

Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland

Annual Report and Accounts 2010/11



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Ann Bowen
President of the Pharmaceutical
Society of Northern Ireland

Foreword from the President

I am pleased to report another year of progress in delivering modernisation of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland's regulatory role, and the separation of its professional role.

The DHSSPS has recently concluded formal consultation on changes to legislation that will help to underpin the delivery of regulatory modernisation in statute:

- A new range of options for use in Fitness to Practise will enhance the fairness and proportionality of procedures and decisions, and the delivery of quality assured outcomes in the interests of patient safety;
 - New processes to create an appointed Council with equal lay and professional membership will mean the Governance recommendations of Trust, Assurance and Safety (2007) can be met;
 - Statutory CPD will ensure every practising pharmacist in Northern Ireland is meeting the same professional standard in relation to keeping their skills and competence up to date; and,
- Statutory reporting to the Northern Ireland Assembly will ensure local accountability for all that the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland does.

You may recall in the foreword to last year's Annual Report I highlighted the work being commenced to set up a Professional Forum, which would act as the professional body for pharmacy and be very clearly separated from the Society's regulatory role. I am therefore pleased to share with you that in the intervening year the following has taken place:

- a competitive election to the Professional Forum Board, contested on strategic issues in relation to the future of pharmacy;
- early emerging work in relation to a formal scheme of delegation of functions from the Council to the Forum;
- elections of the Forum's Chair and Vice-Chair to spearhead the growth of its public voice; and also,
- initial activity on pertinent matters such as articulating pharmacy's role in treating people with Long Term Conditions, and what is required to tackle the growing problem of robberies and attacks on pharmacies.

In summary, what were once simply concepts discussed at Council meetings, have become reality and have taken on a life of their own. It is the job of this Council to continue to nurture and guide these developments in order that the Society emerges in the years ahead as both a truly 21st century regulator operating within a local context, and the home of a Professional Forum with which all pharmacists identify.

In 2010/11, the prospect of achieving these goals has certainly become much closer.

Chief Executive's Report



Trevor Patterson,
Chief Executive

Insanity is doing the same thing in the same way and expecting a different outcome .

Chinese Proverb

At the end of our current year on 31st May 2010 it would seem timely to take our annual insanity test – just what have we done differently this year and how has it given us a different result?

Our legislation requires that we provide both regulatory and professional leadership functions. Historically Council have carried both responsibilities and informally managed any potential conflicts. This year we created a Professional Forum and the management board has been elected by the profession. It was very reassuring to have 13 candidates for the 8 posts and a good level of voting engagement from pharmacists. Already we are enjoying an unprecedented level of member engagement and Council have access to a body which can represent the profession's views on regulatory matters. I look forward to further developments and results from the Forum's work in the coming year.

For everyone, it has been impossible to ignore the current economic circumstances faced in 2010/2011. This has required that the organisation do some very different things. For example, we extended our policy of using electronic communications as the first preference form of communication with pharmacists, resulting in healthy savings in postage, printing and stationary costs. We restructured our staffing, combining a number of posts and responsibilities and created capacity to deliver against the new legislation using in-house resources. This will allow us to meet the projected increase in fitness to practise activity and improve case handling. Most importantly to pharmacists, we again froze registration and restoration fees, minimising the financial burden at a time of austerity, and resulting in a real terms fee decrease in the current inflationary climate.

Engagement with the public has further improved, following on from the earlier creation of a Public Forum we have developed a database of individual members of the public who may be contacted for their views on our work. Having both organisational and individual public input improves our understanding of the wider effect of any regulatory proposals we bring forward, and compliments the influence of the profession through the Professional Forum.

Revalidation remains an issue for all regulators. This year we commissioned research on risk in practise which identified many risks outside the scope of the revalidation project. The Professional Forum has now been invited to take forward ideas in this area. We are working closely with all the other non-medical healthcare regulators to develop proportionate proposals for revalidation which manage the risks associated with practice whilst minimising the burden on registrants. Our final proposals will reflect the Coalition Government's approach to revalidation, as well as local contextual implications.

