

# Strategic plan 2025-30

Empower, protect, build



# **General Pharmaceutical Council**

## **Strategic plan 2025-30**

Strategic plan presented to Parliament and the Scottish Parliament  
pursuant to Paragraph 8 of schedule 1 to the Pharmacy Order 2010





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# Executive summary

The GPhC as the regulator and the professions we work with share a common purpose: the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and the public more widely. The professionalism and skill of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians keeps patients safe and promotes public health. We support, facilitate and assure the public protection role of the pharmacy professions, in all the sectors and environments where they are caring for people.

Over the first five years of our Vision 2030, progress has been made in strengthening pharmacy regulation. Key achievements include our leadership across the system to implement the new pharmacist education and training standards, improving our performance against the Professional Standards Authority Standards of Good Regulation, and the successful first phase of our equality, diversity and inclusion strategy. This progress has established a solid foundation for ensuring that pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies meet the standards of safety and quality.

Once we have launched this strategic plan 2025-30, we will publish our delivery plan 2025-30. That will specify in more detail the programmes of work and the outputs we will deliver in order to achieve the strategic aims and outcomes set out in this strategic plan, and the metrics we will set to monitor progress. In our delivery plan we will also set out how we will look to enable the delivery of our strategy, and how we will manage the risks we will face in delivering it. We will keep our delivery plan updated as a living document.

To build on this progress, we have identified three strategic aims:

- 1. Empower** pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to provide trusted, safe and effective pharmacy care.
- 2. Protect** patients and the public by working with healthcare regulators, and other organisations.
- 3. Build** a skilled, agile and inclusive organisation to regulate effectively and efficiently.

# Who we are and what we do

We have an important part to play in making sure people receive safe and effective care when using pharmacy services and have trust in pharmacy.

We're the regulator for pharmacies, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in Great Britain. Our role is to protect everyone who uses pharmacy services. We operate independently of governments, the pharmacy professions and pharmacy businesses.

We ensure safe, effective pharmacy care and public trust by:

- promoting professionalism and continuous improvement in pharmacy
- registering qualified professionals and pharmacies
- setting, monitoring, and enforcing standards of education, training and professional practice
- providing guidance to the people we regulate about how to meet the standards we set
- investigating concerns and taking action to protect patients and the public
- sharing insights to enhance pharmacy practices

## Our register

As at 31 March 2025



# Our commitment to the people we serve

At the heart of our strategy lies an **unwavering commitment to the safety and wellbeing of the people of Great Britain**. Through this strategy, we will uphold **standards of care and quality** in pharmacy services, foster continuous improvement to adapt to the evolving healthcare landscape, and ensure **patient and public safety remains central to everything we do**. By empowering the pharmacy professions to deliver **trusted, effective, and inclusive care**, we aim to build a future where pharmacy services continue to **inspire confidence, protect the public, and advance healthcare for all**.





# Regulation in a rapidly changing landscape

**The pharmacy professions are evolving rapidly and they are reshaping how care is delivered.**

These advancements present significant opportunities but also bring new challenges in maintaining safety, quality and public trust. The role of the GPhC is crucial in ensuring that regulation keeps pace with these changes, providing a robust framework that safeguards patient care and public confidence, whilst enabling innovation.

## Prescribing and the wider clinical role

Pharmacists in Great Britain will have greater scope to prescribe medicines, enabling wider opportunities to provide care, as well as new potential risks that need to be managed. Likewise, the role of pharmacy technicians has widened, with the profession being added to the list of those legally enabled to supply and administer medicines under Patient Group Directions. At the same time, the public and community health contribution of many pharmacy teams continues to be a vital part of their work

## Pharmacy care access

Encouraging visits to pharmacies for a wider range of conditions allows pharmacy teams to use their expertise in medicines to benefit patients and the public, enhancing access and reducing pressure on general practice and other health services.

## Online services

As online prescribing and supply services become more common and convenient, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians must ensure they meet the same high standards for safety, albeit through new and rapidly changing service delivery models.

## Digital transformation

Digitally enhanced clinical services have the potential to benefit patients and the public, and also to create risks which need to be managed and regulated.

## Integrating healthcare

Healthcare integration in England, Scotland and Wales aims to create a more cohesive, efficient, and patient-centred system by breaking down barriers between providers, leveraging technology, and fostering collaborative governance. Law reform has the potential to allow further changes to the delivery and governance of pharmacy services.

## Workforce pressures and wellbeing

Many pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are experiencing high levels of stress and other threats to their wellbeing, relating to the pressures they experience in the workplace and, for some, work-related discrimination and prejudice. The wellbeing of healthcare professionals and the wellbeing of patients and members of the public go hand in hand.

