



Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20

For the year ended 31 May 2020

Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland

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For the year ended 31 May 2020

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6 October 2020

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Contents

1. President and Chief Executive - Joint Foreword	3
2. Who we are.....	5
3. What we do.....	5
4. About our Register	7
5. Activity and Performance in 2019/20	8
6. Pharmacy Forum NI	38
7. Financial Overview	51
Chair of Resources Committee Foreword	53
Council, Executive, and Professional Advisors	58
Statement of Responsibilities of the Council	59
Independent Auditors Report.....	60
Financial Statements.....	64
Appendices.....	76

1. President and Chief Executive - Joint Foreword

2019/20 has been an exceptional year. The Covid-19 pandemic has placed extreme pressures on the health and care sector and has impacted upon every aspect of society. The pharmacy sector has risen to the enormous challenges that Northern Ireland faced and has continued to provide safe and effective services in an ever-changing environment. Whilst prioritising patient care, all other activities have continued in the background, from training and assessment of pre-registration trainees, through to maintaining professional skills, knowledge and ability.

The Council acknowledges and congratulates the profession, in all its many settings, for its resilience and ability to adapt to unique and challenging circumstances.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we have also needed to prioritise our ability to be a flexible and agile regulator that works in productive partnership with Government, regulatory colleagues and our stakeholders. Acknowledging the crucial frontline role pharmacists would play, we made decisions with the objective that our regulatory burden would be right-touch. Facilitating the frontline response, where possible, whilst maintaining standards and public protection.

The Annual Report 2019/20 outlines the regulatory steps we have taken from early March 2020 in response to the pandemic.

Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19, this was an extremely busy and productive year. We continue to work on achieving Council's vision and objectives as laid out in our Corporate Strategy 2017-2022. The Annual Report marks our progress in 2019/20 against the Corporate Strategy's objectives. Notable landmarks have included agreeing a joint registration assessment with the GPhC and finalising a new Continuing Professional Development Framework for pharmacists in Northern Ireland. Progress has also continued on our review of Standards and Guidance and we maintained constructive engagement with Government in London and Belfast on needed regulatory reforms.

The importance of healthcare professionals and the health and social care system has been underlined in the most tragic of circumstances in 2020. It has also reminded us of the important role regulation plays in this broader system; providing a framework within which professionals can reach and maintain the standards to practise safely, thereby protecting the public and maintaining the health and social care system. These reflections will remind us of our responsibilities as we seek to get the most appropriate regulatory reforms and do the best job possible to deliver on our vision and objectives going forward.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Livingstone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Dr Jim Livingstone, President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trevor Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T".

Trevor Patterson, Chief Executive

2. Who we are

We are the statutory regulatory body for pharmacists and pharmacies in Northern Ireland.

Pharmacists provide a range of pharmacy services to patients and the public in an increasing variety of contexts from community pharmacies, hospitals and GP surgeries to industry, education and research. It is our job to ensure that pharmacists and the services they deliver are safe and protect the wellbeing of those who use them. We do this through a system of personal and premises registration. Through our work, we aim to protect the public and patients and maintain public confidence in the pharmacy profession.

Our work touches the lives of pharmacists from the day they start their training until the day they retire or leave the Register.

Our role, powers and responsibilities are set out in The Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976.

We are almost exclusively funded by registration and retention fees, paid by pre-registration trainees, pharmacists and premises owners. We are not funded by the public purse.

We have a governing Council which is independently appointed, following the public appointment principles, comprising 7 members of the public (lay members) and 7 pharmacy professionals (registrant members) and headed by a President. The Chief Executive of the organisation is accountable for organisational performance to the Council which sets the strategic direction of the organisation.

We are a fully devolved regulator and are accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

We are based in Belfast and have a small regulatory staff team of 14 people.

3. What we do

We work with pharmacists from the day they start their training and throughout their career to protect the public by ensuring they are fit to practise and keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

Our key areas of focus are:

Education and Training

- Setting standards, accrediting courses and approving qualifications for undergraduates and pharmacists including those for specialisms;
- Assuring the quality of the year-long pre-registration training that pharmacist trainees must undertake;

- Setting and running the final assessment that pharmacist trainees must pass before they can be registered as a pharmacist; and
- Ensuring that pharmacists complete the annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme which is designed to ensure that they keep their skills and knowledge up to date and provide evidence of compliance at least annually.

Registering competent professionals

Pharmacists must be registered with us to practise in Northern Ireland. Before registration, we check that they are appropriately qualified to join the Register.

Setting and monitoring compliance with Professional Standards

Pharmacists and pharmacy premises must meet our Standards to remain on the Register. We provide a suite of Guidance documents to assist pharmacists in this regard.

Acting when our Standards are not met

Actions can include suspending someone from working as a pharmacist for a set period, placing conditions on their practice or removing their right to practise pharmacy by removing them from the professional Register. In 2016, legislation was passed to allow us to act when our new Premises Standards are not met. However, these powers have not yet come into operation.

Investigating complaints

We work with the Department of Health Northern Ireland (DoH) and the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) to ensure that any complaint made in relation to the Fitness to Practise of a pharmacist is appropriately investigated and that pharmacy premises meet our Standards.

Oversight of our work

Our work is subject to oversight by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA). Each year, the PSA assesses our performance against its Standards of Good Regulation. The PSA presents a report on all the regulators of healthcare professionals in the UK to the UK Parliament and lays it before the Northern Ireland Assembly¹.

The PSA also reviews all final adjudication decisions in Fitness to Practise cases. The PSA has the discretion to refer to the High Court any final Statutory Committee decision if it considers that decision is insufficient for public protection - including protection of the health, safety and wellbeing of the public; maintaining public confidence in the pharmacy profession; and maintaining proper professional standards and conduct for pharmacists.

¹ <http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work-with-regulators/read-performance-reviews>

The PSA can also, at an early stage, audit a sample of Fitness to Practise cases we have closed before they reached a full Fitness to Practise hearing.

We are accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly for all that we do.

DoH appoints our Council members in line with the Code of Practice issued by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland. DoH approves Council Regulations before they are laid with the Northern Ireland Assembly for negative resolution.

4. About our Register

The number of pharmacists on the Register varies each year due to new pharmacists entering the Register, voluntary withdrawals and decisions made by the regulator.²

Figure 1 – Registration Snapshot - Registered Pharmacists and Premises at end of financial year (31 May)

Registered Pharmacists		
2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
2479	2532	2731

Registered Premises		
2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
548	548	554

Figure 2 - Registered Pharmacists leaving the Register by 01 June annually

Reason for Removal	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Voluntarily withdrawn	168	101	30
Removed for CPD non-compliance	8	12	12
Non-payment of fees	6	-	-
Struck off (Fitness to Practise)	1	-	1
Other	-	-	1
Total	183	113	44

² Registrants can be removed from the Register by the Regulator for non-payment of fees, non-compliance with CPD requirements, or as the outcome of a Fitness to Practise hearing.

5. Activity and Performance in 2019/20

This Annual Report reflects the work of the Pharmaceutical Society NI in the year 01 June 2019 to 31 May 2020. In July 2017, the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI (“Council”) approved a 5-year Corporate Strategy which sets out what the organisation aims to achieve in the period 2017-22.

Within this plan, we describe our Vision:

‘The Pharmaceutical Society NI will be recognised and trusted as a leader of modern and effective healthcare regulation with a key role in ensuring pharmacy services are safe and meet high standards’.

This Vision is underpinned by 6 high-level strategic objectives and related Goals, which set the course of the 5-year planning cycle from 2017 to 2022:

- 1. To deliver high quality pharmacy regulation that is proportionate and cost-effective;**
- 2. To set pharmacy standards that are evidence-based, output-focused, achievable and necessary for patient and public safety;**
- 3. To conduct Fitness to Practise processes that are robust, timely and fair;**
- 4. To ensure that pharmacy education and professional development is fit for purpose;**
- 5. To be an accountable organisation with effective governance and operations; and**
- 6. To communicate effectively, be accessible and responsive.**

Objective 1

To deliver high quality pharmacy regulation that is proportionate and cost-effective

Delivering high quality pharmacy regulation, which protects the public and maintains public confidence in the pharmacy profession, requires us to be focused on our core functions whilst also evolving our policies, practices and legislation to meet new challenges in healthcare and developments in regulatory thinking and practice. We also must be flexible and agile to address emerging issues, working with our partners and stakeholders.

Goal 1. a. We will meet all performance standards in annual PSA appraisals in at least 4 of the next 5 years

Performance Review

In September 2020, the PSA published its Performance Review of our regulatory activities in 2018/19. In 2018/19, we met 22 out of the 24 Standards of Good Regulation. As part of this year's review, the PSA undertook an audit of the initial stages of our Fitness to Practise process. PSA identified areas for improvement in Standards 5 and 7 of the Fitness to Practise Standards, relating largely to customer service issues around communication and record keeping. In its report, the PSA acknowledged the prompt action we have taken in response to its findings and the work we had already planned prior to the audit, to address some of the issues raised. In 2020/21, we will continue to implement reforms in the areas identified and across our Fitness to Practise processes, to ensure the necessary improvements are made. The PSA's full report of our regulatory performance can be found on its website.³ We have met all performance standards of the annual PSA appraisals in 3 of the previous 4 years.

Goal 1. b. We will secure policy agreement with DOH to make legislative and non-legislative changes required to modernise pharmacy regulation

Reforming our primary Legislation and Regulations

The return of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Executive and Minister for Health in January 2020 was extremely welcome. However, expectations of pursuing some of the substantive reforms we consider necessary to maintain public protection and flexible regulation going forward were undermined, at least in part, by the emergence of the Covid-19 Pandemic. We have been unable to make progress in relation to securing policy agreement with DoH on resolving the current legislative and organisational linkage between our Pharmacy professional leadership and regulatory roles. However, some progress on regulatory reform has been made at the UK level.

Promoting Professionalism, Reforming Regulation

The UK Government's response to the four-country consultation *Promoting Professionalism, Reforming Regulation* was published by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in July 2019⁴. DHSC has prioritised reforms, across all 9 regulators of healthcare professionals, in relation to Fitness to Practise and governance powers. A key objective is to provide greater consistency of basic powers across the regulators, coupled with enhanced flexibility of Regulators to make

³ <https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work-with-regulators/read-performance-reviews>

⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/820566/Promoting_professionalism_reforming_regulation_consultation_reponse.pdf

decisions, alongside increased accountability mechanisms. Throughout 2019/20, we have been working with DHSC and DoH, other regulators and the PSA to develop these proposals. Reforming our primary legislation within this broader framework of reform will also require significant engagement with DoH and the approval of the Northern Ireland Assembly going forward.

Goal 1. c We will secure policy agreement with DOH for the statutory regulation and registration of technicians

Policy in this area is led by DoH. We are a member of DoH's Pharmacy Workforce Review Project Board and have participated in the development of a Pharmacy Workforce Review and the initial stages of an action plan for implementation to address the issues identified. Part of this group's work has focused on the potential need to register pharmacy technicians in Northern Ireland and further progress has been made on a policy paper on registering pharmacy technicians for the Minister for Health. It remains a core objective of our Corporate Strategy to develop and publicly consult on proposals to register and set regulatory standards for pharmacy technicians in Northern Ireland. We will continue to work with DoH on this issue in the coming year.

Goal 1. d. We will employ a financial strategy (to be reviewed annually) to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness

Council approved a three-year Financial Strategy in 2018-19 to ensure financial viability and support development through effective operation of the Pharmaceutical Society NI finances. The strategy is supporting and leading activities designed to improve effectiveness, reduce costs and minimise the fee burden on registrants. The completion of Council's Governance Review in January 2020 (see page 29) and the creation of a new Finance and Performance Committee will enhance Council's ability to oversee the implementation of the financial strategy going forward.

Goal 1. e. We will collaborate with other relevant Regulators and PSA to effect change designed to maximise use of shared principles and practices.

We have continued to collaborate and work closely with regulators throughout Northern Ireland and the UK to share best practice and engage with the Governments on proposals for broader regulatory reforms. This work is led by a Chief Executive of The Regulatory Bodies (CEORB) for the 13 regulators for health and social care professionals, which met regularly in 2019/20. Extensive work has been done already on joint working through dedicated sub-groups which also supports the many legislative reforms identified in this report. Our collaborative work is further outlined throughout this report and in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Goal 1. f. We will deliver reforms developed as a consequence of Rebalancing Medicines Legislation and Pharmacy Regulation including the issue of criminal prosecution for dispensing errors

The Rebalancing Medicines Legislation and Pharmacy Regulation Programme Board⁵ (Rebalancing Programme Board) has been tasked by the DHSC (London) to review relevant pharmacy legislation and regulation in the UK to ensure that it provides safety for users of pharmacy services, reduces, wherever possible, inflexible legislation and affords regulators the agility to enable innovation and development of safe pharmacy practice.

In June 2018, the DHSC and the Devolved Governments consulted upon two draft Orders:

- Pharmacy (Preparation and Dispensing Errors – Hospital and Other Pharmacy Services) Order 2018; and
- Pharmacy (Responsible Pharmacists, Superintendent Pharmacists etc.) Order 2018.

The changes relating to Responsible Pharmacists and Superintendent Pharmacists propose to move responsibility for the setting of standards from primary legislation to the professional regulators. The proposals more clearly define the headline primary duties of Superintendents and Responsible Pharmacists, empowering the regulators to provide further detail in a more agile and responsive regulatory framework with the intention of delivering a more flexible and patient-centred model of regulation. We will continue to prepare for the development of a more agile and responsive regulatory framework for Superintendent and Responsible Pharmacists, should these powers come into effect.

These draft Orders did not progress through Parliament in 2019/20 and continue to await progress in 2020/21. We will continue to work with the UK Departments on this important reform.

Responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic

This section of the Annual Report provides an overview of our initial response to the Covid-19 Pandemic up to 31 May 2020. Most of the impact of the decisions outlined below will not be fully assessed or recorded until after the reporting period.

When responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic, we took into consideration several factors. Notably, in acknowledging that this was a healthcare emergency in which pharmacists in Northern Ireland would play a critical and frontline role, we sought to ensure that our regulatory actions were proportionate and appropriate. This meant ensuring that our regulatory burden did not negatively impact on pharmacists' ability to tackle the healthcare emergency and, where possible, we sought to take actions that would facilitate their frontline work whilst at the same time maintaining appropriate

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/pharmacy-regulation-programme-board>

standards to protect the public. We also had to take decisions based on our ability to keep our stakeholders and staff safe during the pandemic and lockdown scenario.

REGISTRATION

Temporary Register

To ensure that the Health and Social Care Service had an adequate number of pharmacists to tackle the Covid-19 Pandemic, specific legislation was rushed through the UK Parliament. Schedule 4 of the Coronavirus Act 2020⁶ gave us various new powers including the power to establish a Temporary Register. Working closely with DoH, we developed 2 phases to implement a Temporary Register. Phase 1 sought to bring individuals who left the Pharmaceutical Society NI Register in good standing within the last 3 years back into practice en bloc.

