



Snapshot

Annual review of performance



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

Key facts & figures:

- regulates the practice of **pharmacists** and also registers **pharmacy premises** in **Northern Ireland**
- **2,360** professionals on register (as at 30/09/2016)
- **£398** annual fee for registration

Standards of good regulation

Core functions

Annual performance review 2015/16

Met

(number of Standards)

Guidance & Standards

4/4

Education & Training

4/4

Registration

6/6

Fitness to Practise

10/10

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www.professionalstandards.org.uk/performancereviews

Focus on: **Activities and actions demonstrating how the PSNI is meeting the Standards**

The PSNI has met all of our Standards of Good Regulation and this represents an improvement in their performance since last year. However, there are problems with the legislation governing the PSNI. While the PSNI has been able to establish work-arounds which ensure that public protection is not compromised, we believe that it is important to address these problems so that they do not cause further difficulties in future.

GUIDANCE AND STANDARDS: ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE HELPS REGISTRANTS APPLY THE REGULATOR'S STANDARDS

The PSNI reviewed and updated additional guidance for registrants, including guidance on patient confidentiality and maintaining clear professional boundaries with patients and carers.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING: PROCESS FOR QUALITY-ASSURING PROGRAMMES IS PROPORTIONATE

The PSNI and the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) work together to quality assure undergraduate and education programmes for pharmacists in Northern Ireland, and the PSNI adopted the GPhC's accreditation methodology into its own procedures. There are two pharmacy degree courses accredited in Northern Ireland and, during this review period, one was reaccredited and the other was subject to an interim accreditation visit. An independent prescribing course was also reaccredited.

REGISTRATION: REGISTRANTS MAINTAIN THE STANDARDS REQUIRED TO STAY FIT TO PRACTISE

The PSNI requires its registrants to submit a continuing professional development (CPD) portfolio each year as a condition of their registration and audits a sample to ensure they meet its standards; registrants whose initial portfolio does not meet the standards are given the opportunity to remedy any deficiencies. In 2015/16 six registrants were removed from the register for non-compliance with the CPD requirements. In May 2016 the PSNI decided to develop a continuing fitness to practise 'straw model' comprising three elements: CPD, peer review, and case studies. An expert advisory group has been established to support the development work, and the resulting model will be piloted before being introduced.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE: ALL DECISIONS ARE WELL-REASONED, CONSISTENT AND PROTECT THE PUBLIC

We noted that the PSNI's Registrar had granted an application for voluntary removal from a registrant who was subject to an interim order and ongoing fitness to practise proceedings. We were unable to find any information about the process followed or any decision-making guidance for the Registrar, so we asked for more details. The PSNI provided additional details about the process and why they had granted the voluntary removal. We are therefore satisfied that the PSNI exercised its powers appropriately.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE: INFORMATION ABOUT FITNESS TO PRACTISE CASES IS SECURELY RETAINED

The PSNI did not meet this Standard in 2013/14 due to a serious data breach. The PSNI commissioned an external audit of its data protection procedures, including recommendations to take on-board. In August 2015, a follow-up audit was carried out to measure progress and found that the recommendations had been implemented, with an exception around staff and PSNI Council members signing a declaration confirming that they understood their data protection responsibilities. The audit also identified that data protection refresher training for staff was required. The PSNI took action to address both these issues. No data breaches were reported to the Information Commissioner's Office in 2015/16 and we have seen nothing to suggest that the PSNI is not securely retaining information about fitness to practise cases.

The full report is available from our website. It covers the PSNI's performance from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.