

2026 Annual registrants' perception survey analysis report



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Executive Summary

In May 2026, we launched the first annual registrants' perception survey as part of our 2025-2030 strategy. A total of 5,368 pharmacists and pharmacy technicians responded, representing 5.6% of the register.

The findings present a positive picture of professional confidence and the continued relevance of the GPhC's professional standards: most respondents reported being familiar with the standards (97%), confident in their professional judgement (94%), and able to deliver safe and effective pharmacy services (90%).

Areas that should be considered for continued improvement:

- Strengthening how the GPhC demonstrates the impact of registrant feedback and communicates how it informs decision-making.
- Demonstrating awareness of the challenges facing registrants and the wider pharmacy sector, showing active engagement with these issues while maintaining clear communication about the regulator's role and responsibilities.
- Increasing promotion of a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion through standards, guidance and broader regulatory activity, safeguarding a pharmacy sector in which discrimination and inequality have no place.
- Ensuring that regulation remains responsive to the changing professional environment and evolving pharmacy practice through our standards, rules and guidance.

The findings broadly support existing priorities within the GPhC's five-year strategy and provide an important evidence base for future improvement. They also establish a baseline against which future progress can be measured as the intention is for this survey to be undertaken annually.

1. Introduction

We launched the annual registrant's perception survey in May 2026 as part of our 2025 – 2030 strategy.

The survey provides an opportunity to hear directly from pharmacists and pharmacy technicians about professional standards, professional practice and the role professional regulation. The findings will help inform organisational decision-making and regulatory improvement.

As the survey will be repeated annually, it also provides a baseline for tracking changes in perceptions over time.

2. Methodology

The online survey was developed collaboratively with key stakeholders, committees and members of our pharmacist forum and pharmacy technician forums. It was distributed to all registrants and promoted through our social media channels. The survey remained open for four weeks (from May to June 2026).

A total of 5,368 responses were received, representing 5.6% of the register, including 3,799 pharmacists and 1,569 pharmacy technicians. Responses were received from a broad range of sectors, professional roles, and career stages (see **Appendix**). This response rate is broadly comparable with those achieved in registrant surveys undertaken by other professional regulators and provides a sufficiently robust sample to support meaningful analysis.

The survey was structured as two sections. The first explored registrants' views on the GPhC's professional standards and their confidence in delivering safe and effective care and the second section considered views on revalidation and professional regulation. Each section contained quantitative questions using a five-point Likert scale to show extent of agreement with statements, as well as opportunities for respondents to provide free-text feedback. Qualitative responses were analysed thematically to identify recurring themes and issues. Responses were collected anonymously to encourage open and honest feedback.

As with all voluntary surveys, findings should be interpreted as reflecting the views of those who chose to respond and may not fully represent the views of all registrants. A summary of the response distributions is included in the **Appendix**.

3. Findings

Familiarity and usefulness

Awareness of the **professional standards** was very high, with 97% of respondents reporting that they were familiar with the standards for their role. In addition, 75% of respondents agreed that the standards and guidance help them deliver safe and effective care, though there was some variation between professions, with 72% of pharmacists agreeing compared to 82% of pharmacy technicians.

Qualitative feedback suggests that registrants generally view these standards as a useful framework that supports safe, ethical and patient-centred practice. Respondents valued the clarity and flexibility of the standards and described them as being embedded within day-to-day professional decision-making.

The most common area for improvement related to ensuring the standards remain relevant across the breadth of modern pharmacy practice and reflect the diverse roles and sectors across the profession.

“I agree that the GPhC standards provide a strong framework for safe, effective and person-centred practice. However, as pharmacy continues to evolve, there is an opportunity for the standards and guidance to better reflect the diversity of roles across sectors, including system leadership, public health, industry, digital health and academia. Greater consideration of emerging areas such as social media, artificial intelligence and technology-enabled care would help ensure the standards remain relevant, practical and future-focused for the whole profession” (*Respondent P4411*)

Confidence in professional judgement

Confidence in professional judgement was high, with 94% of respondents agreeing that they feel confident making decisions in difficult or unclear situations.

Comments suggested that many registrants draw on a combination of professional experience and professional standards when making complex decisions.

“I often have to lean hard on the standards as not every situation is an open and shut case [...] I must always practice using my professional judgement especially when working alongside other health professionals in a high pressure environment.” (*Respondent P2170*)

Delivering safe and effective pharmacy services

Most respondents (90%) agreed that they are able to deliver safe and effective pharmacy services. However, there was a small but statistically significant difference between settings, with respondents working in community pharmacy more likely to disagree than those working in other settings (5.6% compared to 3.9%).

Those who did not feel able to consistently deliver safe and effective services (4%), were given the option of explaining why. The majority of those comments (84%) highlighted issues relating to workforce shortages, workload and time pressures. Respondents also described commercial and organisational pressures, low staff morale and workplace stress as factors that can affect the delivery of safe care.

