

Equality Impact Assessment

A Consultation on amendments to General Regulations: Initial Education and Training Reforms

Phase 1 – Pre-Consultation

If you require this document in an alternative format,
please contact us at Pharmaceutical Society NI,
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number 028 90326927 or by email to
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and we will assist you.

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Section A: Details about the policy/decision to be screened

Title of policy / decision to be screened.

A Consultation on amendments to General Regulations: Initial Education and Training Reforms

Description of the policy to be screened.

The Pharmaceutical Society Northern Ireland (PSNI) wishes to amend the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (General) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1994 (S.R. 1994 No. 202) to reflect the pending implementation of agreed reforms to the initial education and training of pharmacists in Northern Ireland (NI).

In 2021, new regulatory standards for Initial Education and Training (IET) of pharmacists were jointly developed and adopted by the UK Pharmacy regulators, the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) and the PSNI.

Since 2021 the four-year undergraduate MPharm degree and other changes introduced in NI have successfully delivered an increased level of experiential learning (EL) within the undergraduate degree.

Now further changes are needed to update the regulations to support the new Foundation Training Year.

The proposals include:

- Inclusion of Independent Prescriber (IP) training in the Foundation Training Year (FTY).
- Widening the permitted locations of the FTY in NI to include hospital, community and General Practice settings.
- Removing the requirement for an Educational Supervisor to have a sole pupil.
- Enabling annotation as an Independent Prescriber immediately upon registration, removing the requirement for two years' post-qualification practice before qualifying as an IP.

The amendments also propose to update arrangements for the recognition of pharmacists registered outside Great Britain and Northern Ireland and acknowledge the position of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) as the statutory regulator of Pharmacists in Great Britain.

The view of the Pharmaceutical Society NI is that these proposals will deliver benefits to pharmacists and those who use their services by supporting the adoption of the 2021 Joint Standards.

The strong emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the new 2021 Joint Standards will greatly benefit trainee pharmacists and patients by supporting timely access to quality healthcare for all, regardless of Section 75 group. We anticipate the proposals will deliver positive results for all groups.

Main Stakeholders Affected

X	Public / Patients
X	Pharmacist Registrants and future Pharmacist Registrants
X	Pharmacy Foundation Training Year Trainees (FTY Trainees)
X	Others (please specify) Training and Educational Providers: The Northern Ireland Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development (NICPLD) will be affected by these changes as they are responsible for delivering the Foundation Training Year. The two Universities in Northern Ireland that are delivering MPharm course (Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University) will also be indirectly affected.

Other policies with a bearing on this policy.

The Joint Pharmaceutical Society NI and General Pharmaceutical Council Standards for Initial Education and Training of Pharmacists 2021.
[Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists January 2021 final v1.4.pdf](#)

Section B: Available Evidence

Data Sources (Please list)

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence / information																											
Age	<u>General Information</u> The distribution of pharmacists within each age category, who responded to the 2024-2025 Pharmaceutical Society NI Interim Equality Survey (period up to 25 October 2024) compared to the general population distribution is displayed in Table A below. ^{1/2} <u>Table A: Age Range of Pharmacists (2024) Compared to Northern Ireland Population Statistics Census (2021)</u> <table><tr><th>Age Groups</th><th>Pharmacists</th><th>General Population³</th></tr><tr><td>20-24</td><td>2.94%</td><td>5.85%</td></tr><tr><td>25-34</td><td>34.0%</td><td>12.74%</td></tr><tr><td>35-44</td><td>33.77%</td><td>13.11%</td></tr><tr><td>45-54</td><td>17.52%</td><td>13.27%</td></tr><tr><td>55-64</td><td>8.83%</td><td>12.73%</td></tr><tr><td>65-74</td><td>1.17%</td><td>9.30%</td></tr><tr><td>75 and over</td><td>Nil</td><td>7.86%</td></tr><tr><td>Prefer not to say</td><td>1.77%</td><td>n/a</td></tr></table> <i>(Pharmacists who completed the survey: n= 2,141)</i> <i>Total number of pharmacists in October 2024 = 2,960</i> <i>Return rate 72.33%</i> The majority of pharmacists who responded to the 2024-2025 equality questionnaire were aged between 25-54 years. In 2023-2024 there were 137 trainees, of which 108 were under 25. The Society will monitor any impacts of the proposals in relation to the age of pharmacists and trainees and consider any further evidence provided to us. The strong emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the new 2021 Joint Standards will greatly benefit trainee pharmacists and patients by supporting access to quality training and healthcare for all age groups	Age Groups	Pharmacists	General Population ³	20-24	2.94%	5.85%	25-34	34.0%	12.74%	35-44	33.77%	13.11%	45-54	17.52%	13.27%	55-64	8.83%	12.73%	65-74	1.17%	9.30%	75 and over	Nil	7.86%	Prefer not to say	1.77%	n/a
Age Groups	Pharmacists	General Population ³																										
20-24	2.94%	5.85%																										
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75 and over	Nil	7.86%																										
Prefer not to say	1.77%	n/a																										

