



CORPORATE PLAN

2023
-
2026



INTRODUCTION

This Corporate Plan sets out the strategic direction for the Pharmacy Forum NI (The Forum) over the next three years (2023 – 2026) and has been developed by our Board and Committee members. The Plan affirms the role of the Forum, describes our ambition for the Northern Ireland pharmacy profession and grounds these in a set of outcomes (that is, statements of the changes we would hope to see in three years’ time and beyond). Four guiding principles have been identified as a guide for prioritisation and action. A brief background to relevant developments is described. The final sections translate our ambition into five strategic work strands and several supporting strategies; these will frame delivery over the next three years.



2. THE ROLE OF THE FORUM

The Forum is the professional leadership body for all pharmacists in Northern Ireland, representing all sections of pharmacy practice (including hospital, community, General Practice, academia, and industry).

We are an Arm's Length Body (ALB) under the legislative remit of the Pharmaceutical Society NI. The Forum members are pharmacists registered to practise by the Pharmaceutical Society NI.

Our role is to lead, promote and support the pharmacy profession to deliver improved outcomes for patients.



3. OUR AMBITION

Our ambition is to engage and empower pharmacists to push the boundaries of their roles using their full clinical and professional expertise across all areas of practice.

The Forum will work collaboratively to lead the future vision for pharmacy and pharmacy professionals, promoting the value of pharmacists and their teams in contributing to better services for patients and improved outcomes.



4. OUTCOMES FOR THE PROFESSION

Pharmacists will be...

- Using their clinical and professional expertise to the full wherever they practise.
- Recognised for their extended roles, including public health and disease prevention, and leading on the development of new service models.
- Aware of the help and support available when they need it.

The Forum will be...

- Recognised as the professional voice for all pharmacists and a trusted source of information.
- Leading a clear vision for pharmacy, developed through collaboration with all who have an interest in promoting and developing the profession for the future.
- Operating through a sustainable business model.

Patients will be...

- Accessing safe, high quality, patient-centred pharmacist led care through appropriate access points.
- Benefiting from the new roles and services delivered by pharmacists and their teams.
- Experiencing improved care outcomes through the application of pharmacy best practice and medicines optimisation.



5. OUTCOMES FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Our plan will support the Programme for Government¹, where pharmacists will proactively contribute to two key societal outcomes:

- We all enjoy long, healthy active lives.
- We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives.

6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In carrying out our role and seeking to fulfil our ambition, the Forum will be guided by four linked principles. These will help us prioritise our work and make decisions in the best interests of our members and the public.

Patient-centred – We are a caring profession and the best outcome for patients unites and guides action across all areas of pharmacy practice.

Professional – We are working to high standards, using our skills and knowledge to the full.

Outcome-focused – Actions are prioritised to deliver the changes we have agreed.

Collaborative – We believe we work better and can achieve more through collaboration with others who can help us achieve our outcomes.

¹ <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/programme-government-pfg-2021>

7.

BACKGROUND

The last three years have seen unprecedented change for the pharmacy profession. The Forum has worked to support NI pharmacists throughout key changes and to promote emerging best practice for the future.

The strategic direction for pharmacy continues to be framed by the 10-year approach to transforming health and social care, 'Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together.' Practice-based pharmacists are now working across primary care as members of multi-professional teams, enhancing the services available to patients. The new opportunities in primary care have impacted on hospital and community pharmacy with a shift in workforce numbers and skills. There is a growing urgency to consolidate the pharmacy workforce and skill base across all sectors.

Alongside the enhanced role of pharmacists is recognition and support for the enhanced role of pharmacy technicians. The necessary registration of technicians, technician education, redefinition of roles and career development in the NI context are essential to current and further developments.

Pharmacists have been critical to the Covid-19 response as resilient key workers throughout the pandemic. This has included playing a lead public health role in the roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme. This contribution is to be celebrated, however, the unrelenting pressure throughout the pandemic has raised several issues, namely, how to enable work-life balance and how to support good mental health for pharmacists.

Enhanced roles across sectors have raised issues of value and reward. Career structures are relatively flat with a lack of incentivisation to extend roles. As health services continue to change, it is important that pharmacists are valued for their professional contribution and pharmacy careers are attractive across all settings. Pharmacy Futures NI, which the Forum leads, has championed pharmacy and pharmacy technician careers. More will need to be done to attract young people into the profession and to recruit and retain pharmacists to meet the growing demands across all parts of the profession.

Education and training have changed and will continue to change. New standards for the Initial Education and Training of Pharmacists (IETP) is equipping cohorts of pharmacists to apply enhanced clinical skills including independent prescribing from the point of professional registration. As the Foundation Training Year development evolves, it will continue to ensure that newly qualified pharmacists have the range of skills needed to work across all sectors of the health service, taking account of rapidly changing roles and supported through on-the-job training. Students will have greater exposure to other professions through the growth in interprofessional education and will expect to be equal members of multi-professional teams and to collaborate across sectors.

