

General
Pharmaceutical
Council

Strategic plan 2020-25: year two



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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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Foreword

April 2021

We finalised this five-year strategic plan for 2020-25, and our ten-year vision, just as the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning.

This year has challenged us all, both personally and professionally, in ways we couldn't have imagined when we were developing the vision and strategy.

Everyone working in pharmacy has faced huge demands during the pandemic, and pharmacy has risen admirably to the challenges it has faced.

Our ten-year vision is one of safe and effective pharmacy care at the heart of healthier communities. In the last year, pharmacies have really demonstrated how they are at the heart of their communities, continuing to provide safe and effective care to people in extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

Pharmacy is continuing to play a critical role in the response to COVID-19. There is a huge appreciation from patients and the public, from governments and from each health service, as well as from us, for everything that pharmacy teams in all sectors are doing.

Putting our vision and strategy into practice

We have all had to work very differently in the last year. We rapidly had to put our new strategic approach, outlined in this plan, into practice to help us meet the challenges we were all facing and to do what we could to support pharmacy.

It has been a huge test for our strategy and vision, but they have stood up to it and demonstrated their worth. They have given us a clear direction and redefined ways of working during this time.

Two of our strategic aims illustrate this. One is to deliver an adaptable standards framework that meets rapidly changing public and professional needs; another is to shift the balance towards more anticipatory, proportionate and tailored approaches to regulating pharmacy.

We have had the opportunity and the need to put both of these into practice over the last year. For example, we had to change our approach to inspections quickly to focus on providing support to registered pharmacies on their arrangements and plans during the pandemic, and rapidly respond to emerging issues. This approach helped us to identify risks and issues before they became a problem, and to work actively with others to address them.

Like everyone, we have had to be flexible in our approach and some of our plans and timelines have had to change. But we have also kept moving ahead with delivering our strategic plan



and vision, as the pressures of the pandemic have shown powerfully why we must achieve these aims.

We have another strategic aim to deliver improvements in pharmacy care by modernising how we regulate education and training. This year we have taken a significant step towards achieving this by finalising and publishing new standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists.

The pandemic has demonstrated the need for pharmacy professionals to be able to take on new roles within the healthcare team and to work flexibly in the full range of healthcare settings. These major changes will help to achieve ambitious strategies for pharmacy and health across the UK, by enabling newly-qualified pharmacists to play a much greater role in providing clinical care to patients and the public. The new standards will underpin these.

Looking ahead

We know there are further changes and challenges ahead as we begin the second year of this five-year strategic plan. Looking ahead, we can see some significant developments which will have a big impact on what pharmacy is expected to do and on how we regulate pharmacy.

These include:

- the short-term and longer-term effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on health and social care, and on wider society
- the effects on clinical care of new technologies and advances in science
- technology having further impacts on medicines and on the way they are supplied
- patients and the public having high expectations of evolving 'person-centred' care

We expect to see further integration of health and social care in each country in which we regulate, including through the proposed reforms outlined in the White Paper on the future of health and care in England.

Governments across Great Britain are also working together on plans for reforming professional regulation to better protect patients, support our health services and to help the workforce meet future challenges.

We will continue to keep this strategic plan under review, as we've done throughout the pandemic, and to be agile and responsive to

these and other developments. We may need to reprioritise our work and will make sure we continue to reflect on and use the lessons learnt to improve how we regulate pharmacy.

One of the real positives from this very challenging year has been the real spirit of collaboration we have seen and experienced. We are very grateful for the support and engagement we've had from pharmacy professionals and owners, and the organisations representing them, governments, National Health Services, patients, and others that we work with during this time. We look forward to continuing to work together to meet the challenges ahead and to improve further the care received by people using pharmacy services.



Nigel Clarke
Chair



Duncan Rudkin
Chief Executive and Registrar



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:

- promote professionalism within pharmacy
- help make sure pharmacy professionals have the appropriate knowledge, attitudes and behaviours
- assure the quality of pharmacy, including its safety
- support the improvement of pharmacy

We have a number of ways in which we do this. These include:

- registering and listing publicly the pharmacy professionals and pharmacies that provide care to patients and the public
- setting and promoting the standards needed to enter and stay on our register
- receiving assurances, in a number of ways, that pharmacy professionals and pharmacies continue to uphold our standards – and acting appropriately when they do not
- sharing with others what we learn through our work
- investigating concerns about the people or pharmacies we register and taking proportionate action to protect the public and promote our standards

Our strategic plan

Our strategic plan for the next five years marks the start of our journey towards delivering our ambitious Vision 2030, for 'safe and effective pharmacy care at the heart of healthier communities'.