On 03 April 2020, we opened the Temporary Register for this category, automatically registering 260 individuals; provision was made for individuals to opt out prior to automatic registration. The legislation permitted registration without all the usual checks. To compensate for this, employers were written to and information was hosted on our website identifying additional checks that employers should make for all those on the Temporary Register prior to engaging them.

Phase 2 was opened on 24 April 2020. This phase permitted individuals, who were currently registered, or in the last 3 years had voluntarily left, in good standing, the GPhC, PSI or another EEA pharmacy register, to apply to be added to the Temporary Register. This phase required completion of an application process. A further 5 pharmacists joined the Temporary Register in the period, through this mechanism.

No fees were charged for joining the Temporary Register. Council approved a policy for the exercise of the Registrar's powers to deal with concerns about those on the Temporary Register in line with emergency powers contained in the Coronavirus Act and this was published on 23 April 2020⁷. The Temporary Register can be viewed on our website⁸ along with further statements on its operation⁹.

Annual Retention

With a view to reducing the administrative burden on pharmacists and employers during the pandemic, Council, on 31 March 2020, announced an extension to the 2019/2020 registration year. The year was due to end on 31 May 2020 but was instead scheduled to end on 31 August 2020. All those pharmacists that were on the Register on 31 May 2020 remained so for an additional three months. The following registration year will commence on 01 September 2020 and run until the normal year end, 31 May 2021. In accordance with fee regulations, there was no increase in fees for the longer registration year nor will there be a reduction for the following shorter year.

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7/schedule/4/enacted>

⁷ <https://www.psni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Use-of-powers-for-temporary-registrations-of-persons-pdf.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.psni.org.uk/search-register/>

⁹ <https://www.psni.org.uk/publications/covid19-regulatory-statements-and-information/>

FITNESS TO PRACTISE

Remote Procedures

In approaching Fitness to Practise during the pandemic and lockdown conditions, our top priority was public protection and patient safety. We continued to receive and log complaints and concerns which were risk assessed and those which presented an immediate risk to the public were advanced if they met the threshold for Interim Order.

Other cases were advanced where the risk assessment changed or where it was possible to progress safely.

We either heard or adjourned any cases currently listed and only listed the following types of case during the reporting period:

1. Initial Interim Order applications;
2. Interim Order review hearings;
3. High Court applications to extend Interim Orders; and
4. Substantive Fitness to Practise review hearings.

All other face to face Statutory Committee hearings were adjourned, allowing us to prioritise Interim Order and substantive order reviews.

We rapidly moved to secure online software to carryout priority hearings remotely. A full procedure document for remote online hearings was developed for the benefit of participants, panels and the public. Further information on our approach to Fitness to Practise during the pandemic can be found on our website¹⁰.

EDUCATION

Continuing Professional Development

Again, with a view to reducing the immediate burden on pharmacists during the pandemic, on 19 March 2020, we announced that CPD submission would be delayed until later in 2020 and two-months' notice would be given to pharmacists of the new submission date. A decision on the new date for submission would be context specific. This decision did recognise the fact that CPD remained critical during the novel circumstances surrounding the pandemic but recording and write up would require additional time. It was also recognised that 75% of the CPD year had elapsed at the time of declaration of the emergency, leaving only 25% of the 30 hours to complete.

Pre-registration programme and examination

We recognise that this was an extremely difficult period for pre-registration trainees and tutors as tutors were part of the front-line response to the pandemic whilst still

¹⁰ <https://www.psn.org.uk/publications/covid19-regulatory-statements-and-information/>

maintaining their training and supervision responsibilities. Trainees themselves played an important role in supporting the response.

With a view to finding the safest and most proportionate approach to completion of pre-registration training and assessment during this time, following discussions with the GPhC and DoH in Belfast, a decision was made in March 2020 to postpone the Registration Examination in Summer and Autumn 2020. Options, including the use of provisional registration, were considered whilst the impact on training and the effect of government restrictions on an examination were considered.

Following legal advice, it became clear that, due to specific provisions in our legislation, we were unable to consider registering students that had not passed an examination and we, therefore, would be unable to further consider this option.

On 01 May 2020 Council, having further considered the available options and having consulted with DoH, determined that an examination would be scheduled for early August subject to government advice on gatherings at that time. Extensive work was undertaken to identify venues, most of which were closed at the time, then to finalise details with available venues which would facilitate adequate social distancing.

After identifying available venues, work was done around risk assessment allowing confirmation of bookings with Ulster University and Methodist College Belfast, both of whom offered to take their premises out of lock-down to facilitate the examination. Other venues were considered but were either not available or did not meet the requirements set out in government restrictions.

DoH agreed to fund the continuation of current pre-registration training places for an additional 2 months to facilitate the examination in early August. Pre-registration trainees were informed on 14 May 2020.

STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

We made a joint statement with 11 regulators of health and care professionals in the UK on how we would collectively approach regulation during the pandemic, seeking to reassure registrants that the context of the pandemic would be appropriately taken into consideration by their regulators¹¹.

We worked with the GPhC on joint statements outlining our regulatory approach to pharmacy in general, pre-registration training and social distancing within pharmacies.

We also published a statement on collection and delivery services during the Covid-19 pandemic which outlined the governance steps required to ensure volunteer and other delivery services could be carried out in a safe manner that would protect the public¹².

¹¹ <https://www.psni.org.uk/news/joint-regulators-statement-on-covid-19/>

¹² <https://www.psni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Covid-19-Statement-on-Collection-and-Delivery-Services-09.04.20-1.pdf>

A full list of the regulatory statements and guidance published in relation to Covid-19 can be found on the Covid-19 page of our website.¹³

REMOTE WORKING AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Following government advice around home working, the business continuity plan was engaged and work to improve the organisation's resilience and effectiveness to reflect the extraordinary nature of the emergency was prioritised. In addition, work was undertaken and implemented to provide remote working systems and additional computing systems for staff and Council members given the anticipated extent of the measures.

A dedicated Covid-19 webpage designed as a single source of regulatory statements and guidance was developed. Council members, staff, partners and stakeholders were regularly updated on progress and training was given to staff on new and remote working systems. In compliance with government advice, remote working was introduced on 23 March 2020, with only essential and authorised office attendance permitted. The effectiveness of remote working and regulatory advice and guidance was regularly reviewed and updated during this period by the senior management team following discussions with Council, partners and stakeholders.

Staff were supported through this period by holding regular video meetings between teams, all staff video meetings and by a staff daily update newsletter outlining regulatory changes, relevant government advice, staff news, social activities and working from home advice.

Council agreed new processes for approving E-papers remotely, outside of the normal schedule of Council meetings, to facilitate efficient and effective decision making and oversight during this fast-moving period. All decisions taken by E-paper were subsequently reviewed and ratified at scheduled, remotely held Council meetings. All Council meetings moved to an online secure platform during this period.

¹³ <https://www.psn.org.uk/publications/covid19-regulatory-statements-and-information/>

Objective 2

To set pharmacy standards that are evidence-based, output focused, achievable and necessary for patient and public safety

We set professional Standards for pharmacists in Northern Ireland to ensure that pharmacists' conduct, ethics and performance is such that it protects the public and maintains public confidence in the profession. Pharmacists must adhere to our Standards to remain on the Professional Register. We also set Premises Standards for Registered Pharmacies which await ministerial approval for the enabling legislation before coming into operation. In the interim, we have non-legislative standards which are used by the Inspectorate to aid inspection.

Goal 2. a. We will review and, where appropriate, enhance the current set of pharmacy standards

Review of Standards and Guidance

In 2019/20, we continued the rolling review process of Standards and Guidance documents associated with the Code for professional standards, ethics and performance for pharmacists in Northern Ireland 2016.

In 2019/20, initial reviews of the following documents were completed:

- Standards and Guidance for Responsible Pharmacist Regulations; and
- Hospital Pharmacy Practice in the UK and the Responsible Pharmacist Requirements.

The reviews recommended that, subject to the findings of a stakeholder engagement exercise to test the conclusions of the review, both documents should be discontinued with alternative relevant information placed on our website, if appropriate. Stakeholder engagement exercises were completed in February 2020. However, the conclusion of this project was delayed by the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Work will continue in 2020/21 to complete the remaining reviews.

Guidance for Patient Consent 2019

The initial review into *Standards and Guidance for Patient Consent (2016)* concluded that the document required a major review and would be subject to public consultation. The basis of this recommendation was due in part to aspects of the document requiring revision to accommodate planned changes in the law brought about by the Mental Capacity (Northern Ireland) Act 2016. After engagement with DoH, it was acknowledged that the legislation relating to patient consent would not be implemented until much later than originally anticipated, now being the middle of 2020 at the earliest.

With a view to appropriately updating the 2016 Standards and Guidance and ensuring minor changes could be incorporated, Council agreed to downgrade the initial review status from major to minor with a proviso to further review the Guidance on the implementation of the relevant section of the Mental Capacity (Northern Ireland) Act 2016.

A four-week targeted stakeholder engagement exercise was, therefore, carried out between 04 October and 01 November 2019 on draft proposals to update the Guidance. Based on the responses to this exercise, Council approved new Guidance on Patient Consent¹⁴ in November 2019. The new Guidance has an improved structure and is considered more accessible to pharmacists and patients alike, providing enhanced support to pharmacists in Northern Ireland to comply with their obligations under the Code.

Guidance on Professional Indemnity Cover (discontinued)

The initial review into the Guidance on Professional Indemnity Cover for Pharmacists in Northern Ireland concluded that it was more appropriate for this relevant information to be included in the registration and retention section of our website and that the formal Guidance should be discontinued.

A review of the information to be provided to pharmacists and the public was carried out and this work was completed in July 2019, with a new section opened on the registration page of our website¹⁵. This included Frequently Asked Questions. All pharmacists and stakeholders were informed of the discontinuation of the formal Guidance document and directed towards the new section of the website.

Guidance on the Provision of Services

2019 saw significant policy development and stakeholder engagement work carried out in relation to drafting new Guidance on the Provision of Services for pharmacists in Northern Ireland. The proposed Guidance on the Provision of Services covers issues relating to pharmacists' obligations to patients and their individual rights in circumstances of conscientious objection; patients and service users being violent, threatening violence or being abusive; and instances when a medicine or medicinal product is out of stock or unavailable.

Council considered the draft guidance in the context of the recently introduced Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019 and the Northern Ireland Office's then ongoing consultation on 'A legal framework for abortion services in Northern Ireland'. Council noted that the development of its proposed guidance began before this legislative change was introduced at Westminster and the draft, therefore, took no account of this legislative change. Council's proposed advice on issues of conscience related to existing pharmacy services and the then current legal framework on the provision of services. Council considered the potential impact the planned changes to

¹⁴ <https://www.psni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Guidance-on-Patient-Consent-final-copy-281119-002.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.psni.org.uk/registration/pharmacist-registration/>

the legal framework and associated guidance for abortion services may have on its proposed guidance.

Based on these considerations, Council decided to pause the launch of the public consultation to assess the outcome of the Government's consultation and the new legal framework related to abortion services in Northern Ireland. Council will look to subsequently review and revise the proposed Provision of Services Guidance, where necessary, and then proceed to a public consultation in early 2020/21.

Joint Guidance Statements

In 2019/20, we worked closely with other regulators and healthcare bodies to agree and publish the following joint principles and guidance documents:

- Benefits of becoming a reflective practitioner - A joint statement of support from Chief Executives of statutory regulators of health and care professionals - June 2019;
- High level principles for good practice in remote consultations and prescribing – November 2019; and
- How to keep safe when getting medicines or treatment online – March 2020¹⁶.

Premises Standards

The Pharmacy (Premises Standards, Information Obligations, etc.) Order 2016 is intended to provide a new statutory power to set Premises Standards for the safe and effective practice of pharmacy in Northern Ireland. It also potentially gives us new powers to enforce these Standards in the interest of public protection. This legislation has not yet received Ministerial approval to come into operation.

After a period of policy development, engagement with the profession, the public and a full public consultation, Council approved new Premises Standards for Pharmacies in Northern Ireland in June 2018¹⁷. Under the Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, DoH carries out pharmacy inspections against the Pharmaceutical Society NI's regulatory obligations. Upon Council's approval of the Premises Standards, DoH set up a working group to assist the development of criteria for Departmental inspectors to inspect against the new Premises Standards and to initiate a pilot scheme to test the criteria and the corresponding inspection regime to ensure it is fit for purpose. We have continued to engage with DoH throughout 2019/20 on this issue.

The new Premises Standards which will, when commenced, have a statutory basis providing a mechanism to ensure that pharmacies in Northern Ireland operate in a manner that protects the public and puts the patient first, have not yet been commenced. Existing non-legislative advisory Standards remain in place until a commencement date is established for the new Premises Standards for Registered Pharmacies.

¹⁶ <https://www.psni.org.uk/psni/about/code-of-ethics-and-standards/>

¹⁷ <https://www.psni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Council-Premises-Standards-04-June-2018-Formatted.pdf>

We will continue to support DoH in the development of an inspection scheme in 2020/21 with a view to securing a commencement date for the Pharmacy (Premises Standards, Information Obligations, etc.) Order 2016.

Knowledge of English Regulations and Guidance

The Health Care and Associated Professions (Knowledge of English) Order 2015 was passed to ensure that pharmacists have adequate knowledge of English to safely and effectively perform their roles.

The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI has powers to make Regulations in relation to language conditions and must make Regulations requiring persons who wish to be registered with the Pharmaceutical Society NI to satisfy the Registrar that they have the necessary knowledge of English.

In February 2018, we presented draft Regulations and associated Guidance on the knowledge of English to DoH, seeking Departmental approval that the draft Regulations and Guidance could be publicly consulted upon. Unfortunately, due to the absence of a Minister for Health until January 2020 and the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, no further progress has been made in this regard. We are committed to publicly consult upon draft Regulations and Guidance in 2020/21.

Goal 2. b. We will test the on-going efficacy of pharmacy standards in context of the newly emerging HSC reform programme.

With the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly returning in January 2020 and the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, progress in relation to the broad HSC reform programme has been more limited, which has had a knock-on effect on our ability to test the ongoing efficacy of pharmacy standards in this context. We will continue to engage with DoH and monitor HSC reforms.

Goal 2. c. We will test and report on the feasibility of developing and applying new standards over and above Minimum Standards designed to encourage improved service quality.

This work will be initiated upon completion of the Standards Review.

Objective 3

To conduct Fitness to Practise processes that are robust, timely and fair

The Fitness to Practise processes of the organisation are separated into 2 functions - namely investigation and adjudication each of which is handled by a bespoke team. The investigation stage involves receipt or initiation of a complaint or concern which is assessed to ensure it is within the jurisdiction of the organisation. If so, an investigation seeking further evidence or information, sometimes involving partner organisations, is launched. Where a case to answer is identified, the matter will be resolved by either 1) the Registrar, 2) a Scrutiny Committee or 3) a Statutory Committee.

