us about their concerns, with the most frequent concern being that the risk assessment had not been completed. A small number of respondents mentioned other concerns relating to their employment arrangements.

## Access to clinical advice and guidance

**Table 9: Informed of named senior pharmacist**

*Base: Those currently working as pharmacists (n = 973)*

| In this role, have you been informed of who your named senior pharmacist is? | Count      | %           |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Yes  | 942        | 97%         |
| No   | 13         | 1%          |
| Don't know   | 18         | 2%          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>973</b> | <b>100%</b> |

A large majority of respondents reported that they had been informed of who their named senior pharmacist is (97%; Table 9).

**Table 10: Access to clinical advice and guidance**

*Base: Those currently working as pharmacists (n = 973)*

| In this role, do you have access to clinical advice and guidance when you need it? | Count      | %           |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Yes  | 956        | 98%         |
| No   | 3          | 0%          |
| Don't know   | 14         | 1%          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>973</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Again, almost all respondents reported that they had access to clinical advice and guidance in their roles when they need it (98%; Table 10).

**Table 11: Concerns about access to clinical advice and guidance**

*Base: Those currently working as pharmacists (n = 973)*

| Do you have any concerns about your access to clinical advice and guidance? | Count      | %           |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Yes   | 13         | 1%          |
| No  | 960        | 99%         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>973</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Table 11 shows that only a small number of respondents said they had concerns about their access to clinical advice and guidance (1%). Most concerns raised related to accessing appropriate guidance from senior staff members.

## Next steps

We will use this information gathered in this survey for insight and intelligence purposes, and take action if and when necessary.

In the small minority of cases where the survey identified issues with risk assessments and access to clinical support, we have contacted the employer to seek assurance that they have made steps to rectify these in all cases where we have been able to identify the employer's contact details. Our inspectors will follow up where necessary with registered pharmacies.