“Staffing issues and time pressures within the community pharmacy make it difficult to completely and safely undertake services” (*Respondent P2407*)

“As a locum pharmacist, I definitely feel more forced to just provide what customers want and do services in order to get the money for the pharmacy” (*Respondent P2626*)

These comments highlight concerns about the pressures being faced, particularly in community pharmacy, and the impact this can have on the delivery of safe and effective care.

GPhC standards and other regulations, standards and guidance

Most respondents (68%) agreed that GPhC standards work well alongside other healthcare regulations, standards and guidance relevant to their role, while 26% selected neither agree nor disagree.

Agreement was significantly higher amongst pharmacy technicians (76%) than pharmacists (65%). Respondents working in the pharmaceutical industry were less likely to agree (54%) than those working in other settings (68%).

Qualitative feedback suggests that the standards are generally seen as compatible with other healthcare regulations, standards and guidance. However, some respondents indicated that other professional frameworks are more relevant to their day-to-day practice.

“The GPhC professional standards work well alongside other healthcare regulations and guidance in my role.” (*Respondent PT0604*)

“My role is now mainly digital and there are a plethora of other standards that I use on a more regular basis as part of my role. The pharmacy standards by design are more nebulous and “woolly” as they have to cover everyone in a very diverse set of roles.” (*Respondent P1245*)

A smaller number of respondents highlighted areas where responsibilities overlap between regulators and suggested greater clarity could be beneficial.

“I don’t feel GPhC’s standards always align with CQC. As the number of pharmacist prescribers increases, there should be more cohesion between these two regulators” (*Respondent P3051*)

Revalidation and professional development

Views on revalidation were mixed. Overall, 44% of respondents agreed that revalidation supports their professional development and helps build confidence in practice, while 29% disagreed and 27% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Newly qualified pharmacists and pharmacy technicians were the most positive, with 73% agreeing that revalidation supports their development. In contrast, respondents working in the hospital sector and pharmaceutical industry expressed less positive views, with 38% and 39% respectively disagreeing that revalidation supports their professional development.

In qualitative feedback, some respondents described revalidation as a valuable opportunity for professional reflection and development others questioned whether the current model delivers meaningful assurance of competence or supports development as effectively as it could. Common themes included the administrative burden of the process, perceptions that it can become a "tick-box" exercise, and views that requirements are not always sufficiently targeted to individual practice or learning needs.

"CPD requirements essentially tickbox and don't really prove ongoing competence"
(Respondent P3413)

"I totally agree with logging CPD not only to show the GPhC that it is occurring but to focus our minds to ensure ongoing learning. However, I do not really see the benefit or purpose of the reflection and peer review write up." *(Respondent P1912)*

The findings suggest support for the objectives of revalidation, but mixed views on whether the current model achieves those objectives as effectively as possible.

Understanding the role of the GPhC

Most respondents (76%) agreed that they understand the role of the GPhC as a regulator and how it differs from the responsibilities of employers and professional bodies.

There were notable differences between respondents based on when they joined the register. Respondents who joined the register prior to 2010 were more likely to agree that they understood the distinction between the regulator and professional bodies (81%) than those who joined after 2010 (71%). It is useful to note that prior to 2010, regulatory responsibilities for pharmacists sat with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) and pharmacy technicians had no statutory regulation. As a result, some respondents will have experienced the separation of the regulatory body from the professional body and therefore may be more familiar with the distinction between the two.

Qualitative feedback suggests that, while many respondents responded that they understand the role of the GPhC as a regulator, expectations of the organisation often extend beyond its statutory role for example, comments frequently reflected a desire for the regulator to advocate for the professions and taking a more active role in addressing workforce challenges and wellbeing.

"...the GPhC have not done enough to raise our profile, and fight our corner..." *(Respondent PT5284)*

A smaller number of comments also expected services beyond regulation and questioned whether the benefits of regulation are sufficiently visible, particularly in the context of registration fees.

"I also don't understand why the fee is so high every year for having our name on register but barely receiving any form of services." *(Respondent P5365)*

While most respondents said they understood the distinction between the regulator, employers and professional bodies, some comments suggested expectations of the GPhC extend beyond its statutory role, particularly in relation to workforce and professional issues.

Listening to registrants

This statement received the lowest level of agreement across the survey. Overall, 28% of respondents agreed that the GPhC listens to the views of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians when developing policies, standards and guidance, whilst 30% disagreed and 42% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Pharmacists were more likely to disagree than pharmacy technicians (35% compared to 16%). Both professions had high levels of neutral responses (over 40%).

