

National Pharmacy Research Strategy – Engagement Survey

Pharmacy Research Advisory Group

August – 26 September 2025

Introduction

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the regulator for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and registered pharmacy premises in Great Britain. Our role is to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and the public who use pharmacy services in England, Scotland and Wales.

We have a statutory role in relation to ‘system’ regulation (as we regulate registered pharmacies) as well as ‘professional’ regulation of individual pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. Our main work includes:

- setting standards for the education and training of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy support staff, and approving and accrediting their qualifications and training
- maintaining a register of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies
- setting the standards that pharmacy professionals have to meet throughout their careers
- investigating concerns that pharmacy professionals are not meeting our standards, and taking action to restrict their ability to practise when this is necessary to protect patients and the public or to uphold public confidence in pharmacy
- setting standards for registered pharmacies which require them to provide a safe and effective service to patients
- inspecting registered pharmacies to check if they are meeting our standards. GPhC Response

We welcome the Pharmacy Research Advisory Group's (PRAG) National Pharmacy Research Strategy and are in general agreement with the strategy's vision, missions and goals. We recognise the important role of research in supporting effective practice, driving innovation and optimising patient care. We have the following points to provide regarding some of the content within the draft strategy, which PRAG may find helpful.

Collaboration

Within the draft strategy's Key Domains and Objectives, we note that domains 4.2 and 4.3 provide coverage of research hubs, engagement and creating research networks, with domain 4.4 mentioning the sharing of data through digital collaboration. However, we recommend that a specific reference to wider collaboration on research projects may benefit the strategy further. The strategy's objectives should encourage collaboration with other healthcare professionals, both within pharmacy and across other professions and different sectors, to reflect the growing importance of cross-team and multidisciplinary working. It would be helpful to acknowledge the need to collaborate effectively with other organisations including the GPhC when planning and delivering research.

Need for research equity

A potential gap in the draft strategy is the importance of inclusive research for optimising patient care and maximising patient outcomes. We know that there are continuing disparities and inequalities in research and that it doesn't always target underserved populations or address their needs. This in turn can impact on how the research can benefit those populations. This strategy could therefore be an important lever in supporting the reduction of disparities and inequalities in health outcomes through the promotion of research equity and addressing and reflecting diverse population needs.

The role of the GPhC and links to GPhC Standards

We welcome the focus provided in domain 4.3 regarding a 'Research-Positive Culture'. Our **Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists** and our **Standards for Chief Pharmacists** actively mention either the involvement, development and promotion of research or a research culture. Furthermore, our **Standards for pharmacy professionals** require pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, under standard 4, to maintain and develop their knowledge, which this strategy helps further facilitate.

The GPhC has a key role in promoting research in the pharmacy sector and in supporting pharmacy to optimise its potential. We would suggest including reference to this in the strategy to further strengthen sections 4.2 and 4.3.

Implementation

The strategy's aim is to make research a core element of pharmacy practice for all pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. It would be good to understand how this will be rolled out across the different sectors of pharmacy, and the challenges that some sectors, such as the community sector, may particularly face in adhering to the strategy. Similarly, a need to consider how to overcome some of the current obstacles, for example, the lack of research opportunities for pharmacy technicians who are even less well-represented within the research community. We would welcome the opportunity to work with PRAG to help facilitate effective implementation of the strategy.

Other comments

We note that there is potential overlap between domains 4.2 and 4.3 which you may want to look at when finalising the strategy, however, this does not significantly detract from the overall purpose.

If you would like to discuss any of the above further, please do not hesitate to reach out with further questions.

GPhC Research Team

23 September 2025