

Chair's end of year reflections

Note for Council on 08 December 2022

Public

It has been a pleasure to Chair the GPhC. I want to share some brief reflections about the year so far, thinking particularly about our achievements as well as some of the challenges we have faced together.

Looking back to the first few months of my term of office, I spent a lot of time meeting people and listening to stakeholders from across the pharmacy sector, as well as organisations representing patients and the public. That was hugely important for me and what I heard continues to shape my thinking and approach as Chair. It also describes our approach as a Council and organisation – listening, learning and understanding people's experiences, and making sure those are reflected in our regulatory work.

During this time, I've also had the opportunity to represent the GPhC at a series of high-profile external events, most recently the PSA's Safer Care for All conference, and the UK Commission on Pharmacy Professional Leadership.

Representing the GPhC, and meeting stakeholders across the three countries that we regulate, is an essential way for us to raise our profile, to ensure that issues specific to pharmacy and pharmacy regulation are recognised and understood by other policy and decision-makers within the integrated healthcare system. My thanks to all of the staff who support me with those events and all of the preparation that goes into that.

I recognise that this has been an exceptionally busy year for everyone at the GPhC, and I would like to thank the Council members, the Executive team and the staff for their dedication and commitment.

There is not enough time to cover everything here, but I wanted to mention a few points:

- At the start of the year, my initial impression was that the GPhC is regulating in a complex and fast-changing pharmacy landscape and that has not changed. Over the past few months, we have worked together on many complex issues – from changes in online pharmacy to the impact of temporary pharmacy closures, alongside securing new permanent legal powers for remote hearings to help us work flexibly, taking account of the needs of those involved. We must continue to be agile and flexible as an organisation, so we can respond effectively to these changes.
- There is no doubt that education and training, particularly the challenges of the June registration assessment, has been a huge focus for everyone this year. After the significant issues that were experienced in several test centres during our June assessment, teams from across the GPhC worked together to implement significant mitigations and provide

assurance. We agreed the set-up of the new Quality and Performance Assurance Committee (QPAC), Chaired by Rima Makarem. I would like to thank Council for their oversight and support as the Executive and team worked through the issues. I would also like to sincerely thank Duncan, Mark and the wider team for all they did to ensure that the November sitting went smoothly. In my view, the positive impact of a well-run sitting on the mental health and wellbeing of the candidates – our future pharmacy workforce – cannot be underestimated. We also set up the post registration of practice assurance working group.

- The fitness to practise team have continued to develop action plans to meet the PSA standards. However, we know that there is still more work to be done to achieve the desired standards.
- We've also been making sure that pharmacy professionals are supported to meet our regulatory standards. This year saw the introduction of a number of new initiatives and guidance - this included guidance to support the revised entry requirements for independent prescribing, a new toolkit and materials on the duty of candour, and new equality guidance for registered pharmacies.
- That leads me on to EDI and how we've put a clear focus on tackling discrimination and racism, and reducing health inequalities, with significant work taken forward under our EDI strategy in its first year. Our recent racism in pharmacy roundtable has only reinforced why this work continues to be so important. We've also been bolder and more challenging with ourselves and others by speaking out on EDI issues, and we've had a prominent seat at the table at a number of external EDI events, which has provided an excellent platform to raise awareness of our work in this area.
- We also had a Board Away Day, which has enabled us to make great strides towards Board effectiveness and a review of our strategic direction.

As mentioned, we set up the QPAC Committee to which together with our other Committees will continue to provide the assurance the Council needs. We have made progress towards a Board Assurance Framework, which I hope we will start using in the New Year.

Finally, I'd also like to thank the Chairs of our Committees and advisory groups, and the staff involved in supporting or working with those groups, for their continued hard work. This is an essential part of good governance and an important element of assurance for the Council as a whole. Thanks also to everyone who has been involved in the fast-moving work associated with our new ways of working. My very special thanks to Duncan and Laura.

Looking ahead to next year, it's clear to see that things are not slowing down in pharmacy regulation. I would expect an increased focus on Education and Training. As part of my plan for 2023, I hope to organise with Duncan and the team a number of regional roundtables to hear from both the profession and patient groups on their key challenges in relation to regulation and patient safety. I hope Council members in the regions can attend if possible. It will enable me to also visit more pharmacies hopefully with Claire.

I look forward to continuing to work alongside the Council, the Executive and the staff on our shared Vision of safe and effective pharmacy care at the heart of healthier communities.

Below is a list of all the meetings and activities I have attended since I started as Chair in March 2022.

