EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (General) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

S.R. 2026 No. 66

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 ('the Order'). It has been approved by the Department of Health, Northern Ireland in accordance with Article 25A(2) 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) which prescribe the fees for examination and registration, for retention of registration and for annotation of the register, which are to be paid to the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland ("the Society")

3. Background

3.1. The Statutory Rule amends the principal Regulations, and increases the fees in regulation 2 of the principal Regulations in respect of initial registration as a pharmaceutical chemist. The fees in regulation 4(a) of the principal Regulations in respect of retention as a member of the Society are also increased. Regulation 7 of the principal Regulations in respect of the making of a demand for payment of a retention fee are amended to allow for a written demand to be made by post or by electronic mail to a nominated e-mail address. Further amendments are made to regulation 3 of the principal Regulations to reflect previous amendments to Article 20 of the Order in respect of restoration to the register.

4. Consultation

4.1. The Society ran an eight-week consultation between 27 January 2025 and 24 March 2025. This consultation process included an online survey, six online engagement events, communication with pharmacy representative bodies, as well as verbal responses and ad hoc emails received directly from registrants. A total of 750 consultation responses were received, and the Society welcomed the level of engagement from respondents.

4.2. The consultation received considerable and welcome attention and feedback from a range of registrants and representative bodies. It is clear the overwhelming majority of those who responded were not in favour of a fee increase but are supportive of a direct debit payment scheme and alternative notification methods.

4.3. The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI held a public extraordinary meeting on Tuesday 15 April 2025 to review the consultation responses. The views and opinions of registrants during the consultation processes were considered and the decision to increase the fee and change the notification process was taken with the aim to achieve the right balance required to reduce, as best as possible, the burden on registrants whilst ensuring the Society is suitably resourced to deliver its statutory functions.

5. Equality Impact

5.1. The policy was screened for the purposes of the Section 75 equality duty when the regulations were in preparation. It was concluded that in having due regard for the Section 75 duties, the proposed amendments are not anticipated to have a negative impact on any persons with a protected characteristic.

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 in the draft regulations do represent an additional cost to the registrants of the Pharmaceutical Society NI. The measures are required in order to ensure the Pharmaceutical Society NI is suitably resourced to conduct its statutory duties.

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.