¹Pharmaceutical Society Northern Ireland (2024) [Interim Equality Monitoring Survey 2024- 25](#) (accessed January 2025).

²NISRA (2023) '[Age - five year age bands - all usual residents MS-A02 \[UPDATED\]](#)' (accessed December 2024).

³ Excluded 0-20 age group so will not equal 100%.

Dependants	<u>General Information</u> The distribution of pharmacists who responded to the 2024-2025 Pharmaceutical Society NI Interim Equality Survey, with dependants and without dependants, is displayed in Table B. <u>Table B: Registrants Equality Survey 2024-2025</u> <u>Personal Responsibility for the care of dependants^{4/5}</u> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type of Dependant</th><th>Percentage of Pharmacists</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Child (one or more)</td><td>50.44%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Person with a disability</td><td>2.01%</td></tr> <tr> <td>A dependant older person</td><td>4.12%</td></tr> <tr> <td>None of the above</td><td>43.10%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Prefer not to say</td><td>3.79%</td></tr> </tbody> </table> (n=2,137) Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option to reflect their caring responsibility so total exceeds 100% <u>Northern Ireland Population Statistics</u> The information in the 2021 Census, published in May 2022, shows that the children's dependency ratio has fallen from 46 children per 100 people of working age (in 1926) to 30 children per 100 people of working age (in 2021).⁶ The Census also reports that the number of people aged 65 and over for every 100 people of working age has risen from 13 (in 1926) to 27 (in 2021).⁷ The Census 2021 recorded that one person in eight of the population (or 222,200 people) provided unpaid care to a relative or friend who had a health condition or illness.⁸ The Society will monitor the impact of our proposals in relation to pharmacists and patients with dependants and consider any further evidence provided to us.	Type of Dependant	Percentage of Pharmacists	Child (one or more)	50.44%	Person with a disability	2.01%	A dependant older person	4.12%	None of the above	43.10%	Prefer not to say	3.79%
Type of Dependant	Percentage of Pharmacists												
Child (one or more)	50.44%												
Person with a disability	2.01%												
A dependant older person	4.12%												
None of the above	43.10%												
Prefer not to say	3.79%												

⁴Pharmaceutical Society Northern Ireland (2024) [Interim Equality Monitoring Survey 2024- 25](#) (accessed January 2025).

⁵ Note that one person may have selected more than one category therefore totals exceed 100%.

⁶ NISRA (2021) [Census 2021 population and household estimates for Northern Ireland: Statistical bulletin \(May 2021\)](#) (accessed December 2024).

⁷ Ibid (as above).

⁸ 2021 Main Statistics – Phase 2. Census 2021 health & housing statistics released available at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/census-2021-main-statistics-for-northern-ireland-phase-2-press-release.pdf> (accessed December 2024).

	The strong emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the new 2021 Joint Standards, will greatly benefit trainee pharmacists and patients by supporting access to quality training and healthcare for people with dependants.
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Disability

General Information

The distribution of pharmacists who reported having a disability in the 2024-2025 Pharmaceutical Society NI Interim Equality Survey, is displayed below in Table C.

Table C: The Registrants Interim Equality Survey 2024-2025^{9/10}

Disability Status	Percentage of Pharmacists
Disability	1.78%
No Disability	95.21%
Prefer not to say	3.00%

(n=2,131)

Table D: Foundation Year Trainees

Disability Status	Percentage of Trainees
Disability	3.65 %
No Disability	96.35%

(n=137)

General population data

In Northern Ireland, one person in four (24.3% or 463,000 people) had a limiting long-term health problem or disability, 40% of which were aged 65 or more (185,300 people).¹¹

The Pharmaceutical Society NI will monitor the impact of our proposals in relation to people with disabilities and consider any further evidence provided to us.