The complaints which were opened in 2019/20 as Fitness to Practise matters are as follows:

Figure 3 - Sources of Complaints

Source	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Anonymous	1	4.5%	-	0%	5	10.4%
DoH	-	0%	2	8%	5	10.4%
Employer	1	4.5%	-	0%	2	4.2%
HSCB	-	0.0%	1	4%	-	%
Other regulator	2	9.1%	-	0%	-	%
Pharmacy	1	4.5%	1	4%	2	4.2%
Public	6	27.3%	12	50%	29	60.4%
Police Service	-	0%	-	0%	-	%
Registrar	1	4.5%	3	13%	-	%
Self-referral	10	45.5%	5	21%	5	10.4%
Total	22	100%	24	100%	48	100%

Figure 4 - Stages of investigation for cases closed in 2018/19

Closed Cases	Registrar	Scrutiny Committee	Statutory Committee	Total
Lack of jurisdiction	31	-	-	31
No Further Action	17	6	-	23
Advice	-	1	-	1
Warning		-	1	1
Undertakings		1	-	1
Conditions			-	-
Suspension			-	-
Removal			1	1
Total	48	8	2	58

Of the 48 cases closed by Registrar in 2019/20, 31 were closed (or not opened) for lack of jurisdiction and the remaining 17 (which met the jurisdictional test) were closed for failure to meet the Threshold Criteria for referral to a Fitness to Practise committee.

Of the 58 cases closed in 2019/20, 21 were opened prior to 2019/20.

As of 31 May 2020, 19 Fitness to Practise cases remain open.

Outcomes and the full determinations of all public Statutory Committee hearings can be found on our website¹⁸.

Interim Orders

A case will be referred directly to a Statutory Committee by the Registrar based on the evidence available and where it is considered to be high risk to public safety and the Registrar considers that the Statutory Committee should consider making an Interim Order. The Statutory Committee will then hold an Interim Order hearing to receive evidence and make decisions based on the *prima facie* case presented. The Statutory Committee can determine to take no action, place conditions on a pharmacist's practice or suspend a pharmacist for up to 18 months, reviewing the order every 6 months. After 18 months, an extension to the Interim Order can be granted only upon application to the High Court.

There was 1 new Interim Order application and 2 Interim Order reviews in 2019/20 relating to 2 registrants. There were no applications made to the High Court for extensions to existing Interim Orders.

Goal 3. a. We will improve timeliness, efficiency and cost of Fitness to Practise processes and report on progress made

Key Performance Indicators – Closed Cases

- 40 out of 48 cases closed by the Registrar were closed in less than 26 weeks with cases taking a median of 8 weeks to close. All cases that did not meet the 26-week indicator involved more complex investigations and/or were reliant upon the receipt of third-party information in order to progress.
- None of the 8 cases closed by the Scrutiny Committee were closed in less than 40 weeks. Seven of these cases were inter-related and involved a significant investigation by an external body. The remaining case involved a substantial dispute in relation to facts and subsequently required significant investigation by the Registrar prior to referral to the Scrutiny Committee.
- Neither of the 2 cases closed by the Statutory Committee were closed in less than 60 weeks. One of these cases involved a significant investigation and proceedings by an external body and the second was adjourned due to the Covid-19 emergency.

¹⁸ <https://www.psn.org.uk/psni/fitness-to-practise/determinations-of-statutory-committee/>

A key component of the Financial Strategy is ensuring there are in place systems and processes to monitor Fitness to Practise pipeline costs and strategies to deal with costs arising. We will continue to work to improve the timeliness, efficiency and cost of Fitness to Practise processes going forward.

New Parallel Investigations Policy

With a view to ensuring that investigations proceed in a timely manner in order that the public is adequately protected, Council approved a Parallel Investigations Policy in May 2020. The policy sets out the relevant factors and general principles the Registrar should take into consideration to ensure that investigations are only suspended if there exists a real risk of prejudice to criminal and other proceedings.

Goal 3. b. We will ensure regular reports on learning from Fitness to Practise cases are effectively disseminated to pharmacists and other interested parties.

Ensuring that pharmacists are able to learn from Fitness to Practise cases is extremely important to maintaining public safety and the upholding of standards. All determinations of Statutory Committee hearings are published on our website. Any additional learnings produced by the Statutory Committee in relation to closed Fitness to Practise cases have been circulated to pharmacists in Northern Ireland through our Regulatory Newsletter. In addition, the Scrutiny Committee produces an annual report which identifies trends and learnings which is available on our website¹⁹.

Following the conclusion of a complex, multi-registrant case, issues were identified in relation to operational processes and procedures that required further examination. In February 2020, Council commissioned a Lessons Learned report and, following the presentation of the report, certain procedural changes were made and refresher training was given to Scrutiny Committee members and relevant staff. At no stage were the decisions or conclusions of the Scrutiny Committee called into question and the learnings of this case will also form the basis of induction and ongoing training in 2020/21.

Goal 3. c. We will develop Fitness to Practise processes for Pharmacy Technicians

This goal is dependent on completion of Goal 1. c. and subsequently no work was pursued in this area in 2019/20 (see page 10).

¹⁹ <https://www.psni.org.uk/psni/fitness-to-practise/fitness-to-practise-statistics/>

Additional Developments in Fitness to Practise

Consultation on New Threshold Criteria²⁰

The Threshold Criteria forms an important part in the early stages of the Fitness to Practise processes. It is designed to provide a decision-making framework to assist the Registrar in the delivery of consistent, proportionate and reasonable decisions on whether to refer Fitness to Practise allegations to the Scrutiny Committee or to close an investigation.

After an extensive desktop review, including an analysis of other regulators' criteria, Council launched an 8-week public consultation on revised Threshold Criteria on 15 January 2020.

The revised Threshold Criteria proposed placing a greater emphasis on the purpose of regulation and the three more recently identified limbs of public protection, namely: protecting the public from harm; maintaining public confidence in the profession; and upholding professional standards. We consider the revised document also provides an opportunity for users to obtain a better understanding of the Fitness to Practise investigation process and is designed to be more accessible to pharmacists and the public alike.

Council considered the outcome of this consultation at its June 2020 meeting, approved the 10 recommendations within the consultation report, and approved the draft Threshold Criteria.

Appointments to the Statutory Committee

Mr Jonathan Patton resigned as a lay member of the Statutory Committee in April 2019 upon his appointment to the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI. Mrs Edell Fitzpatrick was subsequently appointed by Council, from the reserve list, as a Lay member of the Statutory Committee in August 2019.

Recruitment for new Statutory and Scrutiny Committee Members

As the 8-year tenure of a number of members of the Statutory and Scrutiny Committee will come to an end in October 2020, in order to meet its appointment obligations under *The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (Statutory Committee, Scrutiny Committee and Advisers) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012*, Council appointed Forde May Consulting to carry out an independent recruitment process in January 2020, for the following positions:

²⁰ <https://www.psn.org.uk/news/council-launches-consultation-on-new-fitness-to-practise-threshold-criteria/>

Statutory Committee

- 1 Chair and 1 Vice Chair
- 1 lay member
- 5 registrant members
- A reserve list of at least 11 people (7 lay and 4 registrant with at least 3 lay members being able to act as Chair and/or Vice Chair)

Scrutiny Committee

- 1 Chair and 1 Vice Chair
- 2 registrant members
- A reserve list of at least 8 people (4 lay and 4 registrants with at least 1 lay member being able to act as Chair)

Registrations Appeals Committee

- Will be constituted of those individuals on the Reserve Lists

Council is scheduled to appointed new members to these positions in June 2020. Full Committee member training, including refresher training for existing members will take place in September 2020.

Going Forward

Reflecting on the findings of the PSA's 2018/19 performance review, we will be progressing work in Fitness to Practise, including a review of our record keeping, how we engage and support participants in the Fitness to Practise processes and the test by which we decide whether we can investigate a complaint against a pharmacist.

Objective 4

To ensure that pharmacy education and professional development is fit for purpose

There are 3 core pillars to our work to ensure pharmacy education and professional development is fit for purpose:

- Accreditation of Pharmacy undergraduate and postgraduate programmes;
- Pre-registration training year and the registration examination; and
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for registered pharmacists.

Council's Corporate Strategy goals are related to reviewing and improving upon our activities in each of these pillars to ensure pharmacy education and professional development is fit for purpose.

Goal 4. a. We will review the Pre-Registration Framework and implement necessary improvements

Pre-registration Framework

The pre-registration framework largely consists of a training programme, managed by the Pharmaceutical Society NI, which admits holders of accredited MPharm qualifications and provides a structure and an assessment regime designed to prepare trainees for entry onto the Register of Pharmaceutical Chemists.

Pre-registration training comprises a full calendar year of vocational training which takes place under the supervision of an accredited tutor pharmacist. Training takes place mainly in the community pharmacy and/or hospital pharmacy sectors. During this time, trainees are expected to apply their knowledge and skills gained at University and demonstrate that they are fit to practise and possess the necessary professional skills to operate as a registered pharmacist.

137 trainees entered the pre-registration programme in 2019/20.

146 new trainees joined the Register after completing the pre-registration programme in 2018/19.

In previous years, our review of the pre-registration programme has focused on improving the quality management and control aspects of the pre-registration training year. In 2019/20, we continued our focus on reviewing the final registration examination.

Joint PSNI/GPhC Registration Assessment

A review of the final registration examination was completed in January 2019. The review concluded that, whilst the current examination remains fit for purpose, improvements were needed to bring it into line with best practice.

Council considered three options for delivering on the review's findings and, after consideration, decided that the most appropriate, cost effective and timely way to make the necessary improvements was to develop a joint GPhC/Pharmaceutical Society NI final assessment for gaining entry onto our respective registers.

In August 2019, a 10-week public consultation was launched on Council's preferred option for a joint registration assessment with the GPhC. This consultation included an outline partnership agreement with the GPhC to ensure the appropriate level of input on content, governance and accountability to Council.

Having considered the outcome of a public consultation, Council approved a joint 4-country GPhC/PSNI registration assessment in November 2019. This was subject to the approval of the Council of the GPhC which considered and approved the same in December 2019.

The common 4-country registration assessment will be set and moderated by a single Board of Assessors which will have input from Northern Ireland appointees and will be accountable to the Councils of both regulators. It will test the application of the

pharmaceutical knowledge and numeracy relevant to current pharmacy practice in both Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

There will be a common syllabus and format, described in a joint common Registration Assessment Framework.

In January 2020, Council agreed a joint communications and implementation plan with the GPhC²¹. As part of this plan, in February 2020, we held a joint meeting with 4th year students and academic staff in Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University.

In light of the unavoidable restrictions caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic, the joint implementation plan will be updated to re-commence in early 2020/21 but the first examination in the new format will still take place in 2021.

Goal 4. b. We will review and improve undergraduate and accreditation standards with our partners

Goal 4.c. We will explore the feasibility of developing a joint education strategy with both NI Universities and GPhC

In accordance with our Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the GPhC, in 2019/20, we continued to work closely with our colleagues on a programme of rolling accreditations of Universities. This work ensures that the standard of MPharm Degree delivered across the United Kingdom continues to meet our joint education standards. All accreditation reports are published on our website.²²

In 2019/20, we carried out a joint GPhC/PSNI accreditation of the new Independent Prescribing course at the Queen's University of Belfast and the re-accreditation of the Independent Prescribing course at NICPLD²³.

We receive, and Council considers, an annual report on the accreditation of all GB MPharm courses in each year.

Revision of the Standards for Initial Education and Training of Pharmacists

Standards of Initial Education and Training for pharmacists set out the criteria against which education and training for student pharmacists and pre-registration trainee pharmacists are approved. The Standards ensure that newly registered pharmacists are competent to practise safely and effectively.

The GPhC consulted upon the revision of the Standards for Initial Education and Training of Pharmacists throughout the UK in 2019, with the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI reviewing the responses from Northern Ireland. We have continued to work closely with the GPhC on developing this area of work.

²¹ <https://www.psni.org.uk/news/informing-our-stakeholders-about-the-new-common-registration-assessment-2021/>

²² <https://www.psni.org.uk/education-2/>

²³ <https://www.psni.org.uk/education-2/>

The consultation and subsequent discussions identified a broad consensus on the reasons for change and the skills and knowledge required by pharmacists in the future. This included the importance of students having a coherent and connected “continuum” of five years of education and training with greater application of science in clinical practice and development of skills in decision-making, risk management and patient consultation.

We are also a member of the Education Governance Oversight Board (EGOB) which is made up of representatives of key stakeholders and includes employers, NHS education and training, universities, GPhC the four Chief Pharmaceutical Officers, the RPS and the Pharmacy Forum NI. The Board’s role is to oversee post-graduate education and training and to create a flexible, adaptable workforce who can easily move between care settings and provide increasingly complex care.

Looking forward, we will continue to work with the GPhC and the other EGOB stakeholders. The GPhC has reconvened a working group, which includes the Pharmaceutical Society NI, to inform the final set of revised Initial Education and Training Standards for pharmacists and to drive implementation of the Standards. We will be holding stakeholder engagement events in Northern Ireland in early 2020/21 to garner local opinion to feed into this work. Once the Standards are finalised, there will be a phased approach to implementation.

CPD Report 2018/19

All pharmacists in Northern Ireland are legally required to complete CPD to remain on the professional Register. The purpose of CPD is to help pharmacists maintain and further develop their competency and performance thereby enhancing patient safety and public confidence in the pharmacy profession.

Under certain extenuating circumstances, the Registrar has the power to permit registrants to forego the completion of CPD in that CPD year. In 2018/19, the Registrar received 173 applications for extenuating circumstances, granting 172 of those applications²⁴. In Summer 2019, 2406 registrants submitted CPD portfolios – a compliance rate of 99.38%. 15 registrants failed to submit a CPD portfolio and were subsequently removed from the Register.

A total of 10% of CPD submissions were selected for assessment by a combination of random selection and focused selection. Of this number, 87.9% met the required standard at first assessment and 100% met the standard after going through a remediation process.

²⁴ The procedure relating to extenuating circumstances is outlined in the CPD Framework 2014 - <https://www.psn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/CPD-Framework-and-Standards-2014-COMPOSITE-Version.pdf>

Figure 5 - CPD Statistics

CPD STATISTICS - CPD YEARS 2016/17 ->2018/19		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
CPD Submissions				
CPD submissions	Records submitted	2233	2320	2406
Extenuating Circumstances				
EC applications	Applications submitted	126	152	173
	Applications granted	126	145	172
Non-compliance actions				
Reminders	Investigation letter	21	26	34
	Notice of intention to remove	14	26	18
	Notice of removal	11	12	15
Removals	Removals	8	12	15
Remedial Measures	No in remedial measures	31	24	29
	Not compliant	31	23	29
Compliance				
	Overall compliance with CPD process	99.64%	99.48%	99.38%

Goal 4.d. We will review CPD processes and develop a strategy for the establishment of a Continuing Fitness to Practise regime

Consultation on Revised CPD Framework

Council launched a 12-week consultation on a revised CPD Framework on 29 October 2019, closing on 21 January 2020. Having carried out a review of the existing CPD Framework, a simplified and shorter document which focused on ensuring pharmacists fully understand their obligations was developed.