# Equality, diversity and inclusion: the golden thread supporting our strategy

Inequality and exclusion are bad for people's health. Bias, discrimination and inequity continue to impact the health outcomes of people using pharmacy services, and the health and wellbeing of the pharmacy teams who care for them.

We have therefore embedded equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) as a 'golden thread' across our strategy to reflect its **critical importance in achieving our strategic aims** and delivering value to the pharmacy professions and the public. This approach ensures that our **commitment to EDI drives meaningful action and measurable impact** throughout the implementation of the strategy.

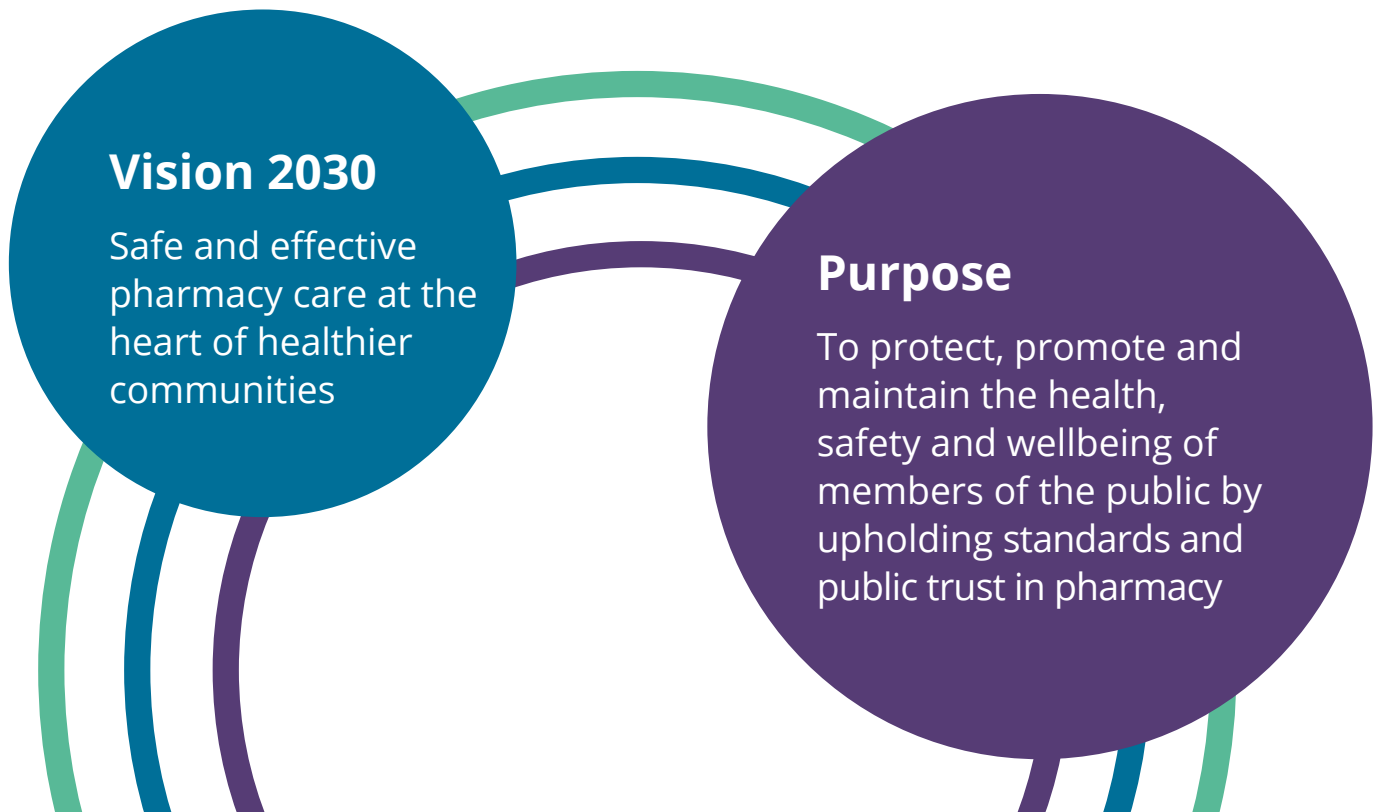
## Why is it a golden thread?

- Our established and functional EDI strategy is making significant progress, providing a strong foundation to build upon.
- The themes of the EDI strategy have been intentionally linked to each of the strategic aims, ensuring that they are central to how we deliver outcomes and support our stakeholders.
- By weaving EDI into every aspect of our work, we strengthen trust, accountability, and inclusivity across the pharmacy professions and beyond.