The strong emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the new 2021 Joint Standards will greatly benefit trainee pharmacists and patients by supporting access to quality training and healthcare for people with disabilities.

⁹Pharmaceutical Society Northern Ireland (2024) [Interim Equality Monitoring Survey 2024- 25](#) (accessed January 2025).

¹⁰ NICPLD (2023) 'Equality Monitoring Data for Foundation Year Training Students 2022-23 Cohort' (unpublished data).

¹¹ NISRA (2022) '[Census 2021 Main statistics for Northern Ireland - Statistical bulletin - Health](#)' p. 18 (accessed January 2025).

Marital Status

General Information

The distribution of pharmacists who reported their marital status in the 2024-2025 Pharmaceutical Society Interim Equality Survey, together with information on the general population, is displayed in Table E.

Table E: Marital Status of Pharmacists Compared to Northern Ireland Population Statistics Census 2021

Marital Status	Pharmacists ¹²	General Population ¹³
Single	31.00%	38.07%
Married	61.94%	45.59%
Civil Partnership	0.51%	0.18%
Separated but legally married	1.03%	3.78%
Divorced	1.64%	6.02%
Widowed	0.37%	6.36%
Separated but legally in a Civil Partnership	0.05%	Not asked
Prefer not to say	3.46%	Not asked

(Pharmacists: n=2,139)

The Pharmaceutical Society NI will monitor the impact of our proposals about marital status and consider any further evidence provided to us.

The strong emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the new 2021 Joint Standards will greatly benefit trainee pharmacists and patients by supporting timely access to quality training and healthcare for people of all marital statuses.

¹²Pharmaceutical Society Northern Ireland (2024) [Interim Equality Monitoring Survey 2024- 25](#) (accessed January 2025).

¹³NISRA (2024) [CT0069 Marital and civil partnership status](#) (accessed December 2024).

Men and Women generally

The reported gender of pharmacists, in the 2024-2025 Pharmaceutical Society NI Interim Equality Survey, is displayed below in Table F and reported gender distribution in the general population in Table G.

Table F: Registrant's Interim Equality Survey 2024-2025¹⁴

Gender identity	Percentage
Female	69.42%
Male	28.42%
Transgender	0.09%
Prefer not to say	2.06

(n=2,139)

Table G: Northern Ireland Population Statistics 2021¹⁵

Gender Identity	Percentage
Male	49.19%
Female	50.81%

In the gender identity Census question in Northern Ireland only the binary response categories "Female" and "Male" were included.

A NISRA 2021 report commented that less than 0.1% of respondents in Northern Ireland reported that they were transgender.¹⁶

The Pharmaceutical Society NI did not find evidence to suggest a negative impact of these proposals in relation to political opinion and will monitor the impact of our proposals and consider any further evidence provided to us.

The strong emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the new 2021 Joint Standards will greatly benefit trainee pharmacists and patients by supporting timely access to quality training and healthcare for people of all political opinions.

¹⁴ Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (2024) [Interim Equality Monitoring Survey 2024-2025](#)' (accessed January 2025).

¹⁵NISRA (2023) '[Sex MS-A07](#)' (accessed December 2024).

¹⁶NISRA (2021) '[Topic report: Research on measuring gender identity](#)' (accessed December 2024).

Political Opinion

There is no data held in relation to the political opinion of pharmacists by the Pharmaceutical Society NI. The May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election had the following breakdown of first preference votes based on a turnout of 63%.

Table H: First Preference Votes¹⁷

Political Party	Percentage
SF	29.0%
DUP	21.3%
AP	13.5%
UUP	11.2%
SDLP	9.1%
OTHERS	15.8%

The Pharmaceutical Society NI did not find evidence to suggest a negative impact of these proposals in relation to political opinion and will monitor the impact of our proposals and consider any further evidence provided to us.

The strong emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the new 2021 Joint Standards will greatly benefit trainee pharmacists and patients by supporting access to quality training and healthcare for people of all political opinions.

¹⁷ NI Assembly - [2422.pdf](#)

Race / Ethnicity

The reported race (ethnicity) of pharmacists in the 2024-2025 Pharmaceutical Society NI Interim Equality Survey is shown below in Table I, Foundation Training Year in Table J and information on the general population in Table K.

