



Snapshot

Annual review of performance 2019/20



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

Key facts & figures:

- Regulates **pharmacists** and **registered pharmacies** in Northern Ireland
- **2,766 pharmacy professionals** and **554 pharmacy premises** on the register at 30 September 2020
- Annual retention fee is **£398** for pharmacists; and **£155** for pharmacy premises

Standards of good regulation met

General Standards	4/5
Guidance and Standards	2/2
Education and Training	2/2
Registration	4/4
Fitness to Practise	3/5

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 15 of the 18 Standards of Good Regulation. It did not meet Standard 3 because it does not collect or analyse EDI data about its Council and Committee members, who make key decisions within the PSNI's statutory and non-statutory functions. Last year, we reported concerns about the PSNI's fitness to practise process. It is clear from changes made by the PSNI that it is committed to addressing the concerns. However, we are yet to see tangible evidence of the impact the changes have had and there appear to be early indicators of a deterioration in the timeliness of case progression. We concluded that the PSNI has not met Standards 15 and 18 this year.

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

The PSNI is the only regulator we oversee which does not attempt to collect and analyse EDI data on its Council and Committee members. The number of Committee members and associates varies amongst the regulators but they all have a similar number of Council members. The PSNI is not responsible for the recruitment or appointments process for its Council members and it operates in a different jurisdiction, with different demographics to the other regulators. However, these members make key decisions within the PSNI's statutory and non-statutory functions and therefore we consider it important for the PSNI to have an evidence-based understanding of their diversity and how it compares to the PSNI's register and the wider population of Northern Ireland. Collecting and analysing EDI data on these members would be a way of gaining this understanding.

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

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted the PSNI's ability to administer its registration assessment in the usual way and on the usual dates. Although administered two months later than usual, the PSNI was able to make alternative arrangements for the exam to take place with no apparent impact on the pass rate. Previous plans to introduce a joint common registration assessment with the GPhC have been pushed back to avoid delays for candidates in Northern Ireland because the differing circumstances of the regulators meant they responded differently to the pandemic and, as a result, the regulators' assessment dates in 2021 are not aligned.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE

The PSNI updated its training and guidance for Scrutiny and Statutory Committee members. We have identified some additional areas where these tools could be further strengthened to ensure the Committees understand their role and remit and to clearly set out the PSNI's approach to the Statutory Committee's powers. The PSNI has made changes to address concerns we reported last year about the transparency and fairness of the fitness to practise process and about the information provided to parties to support them to participate effectively in that process. The changes appear to be appropriately focused on the areas of concern and were implemented promptly. We welcome this clear commitment from the PSNI to address our concerns but we have not yet seen tangible evidence of the impact these changes have had. There also appear to be early indicators of a deterioration in the timeliness of case progression.

The PSNI disagreed with the outcome in Standard 3, in relation to Council recruitment, and in relation to Standards 15 and 18 on all counts. It has published [a response](#) to our report on its website.

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