To make major progress in delivering our vision over the next five years, we will focus on achieving the five strategic aims set out below. These are to:

1. Deliver an adaptable standards framework that meets public and professional needs that are changing quickly.
2. Deliver effective, consistent and fair regulation.
3. Drive improvements in pharmacy care by modernising how we regulate education and training.
4. Shift the balance towards more anticipatory, proportionate and tailored approaches to regulating pharmacy.
5. Enhance our capabilities and infrastructure to deliver our vision.

Each aim is supported by a short narrative for explanatory purposes, the key programmes of work we will be focussing on, along with some high-level examples of success.



Our strategic aims

1. Deliver an adaptable standards framework that meets public and professional needs that are changing quickly

Having an up-to-date and relevant standards framework and supporting guidance – for professionals and pharmacies – will allow us to regulate flexibly, proportionately and effectively. The standards and guidance will help professionals deliver a broader range of clinical services, working in a variety of settings and within different models of service delivery. These service models will incorporate more and more use of advanced technology.

To achieve this aim over the remaining four years of this strategic plan, our key programmes of work will focus on:

1. Developing new regulatory standards for updated roles in medicines legislation.
2. Making sure our core standards and supporting guidance meet the changing needs of the public and professionals.

We will know we are successful if:

- our regulatory standards framework reflects the main issues needed for the safe and effective practice of pharmacy
- standards expected are understood by the public, professionals and pharmacy owners
- professional responsibilities and accountabilities are clear and evidenced by feedback and through inspections, and the concerns that are raised

2. Deliver effective, consistent and fair regulation

As a good-quality regulator, all our services will be performing consistently well. We will understand what difference our regulatory approaches and activities are making to patient safety and the continuous improvement in the quality of pharmacy practice in all settings. We will also be making sure the way we regulate is grounded in equality and diversity, and a good understanding of the systems and cultures professionals and the communities they serve are based in.

To achieve this aim over the remaining four years of this strategic plan, our programmes of work will focus on:

1. Meeting all the standards of good regulation.
2. Reporting broadly on our regulatory and service performance.
3. Regulating fairly.

We will know we are successful if:

- we are consistently meeting all 18 standards of good regulation set by the Professional Standards Authority
- we are reporting on the productivity, efficiency and effectiveness of our services and organisational performance
- we understand the impact of our regulatory approaches and use this to improve the quality of pharmacy practice

- we are able to measure the safety and effectiveness of pharmacy care
- people from all backgrounds can flourish and thrive in the profession and there is fair access to pharmacy services for all communities

3. Drive improvements in pharmacy care by modernising how we regulate education and training

We aim to make sure that all aspects of how we regulate the education and training of pharmacy professionals, and their ongoing learning and development, are up to date and working effectively together. Through this we will be better able to support the shaping of confident and capable professionals that can meet patients' needs now and in the future.

To achieve this aim over the remaining four years of this strategic plan, our programmes of work will focus on:

1. Refreshing standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.
2. Developing our role in regulating the post-registration education and training of pharmacy professionals.
3. Implementing a tailored and intelligence-led approach to accrediting and quality assuring initial education and training providers.
4. Updating the delivery, content and timing of the registration assessment for pharmacists.
5. Enabling the efficient registration of overseas pharmacy professionals considering Brexit.

We will know we are successful if:

- employers tell us that newly qualified pharmacy professionals have the skills needed
- education providers meet our refreshed standards
- our registration assessment is delivered efficiently and effectively and tests the necessary knowledge and skills of a 'day-one' pharmacist
- there is a fair and proportionate assessment for all overseas nationals considering Brexit

4. Shift the balance towards more anticipatory, proportionate and tailored approaches to regulating pharmacy

We will be focusing more and more of our regulatory efforts on getting ahead of issues before they happen or become a bigger issue. We will be using data, intelligence and insights to help us do that. We will also use them to guide our decision-making so that we are increasingly tailoring our regulatory responses, to make the most impact. As a result, our responses will be based more around the context and issues we are dealing with, rather than the way we are structured. This approach will also include engaging and working with others and communicating more directly with the public as well as with pharmacy.