Council considered the consultation responses at its meeting of 10 March 2020 and, based on the feedback received, approved a new CPD Framework to be introduced for the 2020/21 CPD year. Considering the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic, Council decided to delay the implementation of the new CPD Framework until the 2021/22 CPD year, to ensure pharmacists are given adequate time to prepare and adapt to the revised Framework. An engagement process will be developed to build the capacity of pharmacists to deliver CPD against the new Framework during 2020/21.

Continuing Fitness to Practise (CFtP) plans

We maintain an active involvement on the inter-regulatory Continuing Professional Practice Revalidation Working Group. Plans for pharmacists' CFtP in Northern Ireland will then be subject to public consultation and Council approval. Current plans for CFtP are being built on the platform of the revised version of the 2014 CPD Framework and the evidence gained from operations over the last 5 years, with the potential for the addition of a peer review and additional practice specific assessments. We continue to work with stakeholders to further CFtP research and develop these proposals after the introduction of the planned revision to the CPD Framework which is now scheduled for CPD year commencing June 2021.

Objective 5

To be an accountable organisation with effective governance and operations

The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI is the governing body of the organisation and is responsible for ensuring its statutory duties are met. It sets strategic objectives for the organisation and monitors the performance of the Chief Executive in line with its statutory purpose.

It holds the Chief Executive to account for organisational performance as well as ensuring that the financial affairs of the organisation are conducted properly.

Council members are appointed by DoH in accordance with the principles of the Public Appointments Process and based on the competence of the applicants.

The Council has 14 appointed members with an equal number of lay and registrant members and is led by a President.

The Council has a structure of remuneration and expenses based on attendance at meetings which is published by DoH in recruitment activity.

Goal 5.e. We will review and improve organisational governance

With an objective of improving organisational governance, Council launched a review of its governance structures, engaging with an external facilitator (CIPFA) to assist in this process. Work on risk appetite, tolerance and range was completed in 2018 with workshops initiated to review and agree the most appropriate committee structures and governance arrangements for successful delivery. When Council was unexpectedly reduced to 8 members in 2018, this work was postponed to allow for the input of a full Council including new Council members. Upon appointment of new Council members in March 2019, Council agreed a new timetable and schedule for completing its Governance Review with completion planned for early 2020.

Council concluded its governance review in January 2020, reducing its 6 non-Statutory Committees to 3.

The new non-statutory Committees of Council are:

- **Audit and Risk (A&R) Committee**
- **Finance & Performance (F&P) Committee**
- **Remuneration Committee**

Figure 6 - Council Members as of September 2019 and New Committee Membership as of March 2020

Members	Membership type	Committee Membership
Dr Jim Livingstone – President	Lay Member	Remuneration Committee (Chair)
Mr Jonathan Patton – Vice President as of 01 March 2019	Lay Member	Remuneration Committee
Mr Ciaran Hunter	Lay Member	• Finance & Performance Committee (Chair)
Mr Mark Campbell	Lay Member	• Finance & Performance Committee
Ms Sandra Cooke	Registered Member	• Finance & Performance Committee
Ms Colleen Duffy	Registered Member	• Audit & Risk Committee
Laura Murphy	Registered Member	• Audit & Risk Committee
Professor Patrick Murphy	Lay Member	• Finance & Performance Committee
Mr James Perry	Lay Member	• Audit and Risk Committee (Chair)
Mrs Carol Moore	Lay Member	• Remuneration Committee • Audit & Risk Committee
Ms Chanel Jones	Registered Member	• Finance & Performance Committee
Mr Mark McCrudden	Registered Member	• Remuneration Committee • Finance & Performance Committee
Mr Barry Mimmagh	Registered Member	• Audit & Risk Committee
Mrs Alison Ragg	Registered Member	• Audit & Risk Committee

Council met on 6 occasions in 2019/20.

Goal 5. c. We will annually review audit schedules, risk management processes and performance measurement organisationally and implement necessary changes for improvement

Internal Control

Council is responsible for ensuring that the organisation operates an appropriate system of risk management and ensuring appropriate operational effectiveness. Under its new governance structure, two Committees of Council contribute to providing appropriate internal control mechanisms and will work to improve the annual audit schedules, risk management processes and performance measurement organisationally. They are the Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance and Performance Committee.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is responsible to Council for oversight of internal and external audits and confirming that adequate strategies are in place for the identification and management of risk.

Specifically, the Audit and Risk Committee is responsible for:

Risk Management

- Reviewing the policies and process for identifying and assessing business risks and the management of those risks by the organisation and making recommendation for any necessary changes to Council; and
- Considering the effectiveness of the management of policies and processes for risk, control and governance including regular review of the Risk Register and escalating any issues to Council in a timely manner.

Governance

- Ensuring the regular review and ongoing maintenance of the Corporate Governance Handbook, ensuring adherence to same and making recommendations to Council for any necessary improvements in line with best practice.

External Audit

- Making recommendation to Council on the appointment of an external auditor; and
- Overseeing the external audit process.

Internal Audit

- Appointing a suitably qualified internal auditor; delegated authority;
- Overseeing the internal audit process;
- Reviewing and agreeing the internal audit strategy and programme and, where appropriate, requesting that internal audit undertakes specific work;
- Satisfying itself that the internal audit function is adequately resourced and has appropriate standing within the organisation;
- Reviewing the annual audit report;

- Considering management’s response to any internal audit recommendations;
- Third party audits (e.g. PSA);
- Considering reports; and
- Monitoring management responses and escalating any significant issues to Council.

Management

- Seeking assurance of compliance with statutory instruments and appropriate financial management systems and advising Council accordingly; and
- Carrying out any functions attributed to the Committee or Chair in the Whistleblowing Policy.

Annual Accounts and Financial Reporting

- Receiving the Annual Accounts and Annual Report from the Finance & Performance Committee with a view to recommending adoption to Council, considering external and internal audit reports and agreeing recommendations for approval to Council.

Upon completion of an audit needs and risk assessment, the Audit and Risk Committee approved a 3-Year Internal Audit Strategy in August 2017.

In 2019/20, the Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the Risk Register at each meeting, approved changes to policies and processes arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and commissioned internal audits on Payroll and the Pre-registration programme, which both demonstrated satisfactory controls.

Figure 7 - Internal Audits Completed 2019/20

Audits	Rating
Payroll	Satisfactory Control Rating – with one priority 2 recommendation
Pre-Registration Student Training	Satisfactory Control Rating - With four priority 3 recommendations

The internal auditors have provided an overall “satisfactory” level of control for relevant internal audits carried out in 2019/20 whilst identifying recommendations for improvement. The Executive Team accepted all recommendations and have in place action plans to deliver the improvements which will be reported to Council via the Audit and Risk Committee. In 2020/2021, the Committee will develop and approve a new three-year strategic audit programme.

Finance and Performance Committee

The Finance and Performance Committee is responsible for:

Budgeting & Financial Performance

- Scrutinising the annual budget and operational plan prepared by the Executive Team and advising Council on their adoption;
- Reviewing management accounts and monitoring performance against the financial and resource objectives approved in the operational plan and budget;
- Reviewing financial forecasts, annual or interim financial statements and monitor operational financial performance against the operational plan;
- Satisfying itself that appropriate arrangements exist to identify and mitigating significant financial and performance related risks; and
- Satisfying itself that appropriate arrangements exist to identify and mitigate significant financial risks associated with the Pharmacy Forum.

Delegated authority

- Authorising unbudgeted spending in accordance with the limitations below:
 - A maximum of £5,000 per event against any budget head for operational reasons; and
 - A maximum authority of £15,000 cumulative in any given financial year.
- Approving changes to individual budgetary heads within the overall agreed budget.

Financial Strategy

- Providing advice to Council on a suitable/appropriate financial strategy for approval, reviewing and monitoring compliance with same and escalating any significant issues to Council; and
- Advising Council on and reviewing the investment policy, including risk appetite, investment parameters and ethical policy and advising Council on the adoption of any proposed changes.

Financial Reporting

- Providing an Annual Report and Accounts to the Audit & Risk Committee; and
- Providing Council with a report on budget, cash flow and forecasts at intervals determined by Council.

Performance

- Providing advice to Council on suitable strategic KPIs for approval;
- Reviewing and monitoring performance against KPIs and escalating any significant issues to Council;
- Providing advice to Council on appropriate HR and ICT policies for approval;
- Monitoring performance against approved policies and escalating any significant issues to Council; and

- Reviewing the effectiveness of policies and procedures for measuring Council's and Council members' performance and providing advice to Council on improvements.

Goal 5. a. We will establish effective deputising arrangements for the Registrar

In 2017/18, we worked closely with DoH and DHSC to ensure that the then planned Section 60 Orders relating to the Rebalancing Medicines Legislation and Pharmacy Regulation Programme Board's work would include the power to have a Deputy Registrar, thereby addressing an obvious anomaly in our current primary legislation.

We continue to await the laying of a completed Section 60 Order which will enable the appointment of a Deputy Registrar.

Goal 5. b. We will secure policy agreement with DOH on resolving the current Pharmacy Professional Leadership linkage with the Regulatory function

Due to the lack of a Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive until January 2020 and with the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic, we have been unable to make progress in relation to securing policy agreement with DoH on resolving the current legislative and organisational linkage between our Pharmacy professional leadership and regulatory roles. We will continue to work with DoH on this issue in 2020/21.

Goal 5. d. We will develop a new ICT Strategy

Following a review, the new ICT Strategy was implemented in May 2019. In March 2020, we accelerated the implementation of certain aspects of the Strategy in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Work was undertaken and implemented to provide remote working systems, Cloud storage and additional computing systems for staff and Council members. Though planned within the Strategy, it was necessary to carry out many of the measures earlier than anticipated, given the anticipated length of the Covid-19 measures. The work planned within the ICT Strategy was instrumental in maintaining business continuity during this period.

Goal 5. f. We will formulate and implement a new HR strategy to Improve organisational resilience, efficiency and effectiveness

A revised Human Resources Strategy, with a view to improving organisational resilience, efficiency and effectiveness began implementation in February 2019. In 2019/20, implementation continued as we developed changes to staff appraisal processes and more flexible and agile working arrangements which became invaluable in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Work will continue on the implementation and assessment of the HR Strategy in 2020/21.

Goal 5. g. We will work with government and other relevant agencies to ensure robust arrangements are in place to manage the effects upon pharmacy regulation in NI resulting from the UK's exit from the EU, including the provision of suitable transition arrangements

We have continued to liaise closely with DHSC London, DoH, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the other healthcare regulators, including our counterparts in GB and the Republic of Ireland, to plan and effect the legislative and operational changes required when the UK leaves the European Union and European Economic Area.

Our resources have continued to be focused on the recognition of professional qualifications post-Brexit including the underpinning legislative authorities.

Objective 6

To communicate effectively, be accessible and responsive

To deliver high quality pharmacy regulation, communicating effectively, whilst being accessible and responsive is crucial to delivering against our Corporate Strategy and regulatory responsibilities.

Goal 6. a. We will improve and report on communications effectiveness.

Goal 6. b. We will develop a new strategy designed to enhance the public, pharmacy, media and political profile of the organisation.

The Communications Strategy 2017- 22 was agreed by Council in 2018 and we have continued to deliver on the Strategy's objectives in 2019/20.

The Communications Strategy 2017-22 provides a framework for all our communications activities and focuses our communication work to ensure it is accessible, responsive, and effective.

Responding to Covid-19

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown presented unique communication challenges. During this period, we endeavoured to deliver against our communication principles in an agile and flexible manner to ensure that our stakeholders were kept informed of the necessary regulatory information. Dovetailing our communications strategies with our ICT and Human Resources strategies was important during this period.

In March 2020, we created a COVID-19 page on our website which captured and became a repository for regulatory statements and Frequently Asked Questions. Registrants were notified directly by mass email of important regulator statements and were provided with periodic updates on all new statements made. We worked with the

Patient Client Council to direct members of the public to our Covid-19 page as an information resource for the public relating to pharmacy.

From the analytics of our website, this method of communication was highly successful with visits peaking following each key message sent by email, combined with a constant level of interaction on a daily basis. The Covid-19 page alone received over 13,000 visits in its first 3 months of existence.

We augmented our Horizon Scanning policy to provide daily updates to the Senior Management Team of Covid-19 related news and information. This acted to ensure that we could remain suitably informed of the wider health and social care context, to respond appropriately to a fast-moving situation.

We worked with staff, Council members, associates and stakeholders to move our face to face communications online in a short timeframe via secure video conferencing platforms. Appropriate training and support were provided.

During 2019/20, our website has seen a 30% increase in unique pages views and this has been mirrored in the hits and engagements on our Facebook page.

Consultations and Stakeholder engagement work

In 2019/20, three consultations were carried out on behalf of Council:

- Proposals for a Joint GPhC/Pharmaceutical Society NI 4-Country Registration Assessment – concluded in October 2019;
- Proposed 2020 Continuing Professional Development Framework – concluded in January 2020; and
- Revised Threshold Criteria - concluded in March 2020.

The formal consultation was the culmination of a series of pre-consultation engagements on a more targeted and focused basis and each resulted in a high standard of public and registrant feedback which was used to improve upon the initial policy proposals.

The organisation continues to communicate and engage with all our stakeholders via our Regulatory Newsletter, face to face engagement through our policy development and consultation work and in attending meetings, seminars and conferences. However, from March 2020, with the advent of the COVID-19 restrictions, much of our engagement was curtailed but, where possible, this has now been moved online using a variety of online platforms.

Improving effectiveness

In 2019, we updated our email software for sending targeted emails to registrants, improving accessibility for recipients and our ability to assess the success of our engagement activity. This became particularly important during the initial stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. The new email system continues to work well with our emails to registrants and pre-registration students having an average open rate of 76.06% over the reporting period.

Goal 6. c. We will develop a 'Reach Out' programme to better engage with the public and pharmacists on regulation (What, Why, When and How)

The Reach Out programme saw Council hold at least one public Council meeting each year outside of Belfast – inviting local stakeholders to attend. This programme was paused when Council was reduced to 8 members in 2018/19 and has been further hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic. Work on the Reach Out programme will resume in 2020/21.

Goal 6. d. We will review our current public consultation protocols

Work on this goal is scheduled to begin in 2020/21.

Goal 6. e. We will review and improve external and internal complaints processes

Work on this goal is scheduled to begin in 2020/21.

6. Pharmacy Forum NI

Introduction from Sheelin McKeagney

As Chair of the Pharmacy Forum NI Board, I am proud to present the 2020 Annual Report of the Pharmacy Forum NI.

Coronavirus has been the Black Swan of 2020 making this year like no other. Since March, we have faced the most serious public health emergency in a century and one which has become a double-edged sword for our profession.

Given the place of pharmacy within the healthcare system, the Covid-19 pandemic has placed an already stretched service under unprecedented pressure. While hospitals and GP surgeries prepared for situations we were witnessing in the rest of Europe, pharmacies across Northern Ireland stepped up and adapted at every turn throughout this journey to continually provide for and protect patient safety. The fact that this has not gone unnoticed by government, media and the general public is the silver lining we can take from this experience. Indeed, the pandemic has done much to elevate the profile of pharmacy across the UK.