Gisela Abbam, Chair (5 December 2022)

List of key meetings and activities

Date	Meeting with
25 March 2022	Chief Pharmaceutical Officer (CPhO) Wales, Andrew Evans
25 March 2022	Chief Pharmaceutical Officer (CPhO) England, David Webb
25 March 2022	Chief Pharmaceutical Officer (CPhO) Scotland, Alison Strath
12 April 2022	Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) - Claire Anderson, Chair and Paul Bennet, Chief Executive
20 April 2022	Inspection Visit
18 May 2022	Company Chemists Association (CCA) - John Bacon, Chair and Malcolm Harrison, Chief Executive
18 May 2022	Maria Caulfield, Minister for Patient Safety and Primary Care
27 May	Inspection Visit
31 May 2022	General Dental Council (GDC) – Lord Toby Harris, Chair
1 June 2022	Association of Independent Multiple Pharmacies (AIMp) - Leyla Hannbeck, Chief Executive
1 June 2022	General Medical Council (GMC) - Carrie MacEwen, Chair and Charlie Massey, Chief Executive/Registrar
8 June 2022	National Pharmacy Association (NPA) - Andrew Lane, Chair and Mark Lyonette, Chief Executive
8 June 2022	Interview with Independent Community Pharmacist magazine
10 June 2022	Andy Husband, Chair Board of Assessors
15 June 2022	Pharmacists' Defence Association (PDA) - Mark Koziol, Chair and Claire Ward, Director of Public Affairs
15 June 2022	Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI) - Jim Livingstone, President and Trevor Patterson, Chief Executive
22 June 2022	Professional Standards Authority (PSA) - Caroline Corby, Chair and Alan Clamp, Chief Executive
22 June 2022	Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK) - Claire Steele, President
22 June 2022	Interview with The Pharmaceutical Journal
24 June 2022	The King's Find - Richard Murray, Chief Executive
15 July 2022	The Patients Association - Rachel Power, Chief Executive
15 July 2022	Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) – Martin Marshall, Chair
19 July 2022	UK Commission into Pharmacy Professional Leadership
22 July 2022	UK Black Pharmacists Association – Elsy Gomez-Campos, President
23 Aug 2022	Pharmacy Professional Leadership Commission - Regulatory Support

Date	Meeting with
31 Aug 2022	Written Medicine - Ghalib Khan
7 Sept 2022	Pharmacy Schools Council
9 Sept 2022	Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) –Sue Killen, Chair
18 Oct 2022	UK CPhO Commission on Pharmacy Professional Leadership: Leadership, Policy and Professionalism Working Group
19 Oct 2022	Patient Safety Commissioner – Dr Henrietta Hughes
25 Oct 2022	UK Commission Pharmacy: Regulatory Support
26 Oct 2022	Care Quality Commission (CQC) - Ian Dilks, Chair
4 Nov 2022	General Optical Council (GOC) - Dr Anne Wright, Chair
14 Nov 2022	Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry - Richard Torbett, Chief Executive and Amit Aggarwal, Medical Director
14 Nov 2022	Professional Standards Authority Chairs roundtable discussion
16 Nov 2022	UK Commission Pharmacy: Regulatory Support
2 Dec 2022	Visit to Bedminster Pharmacy
7 Dec 2022	Taiwo Owatemi MP, Chair, APPG
7 Dec 2022	General Medical Council (GMC) - Carrie MacEwen, Chair and Charlie Massey, Chief Executive/Registrar
14 Dec 2022	Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) - Christine Elliott, Chair

Conference and events

Date	Activity
12 May 2022	RPS Fellows Annual Dinner (speaking event)
13 June 2022	GPhC Duty of Candour roundtable
30 June 2022	AIMp members conference (speaking event)
26 July 2022	GPhC Registration assessment online listening session
6 Sept 2022	PSA Safer Care for All report launch
6 Sept 2022	UK Commission on Pharmacy Professional Leadership - call for evidence webinar (Scotland) (speaking event)
7 Sept 2022	UK Commission on Pharmacy Professional Leadership - call for evidence webinar (England) (speaking event)
27 Sept 2022	Launch of The Economist Impact Global Health Inclusivity Index
30 Sept 2022	Independent Pharmacy Awards 2022

Date	Activity
21 Oct 2022	Launch of The CQC state of health care and adult social care in England 2021/22 report
27 Oct 2022	BMJ Race Equity at Work Panel Discussion (speaking event)
1 Nov 2022	GPhC Racism in pharmacy roundtable
4 Nov 2022	AIMp Annual Dinner & Awards
9 Nov 2022	PSA Safer Care for All conference (speaking event)
11 Nov 2022	RPS Annual Conference
30 Nov 2022	Women in Leadership and Healthcare webinar (speaking event)