Qualitative feedback suggested that some respondents do not believe registrant views are reflected in decision-making and that engagement activity can feel tokenistic, with the fees consultations mentioned most frequently. Fee increases were announced in March 2026 two month before the survey was launched, following a consultation the previous year.

"I'm not sure how much influence pharmacist or technicians feedback influences when developing policies, standards and guidance." (*Respondent PT5187*)

"I don't believe the GPhC listened when many pharmacy professionals responded negatively regarding the rise in professional fees." (*Respondent P4997*)

Some comments were more positive with some respondents suggesting that the GPhC engages regularly and sincerely with registrants through regular updates, consultations and other activities.

"I believe the GPhC generally listens to pharmacy professionals... While there is always room for further engagement, I feel the GPhC is committed to working with the profession to drive safe and effective practice." (*Respondent P4857*)

The findings suggest that creating opportunities for engagement alone may not be sufficient. Some respondents want clearer evidence of how feedback influences decisions, policies and regulatory activity.

Responsiveness

Views were mixed on whether the GPhC responds to emerging challenges and issues in pharmacy practice through its standards, guidance and other regulatory work. Overall, 39% of respondents agreed, 26% disagreed, and the remaining 35% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Pharmacy technicians were more likely to agree than pharmacists (48% compared to 35%). Responses also varied across work settings, with those primarily based in academic, care home and prison pharmacy settings generally reporting more positive views than those working in GP practice, hospital and pharmaceutical industry settings.

Qualitative feedback suggests that some respondents view the GPhC as slow to respond to developments within pharmacy practice and insufficiently proactive in addressing emerging issues. Comments frequently referenced workforce pressures and a perceived lack of responding to issues affecting the profession, with an expectation that the GPhC should take a broader and more proactive role.

"The GPhC is a very reactive body and fails to keep up with the curve when it should be leading." (*Respondent P0418*)

"The GPhC deliberately limits itself to a narrow 'regulation only' remit, despite many professional failings being rooted in wider systemic pressures." (*Respondent P1370*)

A smaller number of respondents felt that the GPhC has adapted to evolving practice and issues facing the sector.

“Having dealt with the GPhC for more than 40 years, I have seen how the establishment supports pharmacists and technicians with the newer challenges that come with changing demands.” (*Respondent P2508*)

The findings suggest that many registrants expect the GPhC to demonstrate greater visibility and responsiveness as pharmacy practice continues to evolve.

Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion

Responses were generally positive, with 49% of respondents agreeing that the GPhC promotes equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), 9% disagreeing and 42% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Qualitative feedback reflected a range of views. Some respondents felt that the GPhC demonstrates a strong commitment to EDI through its standards, guidance and wider work. Others felt that they had not personally seen evidence of this work or that its impact was not always visible in day-to-day practice and that discrimination and inequality remain challenges within the profession.

“I haven't seen or heard of what the GPhC does to respond to challenges or tackling equality. That's not to say it doesn't, but I haven't heard about anything.” (*Respondent P0323*)

“The GPhC shows strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion but how it is reflected in everyday practice varies.” (*Respondent P5144*)

4. Summary of Findings

Respondents reported high levels of familiarity with the standards and strong confidence in their ability to exercise professional judgement and deliver safe and effective care. The standards were generally viewed as clear, useful and embedded within professional practice. However, some respondents also noted opportunities to ensure standards remain relevant as pharmacy practice continues to evolve, and highlighted workforce and workload pressures.

The findings suggest that registrants support the role of professional regulation. However, views were more mixed in relation to revalidation, organisational responsiveness and perceptions of engagement. Across these areas, respondents frequently expressed a desire for clearer evidence of how feedback informs decision-making, greater visibility of the impact of regulatory activity, and a more active response to the challenges affecting pharmacy practice. While most respondents felt they understood the role of the regulator, some comments also reflected expectations that extend beyond the GPhC's statutory remit, particularly in relation to workforce and professional issues.

5. Responding to the Findings

We will use these findings to inform our ongoing work, helping ensure that our priorities, programmes and regulatory activities continue to respond to the issues identified by pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. Fortunately, the survey findings broadly support existing priorities within our five-year strategy and provide an important evidence base for future improvements.

Standards

The survey suggests that registrants value the professional standards and see them as an important part of safe and effective practice, while identifying opportunities to ensure they remain relevant as pharmacy practice evolves.

We will shortly be publishing new Responsible Pharmacist Rules and new standards for Superintendent Pharmacists and Responsible Pharmacists. We will also consult on revised standards for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies to reflect the developments in pharmacy practice.

Collaboration

Respondents highlighted the importance of standards and guidance keeping pace with developments in pharmacy practice and the wider healthcare system.

We will continue to work with the UK and devolved governments, NHS partners, regulators and professional bodies across Great Britain to ensure standards and guidance remain relevant as pharmacy practice evolves and support our registrants to deliver safe and effective pharmacy services.