Likewise, the Forum, has had to reprioritise and adjust activity. Staff were shifted from office to homeworking arrangements and have been working effectively since the March lockdown. In the absence of in-person meetings, **video conferencing** was set up and has been used to facilitate Board and Committee meetings as well as to deliver pre-registration activities including calculations training and a special meeting with pharmacy leaders.

As a result of the pandemic, we have also taken part in government consultations around emergency legislation and have worked with key stakeholders to futureproof the profession in the face of similar outbreaks. I am particularly proud of the Board's backing for a **new health and wellbeing support service** made available to all pharmacy frontline workers dealing with the new pressures caused by the pandemic, demonstrating the priority we place on the care of our colleagues. Alongside, the Pharmacist Advice and Support Service (PASS) remains a solid source of assistance for those in our network during times of need.

The current environment has been particularly challenging for up-and-coming pharmacists who have had to contend with changes around pre-registration. We are now also seeing the introduction of major reforms to the initial **education and training** of pharmacists that aims to ensure the pharmacy workforce is equipped to work flexibly alongside other health and care professionals. As plans develop for the national foundation pharmacist curriculum, we want to reassure all newly registered pharmacists that the Forum will put in place all necessary support to ease this transition, helped by our involvement in the **Education Governance Oversight Board**.

We are continuing to discuss with the Department of Health and other stakeholders about how **Brexit** might affect the pharmacy profession in Northern Ireland, in particular on safeguarding the continued **supply of medicines** to pharmacies and

their patients when the UK exits the EU. With the UK leaving the European Medicines Verification System (EMVS) and coming out of the European Hub in 2021, the place of Northern Ireland is left in a confusing situation. Representatives of our Board are engaging with the NI Chief Pharmaceutical Officer and the National Competent Authority to seek clarification on how we will operate under the **Falsified Medicines Directive** (FMD) rules and which hub we will be linked to. In a related vein, we are also keeping a watching brief on the Medicines and Medical Devices Bill.

In June, the Forum was quick to react to the very serious issue of **racism in pharmacy** that was brought to light by a young pharmacist, Nkele Mushapho, who spoke to the media of her experience. In addition to publicly condemning any discrimination - racial, sectarian, disability, sexual orientation or in any other way – we have set up a new Forum working group which will provide guidance on different ways to embrace and actively promote inclusion and diversity in pharmacies in Northern Ireland. I am delighted that this group will be led by the **newly appointed Forum Vice-Chair, Eamon O'Donnell**.

Our inclusion and diversity approach is particularly important in terms of the current need to attract and retain pharmacists to come and work in Northern Ireland, an agenda which is being promoted through the **Pharmacy Futures NI** campaign, which is to launch in autumn 2020.

The **landmark £13.25m funding and commissioning agreement** announced by Health Minister Robin Swann in July was a huge achievement for those involved and well received by the profession. The funding and collaboration behind it has marked a significant milestone for community pharmacy and couldn't have come at a more appropriate time.

None of our work could be achieved without the backing of my colleagues on the **Board, the Committees and the Special Interest Groups**. They continue to drive forward the Forum through their energy, time, commitment and enthusiasm. They also bring a wealth of skills and expertise, which is essential to ensuring that our work not only challenges the status quo, but encourages debate, delivers change and seeks to advance the pharmacy profession in Northern Ireland. In addition, the past year has further underscored the **importance of collaborative working** with pharmacy stakeholders locally and nationally to get things done when and where it matters.

Finally, I believe our performance throughout the past year should instil a sense of pride in each of us for the part we have played. Our profession has a long history of resilience and strength, especially during times of adversity. The Covid-19 pandemic is no different and I am confident we can capitalise on the better side of this double-edged sword.



Sheelin McKeagney, Chair of the Pharmacy Forum NI Board

Pharmacy Forum NI

About Us

The Pharmacy Forum NI is the professional leadership body for all pharmacists in Northern Ireland, representing all areas of pharmacy practice, including hospital, GP practice and community settings. We operate as an arms-length body under the legislative remit of the Pharmaceutical Society NI. Our role is to lead, promote and support the pharmacy profession to deliver improved outcomes for patients. Forum members are pharmacists registered to practise by the Pharmaceutical Society NI. The Pharmacy Forum NI Board consists of elected members, representatives from other pharmacy organisations and those co-opted for their skills and expertise. The Board met five times this year.

Figure 1 – Pharmacy Forum Board

Elected Members		
Sheelin McKeagney, Chair		Raymond Anderson
Eamon O'Donnell	Philip Boyle	Anne McAlister
Dr Kate McClelland	Glynis McMurtry	Karen Briers
Representative Members		
Suzanne Cassells – Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists	David McCrea - Community Pharmacy NI	
Co-opted Members		
Linden Ashfield	Prof. Kathy Burnett	Katie Blair
Early Career Pharmacists (non-voting members)		
Jonathan Clarke (left post Jan. 2020)	Lucy Kerr (assumed post Jan. 2020)	

Pharmacy Forum Committees

Figure 2 - Education and Training Committee

Members		
Prof. Kathy Burnett, Chair	Raymond Anderson	Maura Corry
Dr Glenda Flemming	Prof. Lezley-Anne Hanna	Roberta Tasker
Lesley Edgar	Stephen Curran (left post Feb. 2020)	Hilary McKee
Dr Roisin O'Hare	Dr Mary Carmel Kearney	
Early Career Pharmacists (non-voting members)		
Charlotte (commenced 2020)	Hanna January	

Figure 3 - Policy and Practice Committee

Members		
Karen Briers, Chair	Catherine Devlin	Anna Fay
Sheelin McKeagney, Vice-Chair	Eamon O'Donnell	Anne McAlister
Leon O'Hagan	Dr Carole Parsons	
Early Career Pharmacists (non-voting members)		
Mairead McGrattan (left post Jan. 2020)	Patrick Campbell (started post Jan. 2020)	

The Pharmacy Forum NI operates a number of Interest Groups and Short-Life Working Groups, which are project specific and focus on a range of issues.

Pharmacy Forum Activity Report

The Forum has continued to champion the profession and its fundamental role in delivering high quality, safe and effective patient-centred care, in a challenging environment. We remain committed to canvassing and representing the views of Northern Ireland pharmacists, on the issues that matter to them and delivering against our **strategic objectives**. They are as follows:

- Improving pharmacy best practice and medicine optimisation
- Ensuring accessibility to high quality, patient centred care

- Promoting the role of pharmacists and assisting them to maximise their career potential
- Ensuring their voices are heard
- Supporting pharmacists and their families in times of need, through the Pharmacists' Advice and Support Service (PASS)

We will remain a responsive and engaged leadership body on behalf of the pharmacy profession. We will continue to articulate the interests of pharmacists at the very highest levels of decision making and ensure that pharmacy is recognised as an essential, innovative profession, which maintains and enhances its reputation for delivering the very highest standards of patient care.

2019-20 is the third year of the Pharmacy Forum NI's three-year **Corporate Plan (2017-2020)**. The plan takes an outcomes-based approach focused on objectives which are based on how our work will make a difference to pharmacists, pharmacy, patients and other stakeholders.

Activity is prioritised under **five key work strands**:

1. **Leadership**: locally active, nationally minded and internationally benchmarked: an influential voice and trusted source of information as well as an effective advocate for pharmacists, pharmacy practice and improved outcomes.
2. **Excellence**: recognising and sharing excellence within the profession; highlighting and benchmarking best practice for our stakeholders and the public.
3. **Development**: enabling the development of pharmacists in their practice and empowering them to reach their potential as healthcare professionals.
4. **Technology**: enabling efficiency and improvement in the safety and quality of patient care through supporting the culture change required for the introduction of new technologies
5. **Support**: providing help in times of need, through the Pharmacists Advice and Support Service (PASS), for pharmacists, pre-registration trainees, ex-pharmacists and their dependents.

The Corporate Plan is supported by a work plan which details activity under each of the key work strands and supporting strategies. Progress continues to be monitored by the Forum Board and activity is communicated to members through the Forum website, newsletters and annual report.

The Corporate Plan is available at: www.pfni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/PFNI-Corporate-Strategy.pdf

Leadership

Implementing good governance for successful delivery

Following last year's Board member elections, governance training has been completed and a full governance review - including a modernisation of the Governance

Handbook in line with current good practice - is nearing completion with implementation planned for autumn 2020.

The elected members of the Board are trustees of three charitable trust funds:

- Pharmacists Advice and Support Service (PASS)
- C.W. Young Scholarship Fund
- Ronnie McMullen Trust Fund

PASS and C.W. Young are registered with the Charity Commission NI (CCNI). Both have passed an external audit process and are fully compliant with CCNI reporting requirements. Ronnie McMullen Fund is currently undergoing registration in line with CCNI process.

Covid-19 response – safeguarding the pharmacy team’s health & wellbeing

This year we helped our members to support their teams by providing access to and promoting a 24/7 health and well-being service for all members of the pharmacy team including pharmacy technicians, dispensers, healthcare assistants and any anyone providing any other type of pharmacy support role. The support service operated between April and September 2020.

NI frontline pharmacy workers’ support services:

- 24/7 telephone helpline
- Telephone / video counselling
- Financial and legal guidance
- Access to online support and the Inspire Support Hub



Pharmacy Futures NI – attracting, recruiting and retaining pharmacy staff

Related to our work on the Pharmacy Workforce Review Board, one of the main areas of focus this year was the delivery of a substantial DoH-funded project, Pharmacy Futures NI, to help attract, recruit and retain pharmacists and pharmacy staff in all sectors in Northern Ireland.

The Forum alongside the Department of Health planned to launch a **national promotional campaign** in March 2020, delivering a positive message about the opportunities available in the pharmacy profession here. Although resources were prepared, the launch of this initiative was postponed due to Covid-19.

The campaign has a contemporary, dynamic and modern approach and consists of a series of **short videos** for promotion across all social media channels. Central to the activity has been the creation of a **website** that will provide a ‘one-stop-shop’ with information about the range of opportunities available in Northern Ireland, including links to current vacancies.

Launch activity is tentatively rescheduled for autumn 2020.

Collaborating with others to promote patient safety and medicines optimisation

The Forum has continued to collaborate with key stakeholders on the following Department of Health led initiatives and strategies:

- *The third WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge: Medication Without Harm*

The Forum was an active member on the steering group of NI's response to the WHO 3rd Global Safety Challenge: Medication Without Harm. The main themes of this work were identifying key priority action areas, high risk situations, safer transitions of care and polypharmacy. As part of our commitment, we hosted the community pharmacy feedback session in August 2019 and attended the launch of Northern Ireland's first multi-disciplinary Medicines Safety Conference in November 2019.

Also, during the conference, we launched the outcomes of the Forum's work with the **Community Pharmacy Patient Safety Group**, which involved 19 medication officers GB and key stakeholders in NI.

- *Pharmacy Workforce Review – providing for sustainable, high-quality pharmacy services in a complex and evolving environment*

The Forum, along with a range of pharmacy stakeholders, has been part of the pharmacy workforce review which aims to inform HSC workforce development needs for the period 2019-2029. An implementation plan is under development and will have far-reaching implications for the future of the profession, including most notably the reform of initial education and training and development of a foundation programme for pre-registration and early career pharmacists. The Forum is already participating in the **UK-wide Education Group and Oversight Board (EGOB)** and related working groups. This work will continue to be a priority area next year with Covid-19 highlighting the urgent need for prescribing ready pharmacists and the four CPOs requesting an acceleration in the pace of reform.

Rebalancing Medicines Legislation and Pharmacy Regulation Programme Board

Progress on the passage of Bills through Westminster to reform pharmacy legislation on the sale and supply of medicines on the next phase of this work has been frustrated by reprioritisation of emergency legislation around Brexit and Covid-19. However, the Forum has continued to work with RPS colleagues on the narrative around supervision to feed into future Programme Board work.

Influencing decision-makers through policy development and advocating on behalf of the profession

In 2019/20, the Forum undertook a range of policy advocacy work and responded to **consultations**, presenting the views of pharmacists on key issues impacting the profession. This work included:

- Letter sent to the Secretary of State requesting pharmacists to be listed under Abortion NI Regulations 2020
- Response to DoH consultation on Proposed Amendments to the Pharmaceutical Services Regulations (NI) 1997
- Response to consultation on a new legal framework for abortion services in Northern Ireland
- Response to PSNI consultation on proposals for a Joint GPhC/Pharmaceutical Society NI 4-Country Registration Assessment
- Response to DoH consultation on Reshaping Stroke Services

All consultation responses are available at: www.pfni.org.uk/making-a-difference/policy/responses/

Raising profile and awareness through the media

Racism in NI pharmacy was brought to light on the Radio Ulster 'Nolan' show in June 2020 and prompted significant interest from local and regional press. The press approached the Forum for comment and the Chair was quoted in an article published by the Derry News (www.derrynow.com/news/derry-news/552363/pharmacy-forum-ni-appalled-by-racist-abuse-of-derry-woman.html).

On the back of the story, **Chemist + Drug (C+D)** asked us to distribute their UK-wide survey among our network to gauge the level of racism among pharmacists in NI. An **interview with the Forum Chair** was also published in C+D in July 2020 (www.chemistanddruggist.co.uk/news/pharmacy-forum-ni-we-must-make-bame-staff-feel-safe-work).

Excellence

Celebrating excellence at every level

A Fellowship Panel meeting took place in March 2020. Three **Fellows** will be conferred at our Rewarding Excellence Event which will be scheduled in 2021.

Undergraduate Gold Medals were awarded to the student with the overall highest mark in the final year of their MPharm in Northern Ireland's two Schools of Pharmacy.

The recipient of this year's **Ronnie McMullan Award** for the top mark in the Pharmaceutical Society NI's Pre-Registration examination joined Forum Board representatives at the 9th All Ireland Pharmacy Conference in October 2019. with.

Setting standards – producing professional guidance resources for the profession

The **third edition Guide to Support Medication Review in Older People** developed by the Northern Ireland Pharmacists working with Older People (NIPOP) Network completed in May 2020. It is aimed at supporting healthcare professionals when carrying out comprehensive reviews of the appropriateness of medicines prescribed for older people.

In April 2020, the Forum joined an RPS UK-wide short-life working group supporting the development of guidance around new contingency legislation for the **supply of controlled drugs during the pandemic** to ensure NI differentials were included. The guidance included:

- Emergency supply of controlled drugs: supply during a pandemic
- Changing the intervals of instalments for controlled drugs during a pandemic
- Serious Shortage protocols and CDs during a pandemic

In March 2020, UK Pharmacy Professional Leadership Bodies and Pharmacy Regulators issued a joint statement entitled **Covid-19: Social Distancing. Protecting yourself and your teams.**

Following the decision by the Nursing and Midwifery Council to stand down their medicines management standards and cite RPS guidance instead, the Forum worked with NI stakeholders in August 2019 and endorsed the below **RPS standards for NI colleagues** to ensure a UK-wide approach in relation to safe storage, handling, and administration of medications:

- RPS Guidance on the Safe and Secure Storage of Medicines (2018)
- RPS/RCN/RCM co-produced Guidance on the Administration of Medications in Healthcare Settings (2019)

Our work will continue on this front in the coming year.