The Covid-19 pandemic has increased use of technology and enabled connectivity which has provided benefits for patients. Effective collaboration and multidisciplinary team working will require ongoing and better access to information and compatible technologies. Some obstacles were removed overnight as a result of the pandemic, proving that significant changes can safely be made at pace when required. Maintaining that momentum for change will be important. Involvement in developments such as Encompass will be important to this agenda.



Health and Social Care strategies and policies will continue to evolve. The Forum will seek to review and shape new developments to ensure that the contribution of pharmacists is recognised and enabled for the future. It is likely that a new Northern Ireland Assembly presides over the period of this Corporate Plan bringing some different emphasis to health and social care strategy and policy.

The publication of the UK Commission on Pharmacy Professional Leadership will have far-reaching implications. The Commission’s recommendations include greater collaboration across the UK to maximise our impact and amplify the voice of pharmacy. The report will require a response that reflects the views of the membership of the respective professional leadership bodies and special professional groups involved, with particular regard to the devolved nature of healthcare across the four nations.

Other developments include the extension of hub and spoke dispensing between different retail pharmacy businesses. This may strengthen the community pharmacy network bringing greater cooperation as well as realising efficiencies. The impact of EU Exit and concerns about disruption to the supply of medicines will probably be resolved by the Windsor Framework, which was formally signed off by the EU and UK in March 2023. Wider international developments will also have ramifications locally.



8.

WORK STRANDS

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 patient outcomes.

We will...

- Advocate for pharmacists and pharmacy practice, championing patient safety and improved outcomes.
- Build a strong professional community based on active engagement across all sectors of pharmacy.
- Ensure the voice of pharmacists is heard locally and nationally.
- Work collaboratively with identified stakeholders to influence the healthcare system to adopt and enable best pharmacy practice.
- Develop future pharmacy leaders with experience and skills to lead the profession.
- Contribute to the implementation of pharmacy workforce planning, enabling the attraction and retention of pharmacists.

Support

Promoting wellness through effective collaborations and providing help in times of need, through the Pharmacists’ Advice and Support Service (PASS), for pharmacists (including those who have left the register), Foundation year trainees, and their dependents.

We will...

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- Advocate for pharmacists’ health and wellness, including work-life balance and zero tolerance for abuse, engaging in relevant initiatives, and sharing best practice and available toolkits.
 - Promote and support good mental health for pharmacists and their teams by connecting and signposting to practical health and wellbeing supports.
 - Promote and sustain the work of the Pharmacists’ Advice and Support Service (PASS) to help pharmacists, including retired pharmacists, and their dependents.

Excellence

Recognising and sharing excellence within the profession; highlighting best practice for our stakeholders and the public.

We will...

- Promote and retain excellence across the profession by supporting career development e.g., credentialing; advanced practitioner roles.
- Produce and signpost relevant guidance and tools for pharmacists to achieve and exceed the standards set for excellence in pharmacy practice.
- Recognise excellence through Fellowship and other awards.
- Promote the profession to students (e.g., Pharmacy Futures NI).
- Facilitate several special interest groups to advance practice and inspire organisational excellence.

Innovation

Promoting and supporting innovative practices to improve and protect the quality of health outcomes.

We will...

- Encourage practitioners to integrate new approaches and practices into their service delivery by sharing research, learning and toolkits.
- Work in collaboration to influence digital health innovation, connecting healthcare professionals across all settings.
- Collaborate with academia, industry, and other organisations in support of innovation in pharmacy.
- Use the CW Young Fund to resource pharmacists to participate in research.
- Communicate relevant policy developments from government and the regulator that promote innovation, excellence, and learning.



Development

Lead the development of pharmacists in their practice, empowering individuals to reach their full potential as healthcare professionals.

We will...

- Provide facilitation support and relevant learning opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- Ensure education, training and CPD pathways enable development of pharmacists throughout their careers, from foundation to advanced practice.
- Highlight the scope and impact of the roles of pharmacists as members of multi-professional teams in primary and secondary care and as providers of public health in the community.
- Support the development of NI Pharmacy Technicians, collaborating with the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK and others.

9.

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

To achieve our priorities, there are a number of supporting strategies that the Forum will put in place.

Performance – being clear about our outcomes and the prioritised activity that we must deliver and report on each year.

Financial – using our finances efficiently and effectively, matching our income to our planned activity.

Communications – engaging our members and stakeholders, promoting professional leadership for pharmacy, keeping members up to date with developments impacting the profession.

People - deploying our staff and engaging our members to achieve our outcomes.

Partners – creating positive partnerships for collaboration, pro-actively building networks and collaborations locally and nationally.

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) - Creating the right culture for pharmacy; advancing, encouraging, and supporting Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and promoting a greener agenda for pharmacy.



Rewarding Excellence Event 2022

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