To achieve this aim over the remaining four years of this strategic plan, our programmes of work will focus on:

1. Practising an approach to how we regulate that is increasingly informed by intelligence.
2. Managing the flow of incoming information, intelligence and concerns strategically.
3. Operating a more person centred and restorative approach to fitness to practise.
4. Developing a more strategic approach to regulating pharmacy.
5. Raising the public's awareness and understanding of the standards they should expect from pharmacy.

We will know we are successful if:

- we are identifying issues that apply generally across pharmacy and are acting on them
- we make key regulatory datasets available to the pharmacy sector 24/7 through a self-serve data portal, and this is being used
- our regulatory responses are increasingly tailored and co-ordinated based on the issues and context that apply
- pharmacy professionals are safe to practise and can get support to help them meet our standards when they need it
- we are ready to roll out a strategic approach to regulating the quality of registered pharmacies

5. Enhance our capabilities and infrastructure to deliver our vision


To successfully achieve our vision and to regulate efficiently, it is important we have the right foundations in place. This includes having the right people, and the right culture and ways of working. To be successful we will be supported by the right technology and be in a financially stable and sustainable position.

To achieve this aim over the remaining four years of this strategic plan, our programmes of work will focus on:

1. Improving customers' experience of our services.
2. Making sure we are organised for success.
3. Improving our IT infrastructure to support us in delivering our vision.
4. Establishing a sustainable and fair financial position.

We will know we are successful if:

- all our services for registrants are available online, and we are consistently meeting customer service standards
- the organisation is led effectively, and we have improved structures, systems and processes to allow us to change with the times and deliver value for money
- we have the capability, skills and knowledge to work in partnership and collaboration with the pharmacy profession and other stakeholders to deliver safe and effective patient care
- we are in a financially stable and sustainable position, funded appropriately and fairly by those we regulate



Given the fast pace of change, and the significant implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will keep the plan and our aims under regular review. This will make sure we can adapt quickly to any changes in priorities that may arise.

Our strategic approach

The strategic aims we have set ourselves and the level of ambition we have committed to mean we will need to be able to adapt quickly to the fast-changing environment around us. We will need to use intelligence more and be anticipatory in our approach to the way we regulate, to make sure we are proportionate and effective.

It is important that in doing so, we keep our key operating principles at the centre of the way we work. These are to:

Promote professionalism

We believe the professional knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of the people working in pharmacy offer the best assurance to people using pharmacy services. Our most effective role is in helping to promote an environment in which professionalism can flourish, and making sure that the standards expected of pharmacy reflect this.

Be person-centred

At the heart of everything we do is the recognition that everyone is an individual and has differing needs which we must understand

and take account of in our work. This applies to everyone – including people using pharmacy services, people working in pharmacy, people working in the wider health and care sector and people in our own organisation.

Focus on outcomes

We will continue to focus on the outcomes we want to achieve on behalf of the people using pharmacy services. This will mean we can give the people working in pharmacy the flexibility to innovate and adapt in a way that improves quality.

Promote learning and improvement

We will work to continuously improve the quality of pharmacy. We will collect information from our work, and the work of others, so that we can share learning and promote improvement. And we will make sure that we also improve ourselves and work in the most efficient and effective ways.

Collaborate

We are one part of a wider system that makes sure people receive safe and effective care from pharmacy and ensures that public trust in pharmacy is maintained. If we are to be successful, we must work alongside the people using pharmacy, the leaders of pharmacy, other regulators, and the wider health and care sector.



Recognise the contribution of the whole pharmacy team

People receive safe and effective care when the skills, knowledge and contributions of everyone in the pharmacy team are used to their best effect. We will work in a way that recognises the whole pharmacy team's role in quality and improvement.

This strategy is our commitment to work with the people using pharmacy services, people working in pharmacy, and others, to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of people in Great Britain.



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