All guidance documents are available at: www.pfni.org.uk

Development

Making Continuing Professional Development meaningful

The Forum continues to deliver **online resources and a one-to-one support service** where facilitators can support members with their portfolio submission. We delivered eight one-to-one sessions across the year and one group session in February 2020. Themes included supporting those who did not meet standard on first submission and those wanting to update their portfolio presentation style.

The postponement of PSNI's changes to the current CPD framework in June 2020 has postponed a revision of the corresponding CPD support and facilitation resources for our members until 2021.

Pre-registration students zooming ahead

Support for the 2019/20 pre-registration students was dynamically reformatted from the anticipated live calculations tutorial days in March 2020 to a virtual online platform with our expert facilitators. We had excellent uptake with over 70% of students purchasing and participating in the new **3-step calculations programme**, consisting of pre-coursework, filmed webinars and zoom tutorials. Of those students who provided feedback, 93% said the course was 'good' or 'very good'.

In June 2020, the Forum hosted an online information event for pre-registration students entitled '**Refocus & Recharge your Career amid Covid-19**'. The event was organised in response to their particularly challenging year characterised by significant changes in the work environment, as well as the postponement and reinstatement of the PSNI registration exam. A panel of key stakeholders, including the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, participated in a student-led Q&A session and provided reassurance on a range of issues. Over 90 participants joined and the follow-up newsletter to all pre-registration students in Northern Ireland resulted in a further 25 catching up on the event via webinar (<https://vimeo.com/428064495/c7d8afede0>).

In March 2020, our Education, Research and Training Committee hosted a workshop entitled '**Preparation for Change to the Common Registration Examination 2021**'. Approximately 30 stakeholders including DoH, employers, pre-registration service providers and academia, met to discuss the implications of the forthcoming change to the UK-wide examination and assess current training against what is needed for next year. The collated information was used to successfully lobby key stakeholders for the correct resources to be in place to support the new student intake and tutors in 2021.

Cultivating the next generation of leaders

Although plans to launch an early career pharmacist group were put on hold due to Covid-19, we successfully pushed ahead with our programme to develop tomorrow's leaders by appointing three '**apprentice members**' to our board and committees.

Promoting and advancing pharmacy through Trust Funds

C.W. Young Charitable Trust: this year awarded £4,700 to the research project 'Workforce Development in Community Pharmacy: an investigation into the development needs and experiences of Early Career Pharmacists (ECPs) in NI'

Ronnie McMullen Charitable Trust: funded travel to the 9th All Ireland Pharmacy Conference for the student with the highest score in the PSNI registration exam.

Rethinking strategy and enabling innovation through Board and Committee engagement

In preparation for strategy development the Chair of the Forum hosted an evening in September 2020 for Board and Committee members. Guest speakers covered a range of topics:

- CPO Cathy Harrison: Pharmacists are the answer – what is the question?
- Dr Ruth Miller, Medicines Optimisation Project Lead: Integrated Pharmacy Services - our shared vision
- Glynis McMurtry, Head of Pharmacy, GP Federations: Update on Practice-based pharmacy NI

Technology

The Forum continued to make optimum use of new technologies to communicate and interact with our constituents and stakeholders. The Covid-19 pandemic also significantly impacted our way of working and prompted us to incorporate greater use of online meeting space.

Cohesive and coordinated communications to meet organisational objectives

In September 2019, the Board approved a new **Integrated Communications Strategy**, which emphasises coordinating messages across our communications channels to increase the Forum's profile, influence, and engagement with our target audiences. Due to the impact of Covid-19, elements of this have been achieved through alternative communications platforms and some put on hold until pandemic restrictions are lifted.

Keeping the Forum website updated and relevant

We continued to update the website, through the regular publication of relevant news, featuring multimedia elements like photos, graphics, and creating a **Covid-19 Information & Guidance Hub** on the homepage in order to signpost pharmacists in Northern Ireland to key official sources of information. An **audit** of the complete website content has also been completed and further changes to content and design will be introduced in the coming year.

Forging and maintaining connections through our monthly electronic newsletter

As a means to periodically communicate with and to build brand recognition among our network of nearly 3,000 contacts, we relaunched the Forum newsletter in May 2020. Content is now more streamlined, with short engaging news items that drive traffic to the Forum website. Publication has moved from bi-monthly to monthly in order to better maintain continuity and momentum. News items cover the Forum's latest activity, developments affecting the profession and relevant stakeholder news. As a result of the revamp and systematic distribution, the newsletter is receiving on average a **40% open rate** which is well above the 27% industry average.

During 2019/20 the Forum issued eight newsletters to all pharmacists and pre-registration students. We also issued almost 30 special bulletins during the same period, including redistributing letters on behalf of the CPO.

During the peak of the pandemic, our e-newsletters proved a valuable source of information to pharmacists in NI as we were able to signpost key information and

disseminate communication on behalf of DoH. These communications achieved an unprecedented 70% open-rate from all pharmacists at peak times.

Twitter – widening audience reach through real-time communication

The Forum uses Twitter as an essential feed of real-time information, allowing us to quickly disseminate bite-sized comment to a steadily growing audience. As of August 2020, the Forum’s Twitter account registered 1,100 followers, representing a 32% uplift since last year.

Our largest Twitter interaction was recorded in April 2020 with the announcement of the new 24/7 Support for Frontline Pharmacy Teams, which earned approximately **24,500 impressions**.

Zoom video conferencing

In the absence of in-person meetings due to Covid-19, zoom conferencing was used to facilitate Board and Committee meetings as well as to deliver pre-registration activities including calculations training and a special meeting with pharmacy leaders.

Following the lockdown announcement, Forum staff moved to homeworking arrangements and have also been collaborating effectively through daily zoom conferencing.

SUPPORT

The Pharmacists Advice and Support Service (PASS) provides a range of free and confidential services for pharmacists, former pharmacists and their dependants. PASS is a registered charity with the Charities Commission NI and is a registered charity, in accordance with the Pharmacy Order 1976 (NI).

Here are just some of the services on offer through PASS:



All services are impartial, free and completely confidential.

During 2019/20, PASS continued its work across a range of functions including, providing **grants in excess of £1,700** and the provision of **38 counselling sessions** (face-to-face and online due to Covid-19), with **seven new clients availing of Inspire counselling**. Areas that are being dealt with include the relief of financial distress with provision of budgeting and debt advice in parallel and we are seeing the continued trend of younger pharmacists accessing the support service.

In March 2020, a new online support service – **Inspire Support Hub** – was launched by our partner, Inspire, aimed at widening support options available as part of Pharmacy Forum NI's existing programme. The hub provides instant access to a range of information and tools tailored specifically to help care for individual wellbeing needs.

Given the extra pressures that Covid-19 put on the pharmacy sector, the Forum launched a **new health and wellbeing support service for all pharmacy frontline workers**, between April and September 2020. To raise awareness of the initiative, posters were sent to all pharmacists and pharmacies in Northern Ireland and electronic communications were also issued.

We continued to promote PASS services among pre-registration students and newly qualified pharmacists, by attending student events at Ulster University and Queen's University Belfast as well as promoting PASS during the Covid-19 outbreak to through online events.

The highlight of this outreach activity was a project **ECHO webinar** held in February 2020 through the UCA network during which an Inspire counsellor delivered an information session on counselling services and benefits.

We would like to extend our thanks, on behalf of those who have benefitted from PASS services, to everyone who already donates. As a charity, it is vital that we can continue to offer a range of services and financial support received from pharmacists, ensures that we can continue to do so. We urge you to please consider donating. You can do so online at: www.pfni.org.uk/pass/donate

7. Financial Overview

for the year ended 31 May 2020

Financial Overview for the year ended 31 May 2020

Contents Summary	Pages
Chair of Resources foreword	53
Council, Executive and Professional Advisors	58
Statement of responsibilities of the Council	59
Independent Auditor's Report to the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland	60
Statement of Comprehensive Income	63
Balance Sheet	64
Cash Flow Statement	65
Statement of Changes in Equity	66
Notes to the financial statements	67
C.W. Young Scholarship Fund	Appendix 1
The Ronnie McMullan Trust Fund	Appendix 2
Pharmacist Advice and Support Services	Appendix 3

Financial Overview for the year ended 31 May 2020

Foreword by, Ciaran Hunter, Chair of Finance & Performance Committee (formerly Resources Committee)

Although the registration year 2019/2020 was extended to 31st August 2020, the financial year has been maintained as 1st June 2019 to 31st May 2020 to facilitate year on year comparisons

Review of Business Activities

During 2019/2020, the Pharmaceutical Society NI has again managed to achieve the important goal of maintaining expenditure within the existing fee structure. This has been achieved with only one fee increase since 2009 and through a period of considerable financial and legislative uncertainty. The planned use of financial reserves for specific development projects has again been delayed by legislative issues because the majority of our planned projects flow from changes to the legal framework which have been affected by brexit and the pandemic.

Council approved a three-year Financial Strategy in 2018-19 to ensure financial viability and to support development through effective operation of Pharmaceutical Society NI finances. The financial strategy will support and develop operational systems which improve the effectiveness of financial management to control costs and allow timely response to budget variations, and thereby minimise the fee burden on registrants. The newly formed Finance and Performance Committee will review this strategy during 2020/2021 and recommend any improvements identified to Council

Financial Strategy Mission

To support & lead activities which improve effectiveness, reduce costs and minimise the burden on registrants.

To ensure the provision of timely, accurate and relevant financial information to allow decision making by SMT & Council.

To ensure there are in place systems and processes to monitor legal & FTP pipeline costs and strategies to deal with costs arising.

To have in place processes to ensure the proper management of the investment portfolio.

Income

In 2019/20, the Pharmaceutical Society NI's total income increased by £105k over the previous financial year to £1,365k (£1,260k: 2018/19). The variance is made up of an increase in retention fees £60k, one off project funding £49k, recovery of costs £27k relating to a FtP case and £2k interest offset by a reduction in registration £11k, misc income £14k and £8k relating to tutor course, examination and dividend income.

Our main source of income is derived from the renewal fees of pharmacists and pharmacies. Registration fees comprise of pre-registration students, new registrants from the pre-registration programme, those joining from another register, re-registration and EEA applicants.

These key sources of income make up 88% (92% 2019) of our total income.

Key Sources of Income	2019/20	2018/19
	£'000	£'000
Retention Fees	997	937
Premises Licence Fees	87	87
Registration Fees	122	133
Total	1,206	1,157

There has been a significant increase of £60k in retention income compared to the previous year. This was in line with budget expectations and we have seen a year on year increase in those remaining on the Register. Registration fees decreased by £11k to £122k (2019: £133k). Although we have seen a rise in the number of pharmacists joining from another register, there has been a fall in the numbers of new registrants from the pre-registration programme, pre-registration applicants and re-registration applicants.

The Department of Health, working with the Pharmacy Forum, provided one-off funding of £49k for an "Attract, Recruit, Retain" project aimed at pharmacists in Northern Ireland. This project will be cost neutral to the Pharmaceutical Society NI.

Income also includes an additional £27k which relates to the recovery of costs from a Fitness to Practise case.

In support of, and as a reaction to, changing healthcare requirements during the Covid-19 pandemic, 265 pharmacists were registered on our Covid-19 Temporary Register without fees being charged.

Expenditure

In 2019/20, our total expenditure increased by £128k on the previous financial year to £1,281k (£1,153k: 2018/19). The variance relates to an increase in salary and related costs £35k, statutory committee £31k, governance costs £12k, computer £7k, legal, professional and other consultancy £28k, recruitment £14k, project costs £14k and £43k relating to one off project funding noted in income. This is offset by a reduction in facilities & office expenses £26k, CPD £13k and £17k relating to marginal variances over several headings listed below.

Staff & related costs grew from £650k to £685k. Whilst this represented an increase of £35k on the previous year, it was broadly in line with budget expectations. This increase in staff costs, is mainly due to costs incurred on temporary staff needed to cover maternity leave and to annual adjustments to core staff salaries.

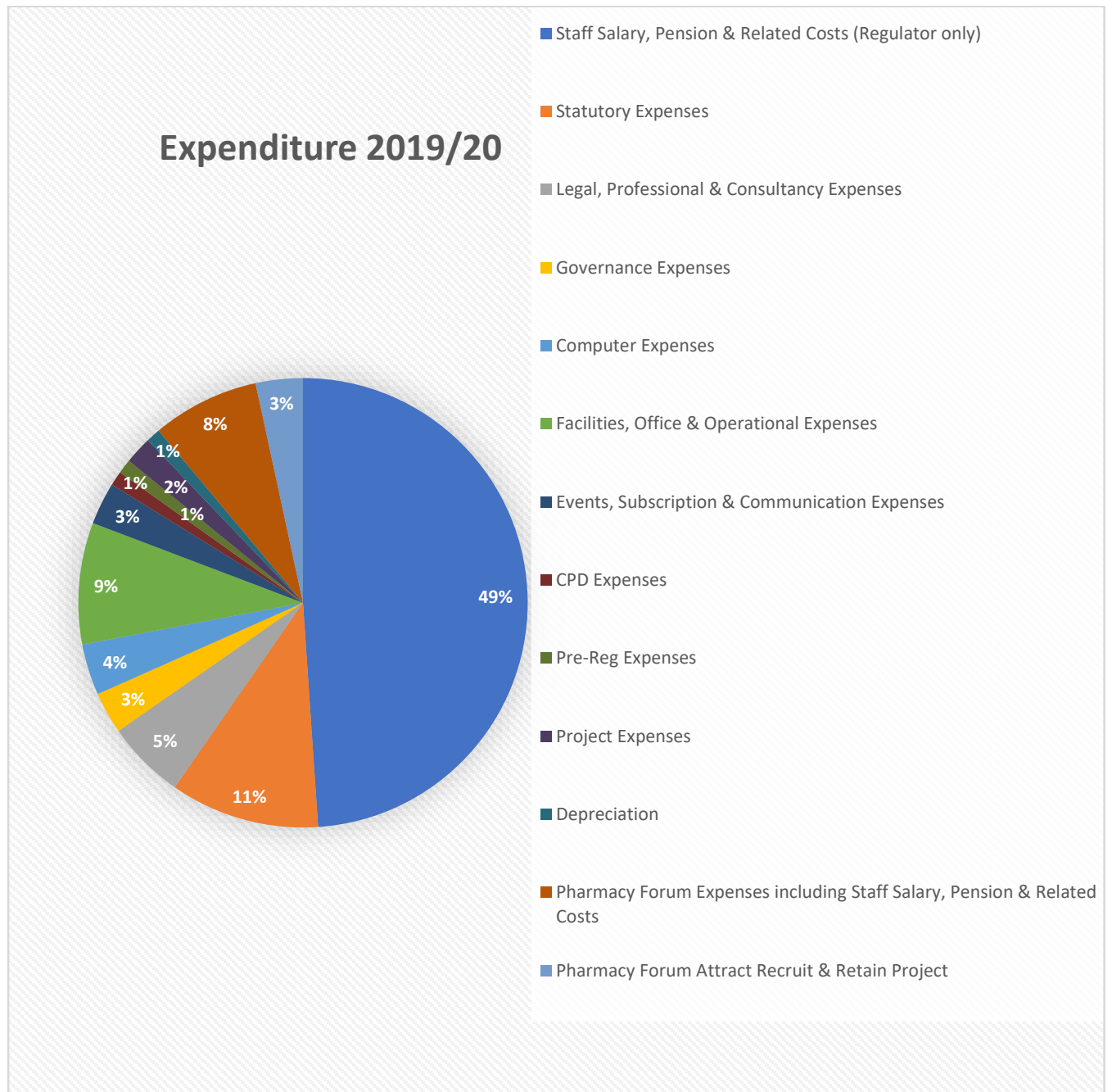
Statutory Committee expenses have increased by £31k, this increase relates to the closure of a single case which took over one year to be resolved. While the Pharmaceutical Society NI continues to focus on reducing costs and timelines associated with each case, based on our current predictions, caseload costs are expected to increase again in the coming year.