Table I: Registrant's Interim Equality Survey 2024-2025^{18/19}

Race / Ethnicity	Percentage
White	93.41%
Irish Traveller	0.09%
Roma	0%
Black African	0.7%
Black Other	0.05%
Chinese	1.17%
Indian	0.42%
Mixed	0.47%
Filipino	0.09%
Prefer not to say	3.13%
Other	0.47%

(n=2,140)

Table J: Number of Foundation Year Trainees by Racial / Ethnic Identity in the 2022-23 Intake²⁰

Race / Ethnicity	Percentage
White (British and Irish)	83.94%
Asian (all backgrounds)	10.95%
Mixed	1.46%
Black (all backgrounds)	1.46%
Prefer not to say	2.19%

(n=137)

¹⁸ Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (2024) '[Equality Monitoring Survey 2024-2025](#)' (accessed January 2025).

¹⁹ Note the census 2021 question changed and this was reflected in the new 2024-2025 registrants survey. Pakistani was no longer a separate group although it could be specified.

²⁰ NICPLD (2023) 'Equality Monitoring Data for Foundation year Training Students 2022-23 Cohort' (unpublished data).

**Table K: Northern Ireland Census 2021
ethnic group statistics²¹**

Race / Ethnicity	Percentage
White	96.6%
Irish Traveller	0.1%
Roma	0.1%
Indian	0.5%
Chinese	0.5%
Filipino	0.2%
Pakistani	0.1%
Arab	0.1%
Other Asian	0.3%
Black	0.6%
Mixed	0.8%
Other Ethnicities	0.2%

The proposed amendments to Regulation 11 of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (General) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1994, ensures that non-EEA and Swiss applicants can still apply to register through the GPhC recognised qualifying courses route. The Pharmaceutical Society NI will monitor the impact of our proposals in relation to race/ethnicity and consider any further evidence provided to us.

The strong emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the new 2021 Joint Standards will greatly benefit trainee pharmacists and patients by supporting access to quality training and healthcare for people of all ethnic groups.

We do not anticipate a negative impact of these proposals in relation to race/ethnicity.

²¹ NISRA (2022) '[Main statistics for Northern Ireland Statistical Bulletin Ethnic group September 2022](#)' (accessed December 2024).

Religious Belief

The reported religious belief of pharmacists in the 2024-2025 Pharmaceutical Society Interim Equality Survey is shown below together with information on the general population in Table L.

Table L: Registrant's Interim Equality Survey 2024-2025 and the Northern Ireland Census 2021 population statistics for religion

Religious Belief	Pharmacists ²²	General Population ²³
Christian Protestant	30.15%	43.5% (protestant and other Christian)
Christian Roman Catholic	48.39%	45.7%
Christian Other	2.24%	N/A
Buddhist	0.05%	Other religions 1.5%
Hindu	0.14%	
Jewish	0.09%	
Muslim	0.51%	
Sikh	0.05%	
No religion	10.61%	9.3%
Prefer not to say	7.43%	N/A
Other	0.33%	N/A

(Pharmacists: n=2,139)

We do not anticipate a negative impact of these proposals in relation to religious belief.

We do not anticipate a negative impact of these proposals in relation to race/ethnicity. The Pharmaceutical Society NI will monitor the impact of our proposals in relation to race / ethnicity and consider any further evidence provided to us.

The strong emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the new 2021 Joint Standards will benefit trainee pharmacists and patients by supporting access to quality healthcare for people from all religious beliefs and none.

²² Pharmaceutical Society Northern Ireland (2024) '[Interim Equality Monitoring Survey 2024-2025](#)' (accessed January 2025).

²³ NISRA (2022) '[Main statistics for Northern Ireland Statistical Bulletin Religion September 2022](#)' (accessed December 2024).