## The three key themes of our EDI strategy

1. To make regulatory decisions that are demonstrably fair, lawful and free from discrimination and bias.
2. To use our standards to proactively tackle discrimination and to make sure that everyone can access person-centred care, fostering equality of health outcomes.
3. To lead by example and demonstrate best practice in our organisation, holding ourselves to the same high standards we expect from others.

# Our vision and purpose



## Strategic aims for 2025-30

### Strategic aim 1

#### **Empower**

pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to provide trusted, safe and effective pharmacy care

### Strategic aim 2

**Protect** patients and the public by working with healthcare regulators and other organisations

### Strategic aim 3

**Build** a skilled, agile and inclusive organisation to regulate effectively and efficiently

# Summary of our strategic aims for 2025-30

## Strategic aim 1: empower pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to provide trusted, safe and effective pharmacy care

The outcomes we want to achieve under this strategic aim:

- Patients and the public are cared for by competent, confident professionals
- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, in all settings, are guided by a regulator that listens, takes account of their practice, how it is changing, and the challenges they face
- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are able to rise to those challenges in ways that promote the wellbeing of their patients and themselves
- Pharmacy owners run registered pharmacies in ways that support pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and the whole pharmacy team to meet our standards
- Necessary enforcement action is prompt, proportionate and effective

## Strategic aim 2: protect patients and the public by working with healthcare regulators and other organisations

The outcomes we want to achieve under this strategic aim:

- Public protection is seamless across regulatory boundaries, because of the work we lead to make sure there are no dangerous gaps or confusing overlaps
- Innovation in pharmacy care is safely enabled and enhanced by effective collaboration between different regulators, and with the pharmacy professional leadership bodies, pharmacy education and training providers, specialist pharmacy groups and trade and representative bodies
- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have the skills to work collaboratively in teams with other health and care professionals, supported by consistent and integrated regulatory standards, regardless of professional boundaries

## Strategic aim 3: build a skilled, agile and inclusive organisation to regulate effectively and efficiently

The outcomes we want to achieve under this strategic aim:

- Our people are developed and supported to deliver and lead our regulatory work with skill and professionalism
- Our culture, our operating model and our technology are strengthened and updated to enable us to deliver on this strategy
- Sustainable, agile and good-value regulation is underpinned by implementation of our financial strategy

# Strategic aim 1: **empower** pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to provide trusted, safe and effective pharmacy care

The outcomes we want to achieve under this strategic aim:

- Patients and the public are cared for by competent and confident professionals
- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, in all settings, are guided by a regulator that listens, takes account of their practice, how it is changing, and the challenges they face
- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are able to rise to those challenges in ways that promote the wellbeing of their patients and themselves
- Pharmacy owners run registered pharmacies in ways that support and enable pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and the whole pharmacy team to meet our standards
- Necessary enforcement action is prompt, proportionate and effective

## For the public

This ensures access to trusted, safe, and inclusive care, building confidence in the pharmacy professions and their role in meeting healthcare needs.

## For pharmacists and pharmacy technicians

This is a secure framework within which they can maintain standards, confidently adapt to new demands and take care of their wellbeing, and which ensures they have a voice that leads to meaningful action. Key transition points are underpinned by our registration and revalidation processes. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working in registered pharmacies are supported to meet their professional standards, with pharmacy owners accountable for enabling them to do so.

## For the GPhC

This focuses on fostering trust, upholding professional standards, and enabling the professions to deliver value as a central part of the evolving healthcare environment.

**EDI golden thread:** We will make regulatory decisions that are demonstrably fair, lawful and free from discrimination and bias.

## Strategic aim 2: **protect** patients and the public by working with healthcare regulators and other organisations

The outcomes we want to achieve under this strategic aim:

- Public protection is seamless across regulatory boundaries, because of the work we lead to make sure there are no dangerous gaps or confusing overlaps
- The safety and wellbeing of patients and members of the public is enhanced by effective collaboration between different regulators, and with the pharmacy professional leadership bodies, pharmacy education and training providers, specialist pharmacy groups and trade and representative bodies
- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have the skills to work collaboratively in teams with other health and care professionals, supported by consistent and integrated regulatory standards, regardless of professional boundaries

### For the public

Regulatory gaps and overlaps can create risks for patients and the public, and can make their experience of regulation disjointed, confusing and inefficient. We aim to minimise and mitigate these risks and issues for patients.

### For pharmacists and pharmacy technicians

The people we regulate also have to navigate a busy and sometimes fragmented regulatory landscape, as they undertake their education and training, join their profession and maintain and develop their practice. We want to support them to understand what is required of them, so that they can focus on caring for patients and members of the public.