There has been a reduction of £26k in costs relating to facilities and office expenses. This has been achieved partly through increased efficiencies and also due to the closure of the office as a consequence of Covid-19. Whilst there is an increase of £12k in governance expenses when compared to the previous year, this was in line with our 2019/20 budget. IT and computing costs have increased by £7k to support the early migration of the Pharmaceutical Society NI's IT services to the 'Cloud' and the enablement of a viable home working solution for all staff during the current pandemic.

Legal, professional, and other consultancy expenses increased by £28k mainly due to a one-off review of our Fitness to Practise processes which also included learnings and targeted training. Although CPD costs have decreased by £13k on the previous year, it remains broadly in-line with budget. CPD costs in the previous year included one-time costs relating to the creation of the new CPD Framework. There is also £43k of expenditure relating to Pharmacy Forum "Attract, Recruit, Retain" project mentioned in income above. There has been an £14k increase in recruitment related to the recruitment of the Registrar, and a further £14k increase in other "one off" project costs. As detailed in the Statement of Comprehensive Income report the remaining

reduction of £17k on the previous year's expenditure relates to smaller variances in the following expenditure lines: pension costs, travel, communications, subscriptions, depreciation, loss on deposal and Pharmacy Forum expenses.

Historically, the largest expenditure elements are staff and related costs, statutory committee expenses, facilities expenditure, office expenses, computer expenses and governance expenses. Together, these represent 80% of the total operational expenditure at £1,028k in 2019/20; this compares to 84% in 2018/19.



Balance Sheet

Due to the overall surplus in 2019/20, the reserves have risen by £17k. The decision to delay the issuing of retention notices for the year ending 31 May 2021 until August 2020 has led to significant decreases in Debtors, Cash and Creditors balances compared to the prior year, though with no overall effect on working capital or net reserves due to the implementation of our reserves policy to deal with the unexpected delays.

Though Covid-19 has caused considerable upheaval for our registrants and indeed for our staff, after a review of budgets and forecasts, as well as the year end position, we do not foresee that it will have a negative impact on our income or expenditure for the foreseeable future. The major impact that Covid-19 has had is a reduction in value of the investment portfolio, offsetting some of the gains made in prior years. The valuation of the investment portfolio at year end exceeded the actual original cost of the portfolio. The prudent reserves policy over the last number of years has meant that the Pharmaceutical Society NI had the appropriate level of reserves and financial resources to cope with the Covid-19 disruption internally, this situation is being continually monitored.



Ciaran Hunter
Chair of Finance & Performance

Council, Executive and Professional Advisors

President

Dr. Jim Livingstone

Council

Full list of Council members referenced on page 30

Chair of Finance & Performance Ciaran Hunter

Chief Executive

Trevor Patterson

Auditors

KPMG
The Soloist Building
1 Lanyon Place
Belfast
BT1 3LP

Principle Bankers

Bank of Ireland
University Road
Belfast
BT7 1ND

Legal Advisors

Cleaver Fulton Rankin
50 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7FW

Statement of responsibilities of the Council

The Council is responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Article 4C of the Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 requires the Council to prepare financial statements for each financial year in such form as the Department of Health (the 'Department') may determine. In relation to 2019/20 accounts, no determination was issued by the Department, however the CPO wrote to the Council's President on 15 May 2020 to set out a "determination" which will be effective from the 2020/21 accounts. The Council has elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the basis of preparation and accounting policies set out in note 1 which it has determined are appropriate to the Society's circumstances having regard to current requirements of accounting standards issued by the UK Financial Reporting Council (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Ireland*.

In preparing these financial statements, the Council has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently.
- made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepared the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Society will continue in business.

The Council is responsible for keeping proper accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Society's transactions.

The Council is also responsible for preparing the Annual Report in accordance with Article 4D of the Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 and the regulations made under it.

The Council has general responsibility for taking such steps as are reasonably open to them to safeguard the assets of the Society and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The Council is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the Society's website. Legislation in the UK governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions. By Order of the Council.



JIM LIVINGSTONE
PRESIDENT



TREVOR PATTERSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

17 September 2020



KPMG
Audit
The Soloist Building
1 Lanyon Place
Belfast BT1 3LP
Northern Ireland

Independent Auditor's Report to the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland

1 Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland ('the Society') for the year ended 31 May 2020 which comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the Statement of Changes in Equity and the related notes, including the summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 1.

In our opinion, the financial statements of the Society for the year ended 31 May 2020 have been properly prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the special purpose basis of preparation and accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 and the regulations made under it.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)), including ISA (UK) 800 and the terms of our engagement letter dated 18 July 2018. Our responsibilities are described Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Society in accordance with ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting Council (FRC)'s Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of matter – special purpose basis of preparation

We draw attention to note 1 to the financial statements, which describes their basis of preparation. As explained in that note, the financial statements are prepared to assist the Society in complying with the financial reporting requirements of Article 4C of the Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976. As a result, the financial statements may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.



Independent Auditor's Report to the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (*continued*)

1 Report on the audit of the financial statements (*continued*)

We have nothing to report on going concern (continued)

The Council has prepared the financial statements on the going concern basis as it does not intend to liquidate the Society or to cease its operations, and it has concluded that the Society's financial position means that this is realistic. The Council has also concluded that there are no material uncertainties that could have cast significant doubt over the Society's ability to continue as a going concern for at least a year from the date of approval of the financial statements ("the going concern period").

We are required to report to you if we have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting is inappropriate or there is an undisclosed material uncertainty that may cast significant doubt over the use of that basis for a period of at least a year from the date of approval of the financial statements. In our evaluation of the Council's conclusions, we considered the inherent risks to the Society's business model and analysed how those risks might affect the Society's financial resources or ability to continue operations over the going concern period. We have nothing to report in these respects.

However, as we cannot predict all future events or conditions and as subsequent events may result in outcomes that are inconsistent with judgements that were reasonable at the time they were made, the absence of reference to a material uncertainty in this auditor's report is not a guarantee that the Society will continue in operation.

Other information

The Council is responsible for the other information accompanying the Annual Report together with the financial statements. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The financial statements and our auditor's report thereon do not comprise part of the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, accordingly, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion on that information.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether, based on our financial statement audit work, the information therein is materially misstated or inconsistent with the financial statements or our audit knowledge. Based solely on that work, we have not identified material misstatements in the other information.

2 Respective responsibilities and restrictions on use

Responsibilities of the Council for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities of the Council set out on page 59, the Council is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the special purpose basis of preparation as set out in note 1 to the financial statements and in compliance with The Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976; determining that the basis of preparation is acceptable in the circumstances; such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; assessing the Society's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the council either intends to liquidate the society or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.



Independent Auditor's Report to the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (*continued*)

2 Respective responsibilities and restrictions on use

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A fuller description of our responsibilities is provided on the FRC's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

Our report is made solely to the Society's Council, as a body, in accordance with Article 4C of the Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Society's Council those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the society and its Council, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

John Poole (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of KPMG, Statutory Auditor
Chartered Accountants
The Soloist Building,
1 Lanyon Place,
Belfast
BT1 3LP

21 September 2020

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland

Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 May 2020

	Notes	2020 £	2019 £
INCOME			
Retention Fees		996,592	936,892
Licenses		87,439	86,606
Registration Fees		122,442	133,186
Tutors Course & Calculations Fees		17,848	23,193
Interest		5,433	3,226
Miscellaneous		6,178	20,521
Examinations		27,579	29,145
Dividends		25,791	26,872
Cost Recovery – Fitness to Practice		26,910	-
Dept of Health – Attract, Recruit, Retain funding		49,218	-
		1,365,430	1,259,641
EXPENDITURE			
Computer Expenses		47,007	39,638
Salaries and National & Medical Insurance		685,219	650,432
Pension Costs - Staff		26,097	28,529
Adjustment to legacy pension obligation		4,082	3,962
Office Expenses		47,326	61,933
Events, Travel & Subsistence		27,742	34,733
Legal, Professional & Other Consultancy Expenses		72,357	44,580
Statutory Committee Expenses		137,176	105,690
Pharmacy Forum Events, CPA subs & Discretionary Expenses		11,864	18,182
Pharmacy Forum - Attract, Recruit, Retain Expenditure		43,290	-
Subscriptions		9,912	9,533
Facilities Expenditure		46,567	58,436
Depreciation	2	13,048	12,008
Recruitment		19,534	6,000
Communications		1,202	2,772
CPD Process		13,253	26,532
Pre-registration Administration		13,213	12,575
Gain on disposal of Fixed Assets		(1,757)	-
Governance Expenses		38,330	26,145
Project Expenses		25,354	11,422
		1,280,816	1,153,102
OPERATING SURPLUS			
		84,614	106,539
Loss on revaluation of investments	5	(81,154)	(21,504)
GAIN BEFORE TAX			
		3,460	85,035
Taxation	3	12,468	3,040
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR			
		15,928	88,075
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
		1,030	1,030
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR			
		16,958	89,105

The notes on pages 67-74 form part of these financial statements.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland

Balance Sheet for year ended 31 May 2020

	Notes	2020 £	2019 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible Assets	4	33,350	33,778
Investments	5	878,189	885,019
		<u>911,539</u>	<u>918,797</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	6	58,806	351,584
Bank deposits		501,002	501,378
Current Account		179,894	745,907
Cash in Hand		-	182
Cunningham Coates – Deposit Interest		95,936	150,275
		<u>835,638</u>	<u>1,749,326</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors	7	(183,206)	(1,103,310)
		<u>652,432</u>	<u>646,016</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS			
		<u>652,432</u>	<u>646,016</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			
		<u>1,563,971</u>	<u>1,564,813</u>
PROVISIONS			
Deferred tax liability	8	(26,452)	(39,911)
Pension obligations	9	(80,979)	(84,290)
		<u>1,456,540</u>	<u>1,440,612</u>
NET ASSETS			
		<u>1,456,540</u>	<u>1,440,612</u>
SOURCE OF FUNDS			
Income and expenditure account		1,451,345	1,434,387
Premises renovation grant		5,195	6,225
		<u>1,456,540</u>	<u>1,440,612</u>
TOTAL FUNDS			
		<u>1,456,540</u>	<u>1,440,612</u>

The financial statements were authorised for issue on 17 September 2020 and signed on behalf of the Council by:

JIM LIVINGSTONE (PRESIDENT)



TREVOR PATTERSON (CHIEF EXECUTIVE)



The notes on pages 67-74 form part of these financial statements.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland

Cash Flow Statement for year ended 31 May 2020

<i>Note</i>	2020 £	2019 £
Cash flows from operating activities		
Surplus for the year	15,928	88,075
<i>Adjustments for:</i>		
Depreciation	13,048	12,008
Interest receivable	(5,433)	(3,226)
Dividends received	(25,791)	(26,872)
Loss on revaluation of investments	79,173	21,504
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	152	-
Taxation	(12,468)	(3,040)
	64,610	88,449
Decrease in trade and other debtors	292,778	116,016
Decrease in trade and other creditors	(920,102)	(64,516)
Decrease in provisions	(3,311)	(3,282)
	(566,025)	136,667
Tax paid	(992)	(975)
Net cash from operating activities	(567,017)	135,692
Cash flows from investing activities		
Acquisition of tangible fixed assets	(12,773)	(12,382)
Interest received	5,433	3,226
Dividends received	25,791	26,872
Purchase of investments	(75,874)	(10,494)
Proceeds from sale of investments	3,531	17,973
Net cash from investing activities	(53,892)	25,195
Cash flows from financing activities		
Cash withdrawn/(placed) from deposit	375	(200,931)
Net cash from financing activities	375	(200,931)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(620,534)	(40,044)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 June	896,364	936,408
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 May	275,830	896,364

The notes on pages 67-74 form part of these financial statements.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland

Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 31 May 2020

	Income and expenditure account	Premises renovation grant	Total funds £
	£	£	
Balance at 1 June 2018	1,345,282	7,255	1,352,537
<i>Total comprehensive income for the year</i>			
Profit or loss	88,075	-	88,075
Other comprehensive income			
Premises grant amortisation	1,030	(1,030)	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	89,105	(1,030)	88,075
Balance at 31 May 2019	<u>1,434,387</u>	<u>6,225</u>	<u>1,440,612</u>
	Income and expenditure account	Premises renovation grant	Total funds £
	£	£	
Balance at 1 June 2019	1,434,387	6,225	1,440,612
<i>Total comprehensive income for the year</i>			
Profit or loss	15,928	-	15,928
Other comprehensive income			
Premises grant amortisation	1,030	(1,030)	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	16,958	(1,030)	15,928
Balance at 31 May 2020	<u>1,451,345</u>	<u>5,195</u>	<u>1,456,540</u>

The notes on pages 67-74 form part of these financial statements

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 May 2020

1. Principal Accounting Policies

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (the "Society") is a statutory regulatory body for pharmacists, domiciled in Northern Ireland.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared as required by Article 4C of the Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 and in accordance with the accounting policies set out in this note, which have been determined by the Council to be appropriate to the Society's circumstances having regard to the recognition and measurement criteria of current accounting standards issued by the UK Financial Reporting Council (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Ireland ('FRS102'), with the exception of:

- Payments to former employees under which the obligation has been estimated in accordance with FRS102.21 Provisions and Contingencies, rather than FRS102.28 Employee Benefits as a defined benefit obligation; and
- The Society has prepared financial statements which present information about the Society only and does not incorporate financial information relating to certain funds (Pharmacists Advice and Support Service, the CW Young Scholarship Fund and the Ronnie McMullan Trust Fund) whose operations are directed by the Society. The Council considers that it is appropriate not to incorporate this information into the Society's financial statements as required by FRS102 and details of the funds are provided in the unaudited appendices to the financial statements.

The presentation and functional currency of these financial statements is Sterling.

The accounting policies set out below have, unless otherwise stated, been applied consistently to all periods presented in these financial statements.

Management have assessed that there are no estimates or judgments that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities recognised in the financial statements.

Measurement convention

The financial statements are prepared on the historical cost basis except investments which are measured at their fair value.