Sexual Orientation	The reported sexual orientation of pharmacists, in the 2024-2025 Pharmaceutical Society NI Interim Equality Survey, is shown below in Table M, together with information on the general population. <u>Table M: Registrant’s Interim Equality Survey 2024-2025 and Northern Ireland Census 2021 Statistics</u> <table><tr><th>Sexual Orientation</th><th>Pharmacists²⁴</th><th>General population²⁵</th></tr><tr><td>Straight or heterosexual</td><td>90.58%</td><td>90.00%</td></tr><tr><td>Gay or lesbian</td><td>2.58%</td><td>1.2%</td></tr><tr><td>Bisexual</td><td>0.94%</td><td>0.7%</td></tr><tr><td>Other sexual orientation</td><td>not asked</td><td>0.2%</td></tr><tr><td>Prefer not to say</td><td>5.9%</td><td>7.9%</td></tr></table> <i>(Pharmacists: n=2,134)</i> We do not anticipate a negative impact of these proposals in relation to sexual orientation. The Pharmaceutical Society NI will monitor the impact of our proposals in relation to sexual orientation and consider any further evidence provided to us. The strong emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the new 2021 Joint Standards will benefit trainee pharmacists and patients by supporting access to quality training and healthcare for people from all ethnicities.	Sexual Orientation	Pharmacists²⁴	General population²⁵	Straight or heterosexual	90.58%	90.00%	Gay or lesbian	2.58%	1.2%	Bisexual	0.94%	0.7%	Other sexual orientation	not asked	0.2%	Prefer not to say	5.9%	7.9%
Sexual Orientation	Pharmacists²⁴	General population²⁵																	
Straight or heterosexual	90.58%	90.00%																	
Gay or lesbian	2.58%	1.2%																	
Bisexual	0.94%	0.7%																	
Other sexual orientation	not asked	0.2%																	
Prefer not to say	5.9%	7.9%																	

²⁴ Pharmaceutical Society Northern Ireland (2024) '[Interim Equality Monitoring Survey 2024-2025](#)' (accessed January 2025).

²⁵ NISRA (2023) '[Census 2021 Main statistics for Northern Ireland - Statistical bulletin - Sexual orientation](#)' (accessed December 2024).

Section C: Assessment

Question: Will the proposed policy or decision impose inappropriate barriers or otherwise disadvantage people with protected characteristics?

Section 75 Category	Analysis	Level of impact: Yes - Minor / Yes Major / No
Age	The proposals, in supporting adoption of the new 2021 Joint Standards, will create a training environment that supports equality, diversity and inclusion. We identified no negative impacts in relation to age.	No
Dependants	The proposals, in supporting adoption of the new 2021 Joint Standards, will create a training environment that supports equality, diversity and inclusion. We identified no negative impact in relation to dependants.	No
Disability	The proposals, in supporting adoption of the new 2021 Joint Standards, will create a training environment that supports equality, diversity and inclusion. We identified no negative impact for people with disabilities.	No
Marital Status	The proposals, in supporting adoption of the new 2021 Joint Standards, will create a training environment that supports equality, diversity and inclusion. We identified no negative impact for people in relation to marital status.	No
Men and Women generally	The proposals, in supporting adoption of the new 2021 Joint Standards, will create a training environment that supports equality, diversity and inclusion. We identified no negative impact for men or women generally.	No
Political Opinion	The proposals, in supporting adoption of the new 2021 Joint Standards, will create a training environment that supports equality, diversity and inclusion. We identified no negative impact in relation to political opinion.	No
Race / Ethnicity	The proposals, in supporting adoption of the new 2021 Joint Standards, will create a training environment that supports equality, diversity and inclusion. We identified no negative impact in relation to race and ethnicity.	No

Religious Belief	The proposals, in supporting adoption of the new 2021 Joint Standards, will create a training environment that supports equality, diversity and inclusion. We identified no negative impact in relation to religious belief.	No
Sexual Orientation	The proposals, in supporting adoption of the new 2021 Joint Standards, will create a training environment that supports equality, diversity and inclusion. We identified no negative impact in relation to sexual orientation.	No

Section D Record of Screening Decision

Title of policy / decision to be screened.

A Consultation on amendments to the General Regulations to enable Initial Education and Training Reforms

On the basis of the answers to the screening question, I recommend that this policy / decision is –

☐	<u>Screened In</u> – Necessary to conduct a full Equality Assessment
☒	<u>Screened Out</u> – No Equality Assessment necessary (no impacts) N/A
☐	<u>Screened Out</u> – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)

Screening assessment completed by:

Name: Suzanne Thompson

Job title: Policy Officer

Signature:



Date 22/01/2025

Screening decision approved by:

Name: Emer Hopkins

Job title: Deputy Registrar and Head of Regulatory Strategy & Education

Signature:



Date: 22/01/2025