

Eugene Windsor
Clerk to the Health and Sport Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Email: HealthandSport@scottish.parliament.uk

8 April 2014

Dear Mr Windsor

Oral Evidence Session on the Scottish Government Action Plan for Pharmaceutical Care

I am writing with regard to the forthcoming oral evidence session that the Health and Sport Committee are holding on Prescription for Excellence- the Scottish Government's action plan for pharmaceutical care.

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the regulator for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies in Great Britain. It is our job 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 protect the public in two main ways- by registering competent professionals to practise pharmacy and by regulating pharmacies. Our core functions are:

- setting the standards of education and training which pharmacists and pharmacy technicians must meet in order to join our register and to remain registered throughout their professional life
- registering pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and setting the standards of conduct, ethics and performance which they must meet in order to stay on our register
- setting standards which must be met by the owners of registered pharmacies
- registering pharmacies which meet our standards and inspecting pharmacies to check that that they continue to do so; and
- taking action when our standards are not met

The GPhC welcomes developments and innovations in pharmacy practice which have the potential to bring significant benefits to patients and the public and is keen to work closely with the Scottish Government and others to play our part in taking forward the ambitions set out in Prescription for Excellence.

Pharmacy is changing rapidly across Great Britain and we want to ensure that our regulatory approach reflects and responds to these changes. We also want to use our functions to provide assurance about

pharmacy professionals and pharmacy services, so that the public can have confidence in expanding roles and services.

The themes of Prescription for Excellence are consistent with our emphasis on supporting and enabling pharmacy professionals to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of patients. We believe that professionalism, not rules and regulations, offers the best protection for patients and want to use our regulatory approach to support patient centred professionalism in pharmacy. We have developed standards for individual pharmacy professionals and standards for registered pharmacies which focus on the outcomes we think should be achieved for patients. These standards are designed to take account of the different models for delivering pharmacy services across Great Britain and support evolving developments in practice. We believe that our standards fit with the ambitions for pharmaceutical care set out in Prescription for Excellence and will seek to ensure that this continues to be the case as part of our ongoing programme of work to review our standards. Our standards can be found at <http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/standards>.

We have recently developed and rolled out a new model for inspecting pharmacies and are committed to ensuring that our inspection approach is flexible enough to reflect structures and service delivery models in Scotland both now and in the future. The data we capture from our inspections and other regulatory functions could prove helpful to the development and delivery of the action plan's proposals. We are one part of a complex system for overseeing and improving the quality of pharmacy care and services in Scotland and recognise that we have an important role to play in sharing information and working effectively with health boards and other relevant organisations to help drive continuous improvement at a local and national level. We are in the process of developing collaborative working agreements with a range of stakeholders in Scotland to facilitate this.

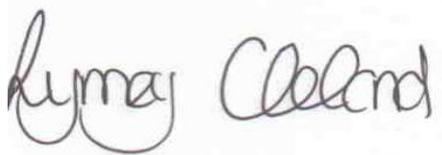
The increasing clinical role of pharmacists and the changing role of pharmacy technicians outlined in Prescription for Excellence is something we will be considering in the context of our education and training work. In line with our general approach to standards, our education and training standards focus on the outcomes we wish to achieve to ensure newly registered pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are competent to practise safely and effectively. Our education and training standards are intended to be flexible enough to respond to developments in practice and to support multidisciplinary learning. Our standards have also been written in such a way that they could accommodate potential changes to the current model for delivering initial education and training in Scotland. We regularly review these standards and will consider if and how our standards may need to change so pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are properly equipped to take on greater roles in delivering health services. We are also working to strengthen the assurance we are able to provide about the continuing fitness to practise of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians throughout their working lives, which will be increasingly important as pharmacy professionals take on new clinical roles.

As the regulator of both pharmacy professionals and pharmacists the GPhC is in a unique position to be able to build a detailed understanding of pharmacy practice today. We recently undertook our first major survey about the day-to-day roles and responsibilities of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. The findings of this work will be used to inform our ongoing work to improve the way pharmacy professionals and services are regulated. The full results of our survey have also been made publically available to help others, including those working in public health policy and workforce planning, to develop a greater understanding of pharmacy today. We have shared our findings, including a summary

of our specific findings for Scotland, with the Scottish Government, NHS Education for Scotland and other key stakeholders. We hope that this will provide a useful evidence base to help inform some of the workforce planning discussions associated with delivering the action plan. Further information about the survey and its findings are available at <http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/registrant-survey-2013>.

I hope the above information is of assistance to the Committee. If you would like further information or clarification about any aspects of the GPhC's work please do not hesitate to contact me on the details provided below.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynsey Cleland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

Lynsey Cleland
Director for Scotland
General Pharmaceutical Council
DD: 020 3365 3426
Email: lynsey.cleland@pharmacyregulation.org