### For the GPhC

This aim builds on existing collaboration, enabling us to spot new and emerging gaps and risks more rapidly, and address them with agility.

**EDI golden thread:** We will use our standards to proactively tackle discrimination and to make sure that everyone can access person-centred care, fostering equality of health outcomes.

## Strategic aim 3: **build** a skilled, agile and inclusive organisation to regulate effectively and efficiently

The outcomes we want to achieve under this strategic aim:

- Our people are developed and supported to deliver and lead our regulatory work with skill and professionalism
- Our culture, our operating model and our technology are strengthened and updated to enable us to deliver on this strategy
- Sustainable, agile and good-value regulation is underpinned by implementation of our financial strategy

### For the public

This aim builds confidence in a well-regulated profession that prioritises safety, quality, and responsiveness in healthcare delivery.

### For pharmacists and pharmacy technicians

This aim ensures clear, consistent, and efficient regulatory processes that help them meet standards, whilst minimising the financial burden.

### For the GPhC

This aim focuses on supporting our people to deliver cost-effective regulation that fosters trust and accountability.

**EDI golden thread:** We will lead by example and demonstrate best practice in our organisation, holding ourselves to the same high standards we expect from others.

# Achieving our goals

To achieve the goals set out in our 2025-30 strategic plan, we need to make full use of the tools available to us and address some important challenges.

Our delivery plan will explain how we will turn our strategy into action. It will set out the programmes of work, key outputs, and milestones that will guide our progress, as well as the metrics we will monitor, to measure the outcomes and impact of our strategy over time. This will enable us to be held to account for delivering our strategic aims. The plan will also outline how we will create the right conditions for delivery—by ensuring we have the people, resources, and systems in place to support effective and efficient regulation.

Modern technology and innovation will be central to how we deliver our strategy. We will continue to strengthen our use of digital tools across the organisation, including the responsible and effective use of artificial intelligence. These developments will help us streamline regulatory processes, improve efficiency, and enhance the quality of our decision-making. In doing so, we aim to deliver more responsive and cost-effective regulation that supports better outcomes for the public and pharmacy professionals alike.

Alongside these enablers, we recognise the need to address key challenges. Improving our fitness to practise processes, making investigations more streamlined and proportionate, and ensuring financial sustainability are all essential to our continued effectiveness as a regulator. By overcoming these challenges, we can strengthen public confidence and ensure we are well placed to support pharmacy professionals in an evolving healthcare landscape.

Our delivery plan will be a living document, updated regularly to reflect our progress, respond to emerging risks, and respond to new opportunities. This flexible approach will help ensure we remain transparent, adaptable, and focused on achieving the long-term goals set out in our strategy.



# Measuring our success

In developing our measures of success, we have focused on the elements of our strategy that involve the most impactful change.

In doing so we have explored where we are now, where we need to be in five years and how we will measure our progress and success in achieving our strategic aims. We've reflected on learnings from the work we did to measure progress with our 2020-25 strategy.

We will take a balanced approach to tracking progress—combining qualitative insights, such as feedback and case studies, with quantitative metrics across our operations and finances. Some of these measures will be new, others will build on our previous strategy, and some will be refreshed to reflect our evolving priorities. In relation to each strategic aim, we have identified two key metrics, which we will work towards, alongside other evidence of outcomes and impact, which will be outlined in our delivery plan. Alongside the key metrics, other strategically-focused information will be gathered to inform our assessment of success.

We'll also strengthen our understanding of how our work delivers real impact for patients, the public, the professions, and the wider health and care system. Becoming a more data-driven organisation is key to this, with high-quality data giving us the insight and oversight we need to spot trends, manage risks, and drive continuous improvement.



# Strategic aim 1

## Where we are now

We recognise that improvements are needed in our regulatory performance. We also understand that we are often perceived as adversarial, with too many pharmacists and pharmacy technicians seeing the regulator as a body that is there just to charge them fees and punish them if they fail.

## Where we want to be

We aim to become a more effective, responsive, and forward-looking regulator – one that is trusted, enables safe and high-quality care, and engages constructively with the pharmacy professions to support development and improvement.

## Our measures of success

Pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy owners experience our regulatory approach as supportive and enabling, rather than adversarial - evidenced by increased confidence in the GPhC, greater engagement with our standards and guidance, and enabling a learning culture which supports safe, reflective, and high-quality practice.

We will measure this through:

- feedback from the people we regulate
- enforcement data including about timeliness
- resolution of cases and feedback from enforcement cases
- engagement via consultations and events
- our performance against the Professional Standards Authority's Standards of Good Regulation

Pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy owners see us as a supportive partner in navigating the changing healthcare landscape – demonstrated by increased engagement and greater confidence to adapt and continue delivering safe, person-centred care.