We have reviewed our CPD framework, made improvements and anticipate going to consultation in early 2012 on a framework for future CPD which you will have an opportunity to comment on, ahead of the introduction of mandatory CPD later in 2012. We will endeavour to improve the support network for CPD and encourage registrants to avail of the facilitation services available.

As is being experienced by other health professional regulatory bodies, fitness to practise activity continues to increase. It is critical that, in order to maintain public confidence in pharmacy, complaints are properly investigated and appropriate measures are put in place to maintain public safety – it is also critical for the reputation of the profession that impairment is identified and managed, wherever possible ahead of adverse incidents. It is also sensible that the profession learns from the mistakes of others and to that end we have published learning points designed to help practitioners avoid pitfalls. We will be monitoring future complaints to measure the effect of disseminating these learning points to pharmacists.

“Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.”

Maria Robinson

In the past year we have worked extensively with officials at the DHSSPS on the reform of the legislation governing pharmacy regulation in Northern Ireland and implementation is anticipated in early 2012. The new framework will see us doing things very differently allowing us to be positioned as a modern and effective regulator, supported by effective and influential Public and Professional Forums to take us forward into 2013 and beyond.

The coming year will see the introduction of a new, fully appointed Council, new fitness to practise procedures and structures, mandatory CPD and the further development of the Professional and Public Fora, all designed to support the profession whilst maintaining public confidence.

Opportunities will arise to apply for Council membership or membership of statutory fitness to practise panels; the Professional Forum will be seeking your views on a range of matters, and we will continue to need tutors for the pre-registration programme.

So the new legislative framework is not so much a new ending, as the beginning of a new phase of operations and activity in which pharmacists and the public can play a part in a whole multitude of new ways.

Please enjoy the rest of this report and look for ways to become involved with us and our work.

Chapter One: Education



Roberta Tasker,
Chair of the Education Committee

Report of the Education Committee

The Education Committee oversees and directs the development of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland's education functions.

In the year 2010/11 the Education Committee met on 7 occasions to discuss and make determinations and recommendations on varied matters.

Changes to CPD process, Pre-Registration training, the development of revalidation and the future of Pharmacy Undergraduate Education were particular items of consideration. Below is a summary of the Committee's work in 2010/11.

Pre-Registration Training

The Committee gave advice on a range of pre-registration matters, including

- The pass rate of the Calculations Exam;
- The provision, format and timing of the various training days (compulsory and non-compulsory) which make up the training year;
- The development of online event booking systems;
- Late application penalties;
- Updates to the Pre-Registration exam syllabus;
- The potential for pre-registration e-folders and online learning materials; and
- Sign-off policy for attainment of pre-registration Performance Standards.

In addition, the Committee gave advice on 8 particular pre-registration matters where assessment was borderline, or new or unprecedented issues had emerged.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

In relation to Continuing Professional Development, following five years of operation, the Society took the opportunity in 2010/11 to commence a review of systems and approach, particularly in view of forthcoming legislation which will upgrade CPD from a professional requirement to a mandatory requirement. Accordingly, matters reviewed included:

- a memorandum of understanding between GPhC and PSNI allowing reciprocal recognition of their individual CPD schemes for dual registrants;
- internal and external measures to improve quality and consistency of overall CPD process;
- externalisation of all aspects of assessment so that the Post-Registration Lead only arbitrates on difficult or contentious cases;
- registrants with Option 3 results are no longer automatically recalled for sampling in the following CPD year;

- how to improve uptake of facilitation amongst registrants particularly those whose CPD does not meet standard (i.e. Option 4 resultees);
- the development of further CPD learning and facilitation resources, including the launch of a new online CPD manual and province-wide facilitation events in June 2011;
- exploring ways to encourage 100% online CPD submission;
- benchmarking our CPD system against other regulators; and,
- learning from the construction and operation of new CPD systems at the General Pharmaceutical Council and the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland.

In June 2011 a CPD Reference Group was formally established to undertake a review of the entire PSNI CPD process. This expert group is made up of representatives from all sectors of pharmacy as well as the Chair of the Education Committee and other members (including lay people) may be co-opted from time-to-time to provide additional skills and expertise. The objective of this review is to ensure the resultant CPD processes are fit for purpose and meet the minimum standards required by the regulator to safeguard patients and public and maintain confidence in the pharmacy profession.

