EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (General) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025

S.R. 2025 No. 117

1. Introduction

1.1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (the Pharmaceutical Society NI) to accompany the Statutory Rule (details above) which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.

1.2. The Statutory Rule is made under powers conferred by Article 5(1) of the Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976. It has been approved by the Department of Health, Northern Ireland in accordance with Article 25A(2) of that Order and following consultation with the Department for the Economy, in acordance with Article 5(3) of that Order, and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

2. Purpose

2.1. The Statutory Rule will amend the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (General) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1994 (the principal Regulations) to ensure that those trainee pharmacists who have completed their training under the Initial Education and Training (IET) Standards for pharmacists (2021) will meet the requirements for registration with the Pharmaceutical Society NI and be enabled to join the Register of Pharmaceutical Chemists under Article 6 of the Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976.

3. Background

3.1. In 2021, new regulatory standards for the IET of pharmacists (the IET Standards) were jointly developed by the UK pharmacy regulators, the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) and the Pharmaceutical Society NI. To meet the new regulatory standards, universities in NI (and GB) revised their four-year undergraduate Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) curricula, requiring students to have access to an increased level of experiential learning (EL) during their undergraduate degree (years 2-4) and to have prescribing embedded in their pre-registration training year (Foundation Training Year) (FTY) (year 5). The training consolidates initial learning and education and offers workplace-based, practical training in a pharmaceutical practice setting (or settings) to help equip future pharmacists for evolving and modern working practices.

3.2. The Statutory Rule amends the principal Regulations, to provide the necessary legal framework to implement the new IET reforms as planned. These include: expanding the permitted settings for trainee pharmacists' pre-registration training into general practice; enabling newly qualified pharmacists to independently prescribe medicines from their first day of registration, removing the current two-year requirement; enabling educational supervisors to oversee multiple trainees, reflecting modern

work practices rather than the current requirement which provides a limit of one trainee per supervisor.

3.3. Further amendments will allow the approved training provider to share information directly with the Pharmaceutical Society NI to support its registration checks and procedures, rather than requiring a written declaration to be made by the registrant.

3.4. Additionally, a historic and outdated provision for recognition of Pharmaceutical Society members from a list of specific countries will be replaced to reflect the current practice of requiring overseas qualified pharmacists to register first with the General Pharmaceutical Council unless applying for recognition under existing EU recognition arrangements.

3.5. A number of technical amendments are made to reflect that the General Pharmaceutical Council became the statutory regulator for Pharmacists in GB from 2010 replacing the Royal Pharmaceutical Society which is currently referred to in the regulations.

4. Consultation

4.1. The Society held an 8-week consultation from 13 February 2025 to 10 April 2025, on the proposed draft Regulations, targeting relevant key pharmacy stakeholders, with 57 responses received from a range of registrants and representative bodies. Responses were fully considered, which were broadly supportive and a number of minor changes were agreed, in response to issues raised, with the Department of Health and the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI agreed that the Regulations should proceed.

5. Equality Impact

5.1. The policy was screened against the requirements of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 when the Regulations were in preparation. The Pharmaceutical Society NI anticipates that the amendments will have an overall positive impact in improving equality of access to the register for all pharmacists in Northern Ireland. An Equality Impact Assessment is not considered necessary.

6. Regulatory Impact

6.1. A Regulatory Impact Assessment is not considered necessary, as only negligible impact on small business is identified.

7. Financial Implications

7.1. The measures being introduced do not represent an additional cost to the registrants, or to the Pharmaceutical Society NI.

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

8.1. The Regulations are compatible with Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

9. EU Implications

9.1. Not applicable.

10. Parity or Replicatory Measure

10.1. Not applicable.

11. Additional Information

11.1. Not applicable.