We will measure this through feedback from the people we regulate and stakeholders, case studies and testimonials.

We are a forward-looking regulator – evidenced by early identification of emerging risks and opportunities, timely updates to standards and guidance, and support that helps the pharmacy professions stay prepared to deliver safe, effective care.

We will measure this through operational data on how our standards and guidance are being met, evidence of effective horizon-scanning outputs such as reports, stakeholder feedback, and case studies of our proactive communications and engagement.

We are able to demonstrate consistently that we are making regulatory decisions that are demonstrably fair, lawful and free from bias.

We will measure this through regularly reporting the outcomes of our fitness to practise cases by reference to protected characteristics, our quality assurance processes and the outcome of appeal cases.

## Key metrics

We are working towards:

- all pharmacists and pharmacy technicians meeting revalidation requirements
- all registered pharmacies meeting all our standards on inspection

## Strategic aim 2

### Where we are now

We engage with other regulators and external organisations, but this is often on an ad hoc and reactive basis. As a result, we may be missing opportunities to collaborate more effectively, and shape change proactively.

### Where we want to be

We want to take a comprehensive and systematic approach to working in partnership with others – working collaboratively and looking ahead to identify and remove regulatory barriers. By leading joint efforts, we will help ensure pharmacists and pharmacy technicians can deliver safe and effective care across all settings, in integrated teams along with other health and care professionals.

### Our measures of success

An integrated regulatory environment that ensures seamless public protection across boundaries, fosters safe innovation in pharmacy care through collaborative efforts, and empowers pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to work effectively within multidisciplinary teams. This is demonstrated by joint initiatives that address regulatory gaps, co-developed guidance, and a high level of confidence among the pharmacy professions in integrated care settings.

We will measure this through feedback from the people we work with, case studies and testimonials on our collaborations, metrics regarding collaborative working including Memoranda of Understanding and information-sharing agreements.

We will use our standards proactively to tackle discrimination and to make sure that everyone can access person-centred care, fostering equality of health outcomes.

We will measure this through regularly reviewing evidence of discrimination within the pharmacy professions, and by the impact we are able to have by working with educators to eliminate differential attainment and awarding gaps in pharmacy education.

### Key metrics

We are working towards:

- the GPhC meeting all the Professional Standards Authority's Standards of Good Regulation
- elimination of the MPharm degree awarding gap and the registration assessment attainment gap<sup>1</sup>

1. For an introduction to awarding gaps, **see for example the briefing, Degree attainment: Black, Asian and minority ethnic students** from the Office for Students

## Strategic aim 3

### Where we are now

We currently face challenges with the consistency, quality assurance, and coordination of our processes, systems, and data flows. Many of our systems are isolated and do not serve the organisation as a whole, limiting our ability to deliver and effectively use data for the people we regulate, patients, and the public.

### Where we want to be

We want to have a skilled, professional workforce, a strengthened culture and operating model, and be a sustainable, agile regulator, driven by a strong financial strategy.

### Our measures of success

Our aim is to have automated and integrated technology systems that are secure and accessible to our users that enable innovation, ensure quality, support improvements to our data and digitise manual processes. This will be demonstrated by delivery of planned benefits for each project in our technology plan, including improved data quality and use of our data.

We will measure success through the operational key performance indicators associated with the delivery of our technology plan covering public-facing services, business systems, data and reporting and our internal IT services.

We will lead by example and demonstrate best practice in our organisation, holding ourselves to the same high standards we expect from others.

This will be evidenced by reductions in pay gaps, improvements in staff engagement, workforce diversity, and alignment with recognised organisational best practices.

We will measure this through our progress in eliminating our gender and ethnicity pay gaps, and through our other workforce metrics.

Our regulation is sustainable, and optimises the value and impact of our resources, underpinned by the effective implementation of our financial strategy. This will be evidenced by clear reporting of resource allocation, achievement of financial targets, increased efficiency, and assurance that resources are delivering long-term value.

We will measure this through:

- achievement of key performance indicators covering delivering a balanced budget over the duration of the five-year plan
- reserve levels within target range
- delivery of efficiency and cost reduction targets
- the allocation of expenditure reflecting the Council's stated priorities. We will also measure our environmental sustainability through our climate action plan metrics.

### Key metrics

We are working towards:

- GPhC staff survey feedback demonstrating that our culture is in line with the Council's values and with the ambitions set out in this strategic plan
- Delivering a balanced budget over the course of the five year strategic plan and successfully implementing our cost efficiency plan









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