We will explore ways to strengthen our approach to horizon scanning and the identification of emerging themes and issues, helping ensure that our regulatory activity remains responsive to changes in pharmacy practice.

Revalidation

The survey suggests that while registrants support the objectives of revalidation, many would like the process to be more meaningful, proportionate and relevant to practice.

Building on the findings from this survey and previous feedback, we are progressing improvements to the revalidation model, with ongoing development of the revalidation framework and improved guidance resources and communications for registrants. This aim of this work is to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and user experience of revalidation for registrants, reviewers and the GPhC.

Communication and Engagement

The survey identified engagement and responsiveness as areas where registrants would like to see improvement, particularly in understanding how feedback influences decisions.

These findings will be used to inform the development and implementation of our refreshed Communication and Engagement Strategy, which will include:

- improving communication about our work, including the purpose of consultations, how decisions are made, and how stakeholder views have been considered. We have already taken action since this survey; for example, we have revised our approach to consultation reporting.
- providing clearer feedback on how registrants' views have influenced policies, standards and regulatory activity; and
- strengthening engagement with pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, students and wider stakeholders through forums, roundtables, conferences and other engagement activities.

Strengthening our work on promoting equality, diversity and inclusion

While most respondents viewed the GPhC's approach to EDI positively, some felt the impact of this work is not always visible in practice.

We are developing a new five-year EDI strategy informed by the NHS Race and Health principles. As part of this work, we will convene a further anti-racism roundtable bringing together organisations from across the pharmacy and healthcare sectors to agree shared principles and actions.

We are working with other regulators to implement the recommendations from the Lord Mann review of antisemitism and other forms of racism in the NHS and healthcare regulatory system.

We will continue to work with stakeholders to improve educational equity and reduce disparities in pharmacy education and training.

Monitoring

We intend to repeat our registrants survey annually to get feedback on our changes and facilitate how we measure progress against our strategic aims.

6. Appendices

Data Tables

Table 1: Number and proportion of responses by profession

Role	Number of responses	% of responses
Pharmacist	3,799	71%
Pharmacy technician	1,569	29%
Grand Total	5,368	100%

Table 2: Number and proportion of responses by primary workplace setting (over the past 12 months)

Setting	Number of responses	% of responses
Academia or training provider	176	3%
Care home	18	<1%
Community sector (including online)	1,965	37%
GP practice	791	15%
Health boards, ICB or equivalent	233	4%
Hospital sector	1,674	31%
Not in pharmacy related role past 12 months	42	<1%
Pharmaceutical industry	135	3%
Prison pharmacy	69	1%
Other	265	5%
Grand Total	5,368	100%

Table 3: Number and proportion of responses by year of joining the register

Joined Register	Number of responses	% of responses
<1993	739	14%
1993-2010	1,915	36%
2011-2019	1,688	31%
2020-2024	752	14%
2025+	274	5%
Grand Total	5,368	100%

Table 4: Likert questions with full breakdown of responses

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Familiar with the professional standards for my role	3,060 (57%) Combined: 97%	2,122 (40%)	148 (3%)	24 (<1%) Combined: 1%	14 (<1%)
Standards and guidance help me deliver safe and effective care	1,815 (34%) Combined: 75%	2,188 (41%)	1,036 (19%)	253 (5%) Combined: 6%	76 (1%)
Confident in using professional judgement	2,613 (49%) Combined: 94%	2,446 (46%)	237 (4%)	58 (1%) Combined: 1%	14 (<1%)
Able to deliver safe and effective pharmacy services	2,616 (49%) Combined: 90%	2,218 (41%)	296 (6%)	186 (3%) Combined: 4%	52 (1%)
Professional standards work alongside other regulations and guidance	1,368 (25%) Combined: 68%	2,294 (43%)	1,382 (26%)	219 (4%) Combined: 6%	105 (2%)
Revalidation supports professional development and confidence	701 (13%) Combined: 44%	1,651 (31%)	1,449 (27%)	1,109 (21%) Combined: 29%	458 (9%)
Understand the role of the GPhC as a regulator	1,492 (28%) Combined: 76%	2,600 (48%)	679 (13%)	373 (7%) Combined: 11%	224 (4%)
GPhC listens to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians	378 (7%) Combined: 28%	1,139 (21%)	2,265 (42%)	848 (16%) Combined: 30%	738 (14%)
GPhC responds to emerging challenges and issues	461 (9%) Combined: 39%	1,625 (30%)	1,896 (35%)	839 (16%) Combined: 26%	547 (10%)
GPhC promotes equality, diversity and inclusion	812 (15%) Combined: 49%	1,791 (33%)	2,259 (42%)	251 (5%) Combined: 9%	255 (5%)

Please note, not all percentages will necessarily add up to 100% due to the rounding of numbers.



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