A consultation on the range of proposed CPD reforms will take place in late 2011/early 2012.

Revalidation

In May 2010, the Society commissioned research from Manchester University to define and assess risk in contemporary pharmacy practice in Northern Ireland. As part of the research, a questionnaire survey was circulated to all registrants to garner views on assessing “risk” in contemporary pharmacy practice in Northern Ireland. In addition, they conducted semi-structured interviews of some registrants who had either moved pharmacy sectors or who had returned to practice after a career break e.g. due to maternity leave.

The recommendations in the final report (produced in June 2011) which are currently under consideration by the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland include:

- the development of explicit standards of practice
- enhancing the existing CPD scheme by aligning to standards of practice
- consider the use of either a CPD-only scheme, a CPD-plus-assessment scheme, or elements from either scheme
- consider the prioritisation of pharmacists in patient-facing roles and those returning from a career break
- consider developing guidelines and training and development resources for registrants returning to practice or changing sectors and for their employers.

The Pharmaceutical Society is working closely with other regulators in the UK to progress the development of a suitable revalidation system. It is likely any new system will build on the current system for CPD.

Any proposals for a new revalidation system will be consulted on.

The Modernising Pharmacy Careers Programme

Although the remit of the Modernising Pharmacy Careers (MPC) Programme extends only to England, any major changes to the way in which pharmacists at English Universities are educated and assessed is likely to have impacts in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Education Committee has therefore been reviewing its early proposals carefully. Whilst the Committee had general agreement with some of the rationale behind its early papers, concerns remain that a 5 year integrated MPharm, with workplace learning split into two 6 month placements in the 4th and 5th years, might risk losing some of the strengths of the current 1 year pre-registration programme. Other implications are noted from changing Fitness to Practise sign off from the regulator to the University. Proposals are still at an early stage, and it is predicted the MPC workstream will continue to be a major focus of the Education Committee's work in 2011/12.

The Accreditation of MPharm at University of Ulster (Step 5)

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland quality assures all courses and awards which lead to registration as a pharmacist in Northern Ireland in cooperation with the General Pharmaceutical Council. If the Pharmaceutical Society has concerns about a course content or teaching methodology the Society's Accreditation Team can make recommendations, sanction further inspections and even withdraw accreditation.

In April 2011, the accreditation teams from the General Pharmaceutical Council and the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland agreed to recommend the University of Ulster be permitted to progress from step 5 to step 6 of the MPharm accreditation process subject to a small number of recommendations which the University will take into account as part of the accreditation process. Step 6 accreditation will take place in May 2012.

Other Matters

Miscellaneous matters considered by the Committee in 2010/11 included:

- The future education role of the Professional Forum;
- Engagement with the "Pharmine" project. Pharmine is a collaborative effort by a number of Universities to define common harmonised outcomes for pharmacy education across Europe;
- Some initial investigatory work in relation to what education qualifications may meet standard in the event the Pharmaceutical Society is given powers to register technicians;
- Advice on the Education elements of a Memorandum of Understanding with the General Pharmaceutical Council, including in relation to GPhC proposals for the accreditation of Universities (e.g. moving from 5 year cycles to 6 year cycles);
- The contents and conclusions of a DHSSPS review of development needs of Pharmaceutical Staff in Hospital Practice.

Finally, once again, I would like to extend my gratitude to all the members of the Education Committee, including observers from the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland who have contributed considerable insight and experience from another regulatory perspective. Committee members are generous in the granting of their time and expertise, and their contributions really do add so much to activity of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland. It is very much appreciated by myself, staff and Council.

CPD Report



The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland's CPD requirement is designed to encourage the continual enhancement of practice and patient care. By using a critical and reflective approach to practice it is possible for pharmacists to identify areas of strength and areas for further development and undertake learning activities that will enable them to continue to deliver high standards of care in a changing environment.

CPD results for 2009/10 (assessed in the year 2010/11) demonstrate that the majority of registrants are achieving the standards for CPD assessment. However, a significant 20% of portfolios were assessed as an Option 4, which was an increase of 8% on the previous year.

