

Fitness to practise report to SMT

Date of report: 31 August 2026

Date of last report: 31 July 2026

Introduction:

- This is a point in time report, meaning that the data has been collated based on the FTP caseload as at the date of this report.
- FTP matters are separated into three keys stages: triage, pre-proceedings and proceedings issued. We also have carriage of applications for restoration to the register subsequent to a fitness to practise direction by the Statutory Committee. Please see further explanation provided as follows:

Triage – concerns awaiting jurisdiction test (“JT”) to determine whether they come within our remit to investigate as a fitness to practise concern.

Pre-proceedings – fitness to practise cases undergoing investigation with a view to applying threshold criteria (“TC”) to determine whether they should be referred to a fitness to practise committee. In some instances, threshold will have been met but the case has not yet been referred to a fitness to practise committee as we are in the process of drafting referral papers.

Proceedings issued – these are cases that have either been referred to the Scrutiny Committee or the Statutory Committee (the latter for interim order or principal hearing).

Restoration – these are applications for restoration to the register of pharmacists by former registrants previously struck off by the Statutory Committee in a fitness to practise direction. The registrar must refer restoration applications to the Statutory Committee under paragraph 9 of Schedule 3 to the Pharmacy (NI) Order 1976. A former registrant is entitled to submit an application for restoration for up to 5 years from and including the date of removal/strike-off.

Team members in FTP:			
IB	Ian Black (Case Presentation Lawyer) (temporary contract)	MS	Maha Shams (Regulatory Paralegal) (temporary contract)
CK	Charlene Kelly (Case Presentation Lawyer)		
AG	Alan Goleac (Regulatory Paralegal)		

Caseload overview:

Caseload overview	
Total number of cases in last month's caseload	41
Total number of cases in current caseload	37
Number of new concerns received since last report	4 Substantive concerns = 3 Self-declarations ('SDs') potentially raised in error = 1
Number of cases closed since last report	8 Cases closed in 'Triage' – Did not satisfy JT = 5 Closed in 'Pre-proceedings' – Did not satisfy TC = 1 Closed in 'Proceedings Issued' – Closed by Scrutiny Committee = 2 Closed in 'Proceedings Issued' – Closed by Statutory Committee = 0
Number of cases considered by High Court or FtP Committees since last report	2 Scrutiny Committee meetings

Concerns/cases at each stage:

Triage		
	Total no of cases	Cases stayed (JT on hold)
No of cases/concerns	3	0
Comments	The number of concerns in triage has decreased by one since the latest report sent to SMT on 31.07.2026 when there were 4 concerns in triage. Current triage caseload, where possible, are all being actioned and a risk assessment is in the process of being applied.	N/A

Pre-proceedings				
	Total no of cases	Cases with ongoing investigation	Cases with threshold met and referral papers being drafted	Cases stayed (TC on hold)
No of cases	18	13	5	0
Comments	The number of matters in pre-proceedings has decreased by 1 since the previous report to SMT on 31.07.2026 when there were 19 matters in pre-proceedings. This is as a result of: 1 matter closed due to lack of TC i.e. 26-142.	1. 23-112 2. 24-139 3. 25-115 4. 25-165 5. 25-166 6. 25-176 7. 25-178 8. 26-111 9. 26-114 10. 26-117 11. 26-146 12. 26-147 13. 26-148	14. 19-131 (legal instruction to be provided) 15. 22-122 (referral papers drafted and being reviewed by Counsel) 16. 23-103 (referral papers drafted and being finalised) 17. 23-106 (referral papers on hold pending additional enquiries) 18. 24-106 (referral papers drafted and being finalised)	N/A

Cases in backlog (Surpassed 52 weeks)

8

Narrative:

1. 19-131 – TC met and now progressing matter to FtP proceedings. MS keeping under review.
2. 22-122 – TC met and now progressing matter to FtP proceedings. Preparation of papers remains with instructed legal representatives. MS keeping under review.
3. 23-103 – TC met and now progressing matter to FtP proceedings. Referral papers now under finalisation. AG keeping under review.
4. 23-106 – TC met and now progressing matter to FtP proceedings. Referral papers on hold pending further enquiries. AG keeping under review.
5. 23-112 – Further FtP investigation required before TC can be applied. Actions being progressed with legal representatives. AG keeping under review.
6. 24-106 – TC met and now progressing matter to FtP proceedings. Referral papers now under finalisation. AG keeping under review.
7. 24-139 – Further FtP investigation required before TC can be applied. AG keeping under review.
8. 25-115 – Parallel investigations policy has been applied. AG keeping under review.

