



Snapshot

Annual review of performance 2020/21



Regulator reviewed: **Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland**

Key facts & figures:

- regulates the practice of **pharmacists** and also registers **pharmacy premises** in **Northern Ireland**
- **2,870** professionals on register, 553 pharmacies (as at 30 September 2021)
- **£398** annual fee for registration (£155 for pharmacies)

Standards of good regulation met

General Standards	5/5
Guidance and Standards	2/2
Education and Training	2/2
Registration	4/4
Fitness to Practise	4/5

We look carefully at a range of evidence to decide whether each Standard is met or not. The total number of Standards met does not on its own give the full picture of how a regulator is performing. Read the full performance review to find out more.

Find out more about our performance reviews at:
www.professionalstandards.org.uk/performancereviews

Focus on: How the PSNI is meeting the Standards

The PSNI has met 17 of the 18 Standards of Good Regulation. It did not meet Standard 15 because, although it addressed the concerns we have reported about its fitness to practise process since our audit in 2018/19, we had concerns about the fairness and transparency of several other aspects of its process.

GENERAL STANDARDS: UNDERSTANDING THE DIVERSITY OF OTHERS WHO INTERACT WITH THE REGULATOR

Last year, we were concerned that the PSNI did not collect or analyse EDI data on its Council or Committee members. The PSNI maintains it has no legitimate reason for collecting EDI data on its Council members. Our view is that this is important in order for it to have a full understanding of the diversity of its decision-makers. However, the PSNI has started collecting data on its Committee members this year and identified potential areas for improvement. It also holds a reasonable amount of data about the diversity of its registrants and uses this to inform its work, including its Equality Impact Assessments, which are of a good standard. On balance, we determined that the PSNI met Standard 3 this year.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING: HAS A PROPORTIONATE AND TRANSPARENT MECHANISM FOR ASSURING ITSELF THAT THE EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS ARE DELIVERING STUDENTS AND TRAINEES THAT MEET THE REGULATOR'S REQUIREMENTS

The PSNI and GPhC's plans to hold the first sitting of the joint common registration assessment in June 2021 were disrupted by the pandemic. To avoid delays for candidates, the PSNI arranged its own separate registration assessment in June 2021 and there were no reported issues with the sittings. The pass rate was comparable to previous years and the PSNI's decision to proceed with a separate registration assessment was welcomed by stakeholders.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE PROCESS

The PSNI has addressed the concerns we reported in 2018/19. Information about the process is routinely shared with participants, case updates are provided in line with the PSNI's new fitness to practise Communications policy and reasons for decisions are contemporaneously recorded and shared with the participants. While this meant that Standard 18 was met this year, we determined Standard 15 was not met because we identified other concerns about the fitness to practise process:

- registrants are not always explicitly told they are the subject of the investigation
- the PSNI's position on investigating cases without the consent of the complainant is that it does not consider it appropriate to disclose a complainant's details against their wishes, even in serious cases
- the PSNI did not accept that if a registrant under investigation knows the Registrar, this could be a perceived or actual conflict of interest
- the PSNI has not published information setting out its interpretation of the Statutory Committee's powers when reviewing Conditions of Practice Orders.

We consider that it is important that the PSNI should address these points.

You can find out more details in the full report which is available on our website www.professionalstandards.org.uk/performance-reviews