

Corporate Strategy 2025-2028





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Foreword from the PSI President and the Registrar

As we embark on our new Corporate Strategy 2025-2028, we begin a new chapter in our organisation’s development and business transformation journey. We will also be entering a period of significant change in the pharmacy and healthcare landscape in Ireland. It is an exciting time that requires the investment and focus of our people and resources to ensure that we are aligned with the broader health system. We have confidence that our efforts to support public health transformation will benefit Ireland’s population in the long term.

The objectives we have set in this strategy outline how we will approach the changes expected for pharmacy and the broader health landscape; our proposals for continued regulatory change and advancement; and our plans for internal improvement, some of which are a continuation of the transformation programme we are already embarked on.

All of the work we will be undertaking reflects the cornerstone of our role – to assure patient safety and public trust in pharmacy through effective regulation. Our aim is to deliver on our remit in the best way possible, and in so doing, support the provision of safe, patient-focused pharmacy services.

A significant proportion of our strategic activity for the next four years will be focused on supporting the implementation of important policy projects, such as the recommendations of the Expert Taskforce to support the expansion of the role of pharmacy, and the significant and much anticipated advances set out for the digital health space in Ireland. These provide for transformative change and improvement for those providing and receiving healthcare.

With the envisioned changes for pharmacists’ scope of practice, it is our role to see that the standards for pharmacy, including education and training, underpin and facilitate the evolution and expansion of pharmacy services. Our intentions for legislative amendments that shape how we regulate, as well as internal digital and process changes, are all strands we believe are necessary to afford us the ability to regulate fairly and effectively into the future.

We appreciate and value all who have contributed to the development of this new strategy and who took the time to meet us in the process. This includes our registrants, various partners and other stakeholders, our staff, and the PSI Council. We hope we have captured the key matters and concerns across our objectives and actions. Throughout the development of this strategy, we have been mindful of our statutory duty to equality and human rights. Over the next four years, we will continue in our commitment to assess, respect, and promote equality and human rights issues as we carry out our core functions and strategic activities.

We look forward to continuing to work successfully with those in government, policy-makers, colleagues across the health and regulatory fields, with our registrants and the public. We are committed to advancing our promise to find ways to hear from a broader range of stakeholders, including the public and patients, so that all aspects of our work are informed by their experiences.

We appreciate the vast commitment, expertise and versatility of pharmacists and the pharmacy sector. Pharmacists continue to be trusted extensively by the public, something for which the profession should be very proud. Over the lifetime of this strategy, we will continue, in the public interest, to engage with and support pharmacists and pharmacies to deliver traditional and new services safely, so that the path of change is paved together.

Katherine Morrow
President

Joanne Kissane
Registrar and Chief Officer

December 2024

About the PSI: The Pharmacy Regulator

Who we are

We are the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI – The Pharmacy Regulator), a public body established by the Pharmacy Act 2007 to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and the public by regulating pharmacists and pharmacies in Ireland. While we are an independent regulatory body, we operate for public accountability purposes under the aegis of the Minister for Health. We are governed by the PSI Council, whose 21 members are appointed by the Minister.

What we do

- We register pharmacists, pharmaceutical assistants and pharmacies;
- We set standards for pharmacy education and training and ensure all pharmacists are undertaking appropriate continuing professional development (CPD);
- We promote good professional practice by pharmacists by raising standards and sharing information for the benefit of patients and the wider health system;
- We conduct fieldwork to assess how pharmacies comply with pharmacy and medicines law and, where necessary, act to address poor performance and/or unsafe practices;
- We consider formal complaints made against a pharmacist or a pharmacy, including imposing sanctions;
- We provide advice, support and guidance to the public, the pharmacy profession and the Government on pharmacy care, treatment, and services in Ireland.

Why we do it

We believe that the public is entitled to expect and receive a high standard of care from pharmacists and pharmaceutical assistants and that pharmacies are operated to high standards. We believe that the public should always be able to trust pharmacists, pharmaceutical assistants and pharmacies to deliver this standard of care and service. We want to play a key role in facilitating this to happen, and we believe that this is best done through adopting a collaborative approach involving all those who share our commitment to high-quality pharmacy care and services.

We are committed to our ongoing development and to improving our effectiveness as we seek to provide continued assurance in an evolving healthcare, regulatory and public sphere. We believe it is important that we set challenging strategic objectives so that we create impact for those we serve, build on our strengths and effectiveness, and ensure communication and engagement underpins all our work. Our Corporate Strategy 2025-2028 is designed to advance these objectives.



Our Mission, Vision and Values



Our Mission

We assure patient safety and public trust in pharmacy through effective regulation



Our Vision

Safe and effective pharmacy care supporting the health of our communities



Overview of Strategy: How we will deliver on our mission

Our mission for this strategic period centres on a commitment to assuring patient safety and public trust in pharmacy through effective regulation.