To counter this the Society has:

- launched a new CPD online learning resource
- actively encouraged uptake of one-2-one facilitation from trained facilitators particularly amongst those registrants whose CPD submission did not meet standard; and,
- circulated an invitation in the annual retention mailing to 4 facilitation events across Northern Ireland during the month of June.

Since its launch in February 2011, approximately 10% of the register has accessed the online resource. Feedback from the facilitation events was excellent and many commented on "how easy it was to record CPD correctly by following the tips provided." Registrants are also reminded that CPD facilitation support is available by contacting the Society.

In preparation for statutory CPD, the entire process is undergoing a review to improve aspects of quality assurance. A Reference Group has been established to oversee this review and all sectors of pharmacy are represented on it. Outcomes from this review will be reported to the membership in the Society's Newsletter.

Below is a statistical summary of the CPD assessment and reassessment process over the operational year 2010/11.

Statistical Summary of the CPD Year 2010/11

CPD Assessment

Assessment of CPD portfolios selected on 1 June 2010 related to CPD records produced by pharmacists during the period 1 June 2009 until 31 May 2010.

- Overall 475 portfolios were assessed over two periods
- 85% of portfolios were submitted online
- Results were issued to pharmacists at the end of September (option 1, 2 and 3) and mid October (option 4) 2010 for period 1 and January 2011 for period 2 result holders in accordance with the Society's CPD procedures.
- Table 1 illustrates the results achieved with 80% of portfolios assessed meeting the Society's standard for CPD.
- Option 4 was allocated to 20% of those assessed (97 Portfolios in total), and the pharmacists in this category were requested to submit reassessment portfolios (by the end of January [RP1 0910] or end of April 2011 [RP2 0910]).

Table 1 CPD portfolio assessment 2009/10

	Number of Portfolios			
Portfolio outcome*	0910 P1	0910 P2	Total 0910	% for 0910
Option 1	128	127	255	54
Option 2	33	25	58	12
Option 3	35	30	65	14
Option 4	41	56	97	20
Total Assessed	237	238	475	100

* A portfolio issued options 1, 2 or 3 has met standard, whilst a portfolio issued with an Option 4 has not met standard.

CPD portfolio assessment commenced in June 2006 and Table 2 summarises the total numbers processed by the Society to date.

Table 2 CPD portfolio assessment: assessment reports issued since 2005

Year	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	Total
Number of portfolios assessed	80	280	316	487	475	1638

CPD Reassessment

Where a portfolio has not met standard (i.e. has received an Option 4 result) notification will be sent to the pharmacist to submit a further three CPD cycles as part of the reassessment process. This process provides a further opportunity for pharmacists to record their CPD correctly whilst encouraging them to seek additional facilitation support from a trained facilitator.

Throughout the year the Society makes available one-to-one facilitation via the facilitator network and the Post-Registration lead to any pharmacist requesting extra support and feedback on any aspect of their CPD. A total of 23 registrants sought facilitation support during 2010/11.

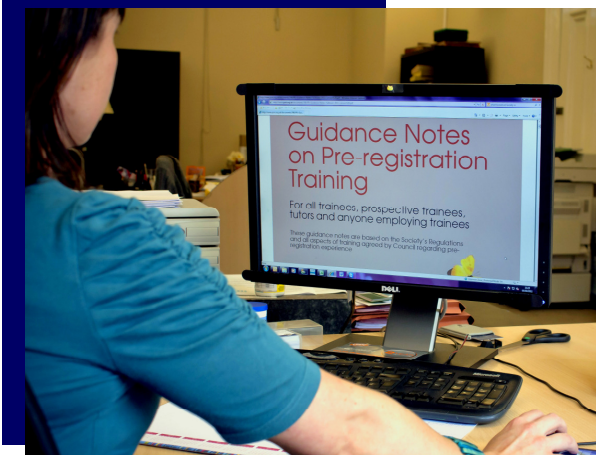
In 2011 68 pharmacists out of a possible 97 participated in reassessment. 54 (56%) were successful in meeting the CPD standard.