Going concern

The Pharmaceutical Society's activities together with factors affecting future, development, performance, and position are set out in the Annual Report and Chair of Resources Foreword including the potential impact COVID-19 could have on the financial position. The Pharmaceutical Society NI has satisfactory financial resources and is in a strong net asset position. As a consequence, the Council believes that the Pharmaceutical Society NI is well placed to manage its risks successfully. Accordingly, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

Financial information relating to funds administrated by the Society

Certain funds (Pharmacists Advice and Support Service, the CW Young Scholarship Fund and the Ronnie McMullan Trust Fund) whose operations are directed by the Society are not incorporated in the financial statements. The financial statements present information about the Society only.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 May 2020 (continued)

1. Principal Accounting Policies (continued)

Revenue

Turnover represents the invoice value of service and is recognised on provision of the related service.

Retention, licences, and registration fees are recognised on commencement of the relevant annual registration period.

Revenue from examinations is recognised in proportion to the stage of completion of the delivery of this service at the reporting date. The stage of completion is assessed by management.

Interest is included in the income and expenditure account on an accrual's basis. Dividend income is recognised when the security is declared ex-dividend.

Basic financial instruments

Trade and other debtors/creditors

Trade and other debtors are recognised initially at transaction price less attributable transaction costs. Trade and other creditors are recognised initially at transaction price plus attributable transaction costs.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash balances and call deposits.

Equity investments

Equity investments are recognised initially at fair value which is normally the transaction price (but excludes any transaction costs, where the investment is subsequently measured at fair value through profit and loss).

Subsequently, they are measured at fair value through profit or loss, except for those equity investments that are not publicly traded and whose fair value cannot otherwise be measured reliably, which are recognised at cost less impairment until a reliable measure of fair value becomes available.

If a reliable measure of fair value is no longer available, the equity instrument's fair value on the last date the instrument was reliably measurable is treated as the cost of the instrument.

Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Where parts of an item of tangible fixed assets have different useful lives, they are accounted for as separate items of tangible fixed assets.

Depreciation is charged to expenditure on a straight-line basis and reducing balance over the estimated useful lives of each part of an item of tangible assets. Leased assets are depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and their useful lives. The estimated useful lives are as follows:

- Property - 40 years, straight-line
- Furniture and office equipment - 4-7 years, reducing balance
- Computer equipment - 4 years, reducing balance

Depreciation methods, useful lives and residual values are reviewed if there is an indication of a significant change since last annual reporting date in the pattern by which the Society expects to consume an asset's future economic benefits.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 May 2020 (continued)

1. Principal Accounting Policies (continued)

Impairment

Financial assets (including trade and other debtors)

A financial asset not carried at fair value through profit or loss is assessed at each reporting date to determine whether there is objective evidence that it is impaired. A financial asset is impaired if objective evidence indicates that a loss event has occurred after the initial recognition of the asset, and that the loss event had a negative effect on the estimated future cash flows of that asset that can be estimated reliably.

An impairment loss in respect of a financial asset measured at amortised cost is calculated as the difference between its carrying amount and the present value of the estimated future cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. For financial instruments measured at cost less impairment an impairment is calculated as the difference between its carrying amount and the best estimate of the amount that the Society would receive for the asset if it were to be sold at the reporting date. Interest on the impaired asset continues to be recognised through the unwinding of the discount. Impairment losses are recognised in profit or loss. When a subsequent event causes the amount of impairment loss to decrease, the decrease in impairment loss is reversed through profit or loss.

Pension obligations

Defined contribution plans

A defined contribution plan is a post-employment benefit plan under which the Society pays fixed contributions into a separate entity and will have no legal or constructive obligation to pay further amounts. Obligations for contributions to defined contribution pension plans are recognised as an expense in the income and expenditure account in the periods during which services are rendered by employees.

Payments to former employees

The Society has a commitment to provide annual payments to a former employee. The Society's obligation in respect of this member is calculated by estimating the amounts of future benefit that the member is estimated to receive and is recognised as a liability of the Society.

The liability is measured based on publicly available actuary mortality tables and other relevant assumptions using guidance set out in FRS102.21 Provisions and Contingencies.

Provisions

A provision is recognised in the balance sheet when the entity has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event, that can be reliably measured, and it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation. Provisions are recognised at the best estimate of the amount required to settle the obligation at the reporting date.

Taxation

Tax on the profit or loss for the year comprises current and deferred tax. Tax is recognised in the income and expenditure account except to the extent that it relates to items recognised directly in equity or other comprehensive income, in which case it is recognised directly in equity or other comprehensive income.

Current tax is the expected tax payable or receivable on the taxable income or loss for the year, using tax rates enacted or substantively enacted at the balance sheet date, and any adjustment to tax payable in respect of previous years.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 May 2020 (continued)

1. Principal Accounting Policies (continued)

Taxation (continued)

Deferred tax is provided on timing differences which arise from the inclusion of income and expenses in tax assessments in periods different from those in which they are recognised in the financial statements. The following timing differences are not provided for: differences between accumulated depreciation and tax allowances for the cost of a fixed asset if and when all conditions for retaining the tax allowances have been met to the extent that it is not probable that they will reverse in the foreseeable future.

Deferred tax is not recognised on permanent differences arising because certain types of income or expense are non-taxable or are disallowable for tax or because certain tax charges or allowances are greater or smaller than the corresponding income or expense.

Deferred tax is measured at the tax rate that is expected to apply to the reversal of the related difference, using tax rates enacted or substantively enacted at the balance sheet date.

Grants

Premises Renovation Grant

The premises renovation grant was recorded in reserves on receipt and is amortised into the income and expenditure account at 2.5% per annum in line with the depreciation period on the property.

2. Expenses and auditors' remuneration

	2020	2019
	£	£
<i>Operating surplus on operating activities before tax is stated after charging</i>		
Depreciation of tangible assets	13,048	12,008
Auditors Remuneration:		
- Audit of these financial statements	9,000	9,000
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

3. Taxation

Total tax expense recognised in the statement of comprehensive income

	2020	2019
	£	£
<i>Current tax</i>		
Current tax on income for the period	991	613
Adjustments on respect of prior periods	-	(6)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total current tax	991	607
<i>Deferred tax</i>		
Origination and reversal of timing differences	(13,459)	(3,647)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total deferred tax (note 8)	(13,459)	(3,647)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total tax credit	(12,468)	(3,040)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 May 2020 (continued)

4. Tangible Assets

	<i>University Street Property</i> £	<i>Furniture and Office Equipment</i> £	<i>Computer Equipment</i> £	<i>Total</i> £
Cost				
At 1 June 2019	87,114	130,643	108,011	325,768
Additions	-	2,284	10,489	12,773
Disposals	-	-	(1,702)	(1,702)
At 31 May 2020	87,114	132,927	116,798	336,839
Depreciation				
At 1 June 2019	74,838	127,389	89,763	291,990
Charge for year	2,710	1,270	9,069	13,048
Eliminated on Disposal	-	-	(1,550)	(1,550)
At 31 May 2020	77,548	128,659	97,282	303,489
Written Down Value At 31 May 2020	9,566	4,268	19,516	33,350
At 31 May 2019	12,276	3,254	18,248	33,778

5. Investments

	2020 £	2019 £
Fair value		
At beginning of year	885,019	914,002
Additions	75,874	10,494
Disposals	(1,550)	(17,973)
Fair value adjustments	(81,154)	(21,504)
At end of year	878,189	885,019

Investments comprises listed investments which as at 31 May 2020 the market value of these investments was £878,189 (2019: £885,019).

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 May 2020 (continued)

6. Debtors

	2020 £	2019 £
Trade debtors	24,474	329,350
Amounts receivable from related parties	1,567	-
Prepayments and accrued income	32,765	22,234
	<u>58,806</u>	<u>351,584</u>

7. Creditors

	2020 £	2019 £
Trade Creditors	95,656	8,323
Accruals	45,965	42,926
Deferred Income	26,747	1,037,608
Taxation and Social Security Costs	14,737	14,352
Corporation tax	101	101
	<u>183,206</u>	<u>1,103,310</u>

8. Deferred tax liability

	2020 £	2019 £
Investments	26,452	39,911
	<u>26,452</u>	<u>39,911</u>

The movement during the year comprises a debit of £13,459 (2019: debit of £3,647) which is recognised in gain or deficit for the year.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 May 2020 (continued)

9. Pension obligations

Defined contribution plans

The Society operates a defined contribution plan. Contributions payable by the Society for the year ended 31 May 2020 amounted to £26,097 (2019: £28,529). No contributions were outstanding at year end (2019: nil).

Payments to former employees

	2020 £
At beginning of year	84,290
Charge to the income and expenditure account for the year	4,082
Benefits paid	(7,393)
	<hr/>
At end of year	80,979
	<hr/> <hr/>

The provision relates to the Pharmaceutical Society's obligation to make annual payments to a former employee and in his death, 50% of the annual payment to his spouse.

10. Commitments

The Society had no contractual commitments contracted for but not provided in the financial statements (2019: nil).

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 May 2020 (continued)

11. Contingent liabilities

During the 2014/15 review of fees, which was the subject of public consultation, the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) was requested, pursuant to Articles 5 and 25A of The Pharmacy (1976 Order) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012 as amended, to approve amendments to some of the fees levied by the Society. During this approval process it became clear that, in the last round of substantive amendments to fees in 2009, some of the changes we had requested at that time had for some reason not in fact been incorporated in new Regulations as expected.

The Council initiated an immediate and comprehensive review of fees charged and their historic legislative basis. As a result, it became clear that a number of anomalies had arisen over a period of twenty years such that some registrants and prospective registrants were charged fees for services provided on the basis of a fee structure that was not wholly contained in Regulations.

Council has taken legal advice concerning any potential liability to repay sums charged in excess of statutory authority to affected persons. Council does not consider it appropriate or equitable to refund any of the sums that have been charged in excess of statutory authority.

No provision has been made by the Pharmaceutical Society NI for future costs or refunds in this regard and such sums are deemed to represent a contingent liability. The total amount of fees charged in excess of statutory authority is estimated to be £340k (2019: £340k).

12. Related party transactions

During the year none of the Council members or members of the key management staff has undertaken any material transactions with related parties.

Total compensation (including pension contributions & benefits) of key management personnel in the year amounted to £294,552 (2019: £273,034). Total compensation of Council Members in the year amounted to £38,330 (2019: £29,842).

During the year, the Society paid attendance fees to Council members totaling £32,962 (2019: £27,422). The Society also paid expenses to Council members totaling £5,368 (2019: £2,420).

Registrant members of the Council are required to pay a Retention Fee to the Pharmaceutical Society of NI, on the same basis as other registrant members.

The CW Young Scholarship Fund, The Ronnie McMillian Trust Fund and the PASS Fund are deemed to be related parties by virtue of the fact the trustees are elected members of the board of the Pharmacy Forum NI which is an arms-length body under the legislative remit of the Pharmaceutical Society NI. During the year, the Society collected income of £0 (2019: £0) on behalf of the Funds. Additionally, expenses of £12,196 (2019: £21,533) were recharged from the Society to the Funds. The Funds owe £1,567 (2019: £0) to the Pharmaceutical Society NI as at 31 May 2020 and the Society owes £0 (2019: £0) to the funds as at 31 May 2020.

13. Subsequent events

Subsequent to the balance sheet date, the World Health Organisation declared a COVID-19 pandemic on 11 March 2020. The outbreak is an evolving issue and one that can have a significant impact on the economy and business operations. The Pharmaceutical Society NI has considered the impact of COVID-19 on the financial statements and operations of the Pharmaceutical Society NI and does not consider that there will be a material impact on the financial statements.

The following appendices do not form part of the audited financial statements

THE PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

UNAUDITED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AND BALANCE SHEET OF THE CW YOUNG SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2020

APPENDIX 1

	Cost	Related Income	
		2020	2019
	£	£	£
Investments	150,551	5,640	5,517
Gain on sale of shares	-	-	334
Debtors	55	-	-
Ulster Bank Ltd. - Current Account	4,527	-	-
Cunningham Coates - Deposit Account	18,529	-	-
Cunningham Coates – Income Account	353	-	-
Creditors	(200)	-	-
	<u>173,815</u>	<u>5,640</u>	<u>5,851</u>
INCOME ACCOUNT		2020	2019
		£	£
At Beginning of Year		164,645	153,687
Income for Year		5,640	5,851
Investment Management Charge		(1,750)	(1,699)
Research Grant		-	-
Sundry		(40)	(38)
Legal and Professional Fees		(200)	(50)
Bank Charges		(25)	-
Realised gain on investments		-	6,894
At End of Year		168,270	164,645
CAPITAL ACCOUNT		5,541	5,541
		<u>173,811</u>	<u>170,186</u>

THE PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

UNAUDITED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AND BALANCE SHEET OF THE RONNIE MCMULLAN TRUST FUND AS AT 31 MAY 2020

APPENDIX 2

BALANCE SHEET

	2020	2019
	£	£
Bank of Ireland – Current Account	14,696	14,721
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Creditors	14,696 (1,279)	14,721 -
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Assets	13,417	14,721
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

	2020	2019
	£	£
INCOME ACCOUNT		
At beginning of year	14,721	15,877
Bank interest	-	-
Conference Trip	(199)	-
Legal & Professional Fees	(300)	(350)
Independent Examination Fees	(780)	(781)
Sundry	-	-
Bank charges	(25)	(25)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At end of year	13,417	14,721
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

THE PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

PHARMACISTS ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICES (FORMERLY NORTHERN IRELAND CHEMISTS BENEVOLENT FUND)

**UNAUDITED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AND BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MAY 2020
APPENDIX 3**

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2020

	2020	2019
	£	£
INCOME		
Dividend Received	17,518	19,484
Donations	270	9,378
Bank Interest	<u>1,341</u>	<u>934</u>
	19,129	29,796
EXPENDITURE		
Grants	7,437	7,715
Retirement Training	-	1,364
Management Charge	4,909	5,084
Bank Charges	112	83
Salary Costs	10,629	14,260
Printing/Stationery	150	-
Counselling	-	3,160
Legal and Professional Fees	3,549	2,016
Gain on disposal of assets	(2,748)	-
Help Line	-	5,925
Sundry	264	179
Telephone	676	529
Website & Branding	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	24,978	40,315
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
(DEFICIT) OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	<u>(5,849)</u>	<u>(10,519)</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MAY 2020

	2020	2019
	£	£
CAPITAL EMPLOYED ASSETS		
INVESTMENTS	<u>415,628</u>	<u>415,511</u>
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at Bank	12,574	991
Cash on Deposit	56,284	69,811
Loans	2,371	3,264
Sundry Debtors	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	71,229	74,066
CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>(3,129)</u>	<u>-</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>483,728</u>	<u>489,577</u>
REPRESENTED BY:		
CAPITAL ACCOUNT		
At start of year	489,577	479,349
(Deficit) of Income over Expenditure	(5,849)	(10,519)
Realised gain on investments	<u>-</u>	<u>20,747</u>
At end of year	483,728	489,577