

Workforce Projects  
DHSSPS  
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14 June 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

**Consultation on the future of pharmacy regulation in Northern Ireland**

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the regulator for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and registered pharmacy premises in Great Britain. Our role is to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and the public who use pharmaceutical services in England, Scotland and Wales.

We have a statutory role in relation to 'system' regulation (as we regulate registered pharmacies) as well as 'professional' regulation of individual pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. Our main work includes:

- setting standards for the education and training of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy support staff, and approving and accrediting their qualifications and training
- maintaining a register of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies
- setting the standards of conduct, ethics and performance that pharmacy professionals have to meet throughout their careers
- setting the standards of continuing professional development that pharmacy professionals have to achieve throughout their careers
- investigating concerns that pharmacy professionals are not meeting our standards, and taking action to restrict their ability to practise when this is necessary to protect patients and the public
- setting standards for registered pharmacies which require them to provide a safe and effective service to patients
- inspecting registered pharmacies to check if they are meeting our standards

We aim to secure the confidence of patients, the public and our registrants by regulating in a fair, proportionate and responsive way that identifies and mitigates risk, supports continual improvement in standards and quality of care and enables positive developments and innovations in practice.

We are also committed to regulating in a way that reflects divergent health structures in the NHS and wider health and care sectors across Great Britain as well as the respective devolved nature of health policies and legislative framework. We have a devolution strategy that sets out how we work to deliver consistent and effective outcomes in a way that takes account of the local context. We also work closely other regulators and key stakeholders across the UK on regulation and safety issues of UK wide interest including with colleagues in PSNI.

As a statutory body our roles and responsibilities are set out in legislation and we regulate according to the legislation that is in place. As such it is not for us to have a view on the draft proposals for future arrangements for pharmacy regulation in Northern Ireland set out in the consultation document. These are, rightly, for the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly to decide through the relevant decision making bodies and consideration of the public consultation.

While it is not for the GPhC to have a view on the current or future arrangements for pharmacy regulation in Northern Ireland we would wish to ensure that if there was to be a decision by governments to change our own existing regulatory responsibilities that any change be based on transparent, accountable, consistent and cost-effective arrangements. The GPhC is accountable for the effective deployment of resources funded by fees from registrants and pharmacy owners in England, Scotland and Wales and any changes to our regulatory remit would require appropriate transitional funding and governance. Furthermore we believe, in the interests of both the public and those we regulate, it would be imperative that any potential extension of our regulatory responsibilities should be based on clearly defined structures and regulatory functions which are consistent with those already in place across Great Britain.

We are happy to provide relevant information to help inform the consultation and decision making process and will continue to engage with the Department and other key stakeholders on this. If you would like further information on any of the points in this response, or any other aspects of the GPhC's work please do not hesitate to contact us on the details provided below.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Duncan Rudkin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Duncan Rudkin  
Chief Executive & Registrar

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