Proceedings Issued				
	Total no of cases	Cases stayed	Cases before Statutory Committee	Cases before Scrutiny Committee
No of cases	15	1	14	0
Comments	The number of cases in proceedings issued has decreased by 2 since the last report dated 31.07.2026 when there were 17 matters in proceedings issued. This is a result of 2 cases being closed by the Scrutiny Committee: 25-170 25-179	26-131	4 cases are being sought for listing as soon as possible in 2026. 23-104 – Due to be listed for PH in second half of 2026. Awaiting report from instructed prescribing expert. Within the jurisdiction of the FTP team. [Dates TBC] 23-102 – Being prepared for principal hearing listing. Within the jurisdiction of the FTP team. [Dates TBC] 24-101 – Evidence received and being reviewed for the purposes of preparing the matter for PH. Within the jurisdiction of the FTP team. [Dates TBC] 23-110 – Additional investigatory items concluded and progressing to principal hearing. Within the jurisdiction of the FTP team. [Dates TBC] 8 cases have concluded but require review of the substantive order as per the legislative framework -	

			these cases cannot be expedited as these timelines are based on legislative provisions. Therefore, these timelines fall outside the FtP team's control. 5. 20-102 6. 20-119 7. 22-110 8. 22-111 9. 23-107 10. 24-102 11. 24-103 12. 24-105 2 FtP matters no longer subject to parallel investigations and are being prepared for Principal Hearing. 13. 21-108 14. 22-108	
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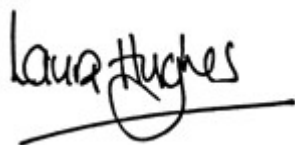
Cases with interim orders	Cases in backlog (Surpassed 52 weeks)
4	6
1. 21-108 2. 23-104 3. 23-110 4. 26-131	<u>Narrative:</u> 1. 21-108 – Parallel investigations policy only concluded as of 20/04/2026. Now being progressed to PH. CFR and legal counsel instructed. 2. 22-108 – Parallel investigations policy was applied for prolonged period. Matter has been referred from the Scrutiny Committee to the Statutory Committee. CK and legal counsel instructed. 3. 23-102 – Preparation for PH underway. IB instructed. 4. 23-104 – Due to be listed for principal hearing in second half of 2026. IB instructed. 5. 23-110 – Additional investigatory items concluded and progressing to principal hearing. IB instructed. 6. 24-101 – New evidence received and being reviewed for the purposes of preparing the matter for PH. IB instructed.

Restoration	
Total no of cases	The Registrar is currently in receipt of one application for restoration under paragraph 9 of Schedule 3 of the 1976 Order. This matter has been listed for 10.09.2026 for hearing before the Statutory Committee. Awaiting outcome of proceedings.

Listings in 2026

So far in 2026, the following matters have been considered by or are listed before the High Court, Scrutiny Committee or Statutory Committee:

Venue	Number of Listings
High Court proceedings – interim order extension applications	2
High Court proceedings – PSA s29 appeal *Note: Only 2 matters subject to appeal. From the 4 listings, this requires 5 days in total.	4*
Scrutiny Committee meetings	6
Interim order applications	2
Interim order reviews	6
Case management meetings	3
Principal hearings* *Note: From the 2 listings, this requires 3 days in total.	2*
Reviews of principal sanction	9
Restoration hearings	1
TOTAL	35



Laura Hughes
Registrar & Director of Regulation