The 29 pharmacists who did not participate in reassessment will be automatically called again for sampling in Summer 2012.

Pre-Registration Report

The 2010/11 Pre-Registration year – key statistics

Number of trainees:	206
Number of tutors	215
Number of compulsory PSNI training events	4
Number of PSNI calculations training events	3
Number of PSNI tutor training events	4
Number of tutors attending PSNI training events	109
Pass rate of June exam	98%



Pre-registration Trainees

The trainee questionnaire continues to be the main source of feedback from trainees on their pre-registration training. Feedback received from trainees in 2009/2010 revealed that 96% enjoyed their pre-registration experience, 100% felt they had coped well with training and 99% felt the training allowed them to identify their strengths and improve on any areas of weakness. Feedback received concerning the compulsory training revealed that 97% of trainees found the training days improved their knowledge and understanding of the topics covered and 98% found the distance learning courses beneficial in improving their knowledge and understanding. The feedback from 2010/2011 trainees has not yet been completely received but will be used to review the training programme in conjunction with feedback received from previous years.

The training event hosted by the Health and Social Care Board entitled 'Helping you get it Right' became compulsory for trainees in 2010/2011. The intended outcomes of the event were:

- To highlight the importance of accountability and probity;
- To appreciate the professional and contractual environment; and,
- To illustrate the above with practical examples of relevant pharmacy activities e.g. record-keeping, prescription coding and claims submissions.

Trainees were asked to provide feedback at the end of each event. 89% of respondents assessed the training event as completely or mostly relevant to their daily activity and 93% felt their knowledge had improved as result of the training provided.

The calculation training event continued to be an optional event with 119 trainees attending, a 24% increase on the numbers attending in 2009/2010.

Registration Examination

The Examination Committee continued to have the same composition as in 2009/2010. The committee has lay representation in addition to pharmacists from community, hospital, academic and primary care sectors. The pass mark for Section B of the Open Book examination was reviewed by the committee in 2010 and as result was increased from 70% to 80% for the examinations held in 2011. The Registration Examination in June was conducted successfully with 98% of trainees attaining the required pass mark. There will be a further examination in October 2011.

Application to become a Pre-registration Trainee

The application process to become a pre-registration trainee in 2011/2012 was reviewed in 2010 and as result verification of an applicant's fitness to practise was sought from the appropriate university. This is a further assurance mechanism of the validity and authenticity of presented education credentials.

Pre-registration Tutors

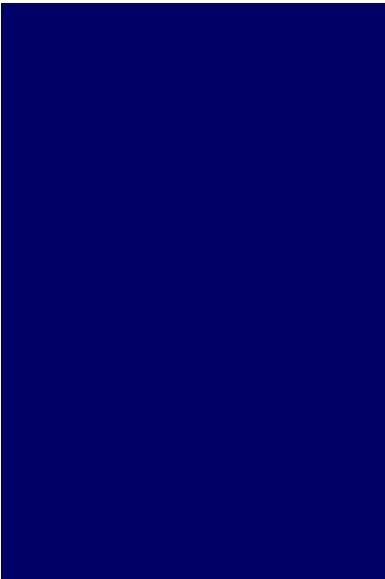
Pre-registration tutors continued to be provided with a personalised feedback report on their performance as a tutor by their trainee in 2010. The feedback was similar to feedback received in previous years with 99% of tutors reaching the required standard and confirming the high calibre of pre-registration tutors in Northern Ireland.

Two tutor support evenings were held in October 2010 and January 2011 with a total of 15 pharmacists attending. 100% of attendees found the quality of the presentation and overall value as good or very good. The tutors found the course very informative and found discussing common issues with other tutors very helpful.

The annual tutor courses were attended by 109 new and experienced tutors over four events in spring 2011. 100% of attendees judged the course as good/very good in overall value. Tutors completing the course for the first time found the discussion with experienced tutors very beneficial and tutors reported that as a result of the course they would meet more frequently with their trainee, provide a more structured training year and submit more comprehensive comments on their trainee's quarterly appraisals.



A record number of 206 trainees entered the Pre-Registration year in 2010/11



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