Objectives and Actions 2025-2028



Objective 1

Regulate Pharmacists and Pharmacies to Deliver Essential and Expanded Pharmacy Services in the Healthcare System

Ireland's healthcare landscape is entering a period of significant change, which will inevitably shape and influence the evolution of the pharmacy sector and the pharmacy profession. In 2023, the Minister for Health established an Expert Taskforce to support the expansion of the role of pharmacy in Ireland. The remit of the Taskforce was to identify and support the delivery of specific objectives, which will serve to align services and practices that can be delivered by pharmacists and pharmacies with the needs of the health service and patients. The role of the pharmacist is expected to expand significantly on foot of the Expert Taskforce recommendations, including the introduction of full pharmacist prescribing authority, in a phased manner, over the coming years.

Moreover, advances in digital health, as outlined in the Department of Health's *Digital for Care: A Digital Health Framework for Ireland 2024-2030* and provided for in relevant legislation, are set to transform health services in Ireland. These include initiatives like the Patient App, the National Shared Care Record, and the National ePrescribing Service, along with advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI), and requirements being introduced by the European Health Data Space (EHDS). The introduction of digital health solutions presents significant benefits in terms of patient safety, efficiencies in care delivery and improved data quality.

We recognise that such advancements may also give rise to potential new risks and challenges for pharmacists and pharmacies. As these changes are developed and evolved, we will work to ensure that those registered with us are equipped to identify and mitigate any risks to patient safety.

Additionally, we have made a number of commitments under our Workforce Intelligence Report. Through active collaboration with our stakeholders, we will realise a number of the report's recommendations to ensure that the public continues to have access to safe, inclusive and effective pharmacy care into the future and that pharmacists are empowered and supported to perform within the full scope of their practice.

This objective sets out the work we will carry out over the lifetime of this strategy to ensure patient safety remains paramount in the context of a changing pharmacy environment. Many of the actions under this strategic objective cannot be carried out by us alone. To this end, we will continue to proactively work in partnership with our stakeholders – the Department of Health in particular – throughout this strategy.





Actions

How we will deliver this objective

- Implement the recommendations of the Expert Taskforce to support the expansion of the scope of pharmacy that fall within our regulatory remit.
- Propose and implement policy changes agreed with the Department of Health that relate to pharmacists and pharmacy services.
- Deliver the regulatory supports to enable pharmacists and pharmacies to implement the expected outputs associated with advances in digital health.
- Proactively engage with and support higher education providers to deliver and enhance pharmacy education in the State.
- Continue our own work and our collaboration with others in delivering the recommendations of our Workforce Intelligence Report 2023.



Intended Outcomes

How we will know if we are successful

- We have fulfilled our particular role in implementing the recommendations of the Expert Taskforce to support the expansion of the role of pharmacy to meet patient and public health needs.
- Policy changes relating to pharmacy have been implemented by way of continuous, effective engagement with the Department of Health.
- Pharmacists and pharmacies can effectively utilise and access advances in digital health to provide safe pharmacy services and improved patient health and experience.
- We have managed and progressed all applications for the accreditation of new and existing pharmacy training programmes in the State, in line with our accreditation policy.
- We have executed both the short and medium-term PSI actions outlined in the Workforce Intelligence Report 2023, as well as laying the groundwork for the essential long-term actions.



Objective 2

Evolve our Regulatory Approach to Drive Safe Patient Outcomes in the Delivery of Pharmacy Care

In the rapidly changing landscape of pharmacy in Ireland, we believe that there is a strong imperative to update our regulatory model. In evolving our approach, we will strive to deliver risk-based, effective, and proportionate regulation. We will do so while efficiently utilising PSI resources to ensure that our regulatory actions and activities promote sustainability, enhance patient safety and continuously improve the quality of pharmacy practice in all pharmacies.

The expansion of the scope of practice of pharmacists and pharmacies is best supported by a move towards an adaptable, standards-based approach to regulation that meets patient and professional needs in an ever evolving landscape. Standards provide concise, outcome-focused statements against which a pharmacist or pharmacy establishes and delivers their service and which we as the regulator can use to assess performance. Standards empower the pharmacist or pharmacy to meet the requirements of the standards in a range of different ways, i.e., it is not a prescriptive, one-size-fits-all approach.

We will leverage our data, intelligence, and insights to shift our focus to adopting a more anticipatory, proportionate, and tailored approach to regulating pharmacy. We will use this information to inform our decision-making and proactively protect patients and the public.

This objective outlines the actions we will undertake throughout this strategy to implement a more evolved regulatory approach. To achieve this objective, we will focus on reforming and improving our Fitness to Practise processes, ensuring they are transparent, effective, and consistent, while embedding a kinder, more compassionate and proportionate approach. To achieve this strategic objective, we will collaborate closely with our partners, including the Department of Health, to facilitate necessary legislative or regulatory changes. Additionally, we will maintain regular engagement with our registrants and strengthen our interaction with patients and the public. We will continue to ensure that the way we regulate is grounded in equality and human rights, diversity, and inclusivity and that we adopt and instil a person-centred approach across all of our activities.





Actions

How we will deliver this objective

- Develop a standards-based regulatory model for community pharmacies to effectively oversee pharmacy services while supporting the evolving needs of both the public and pharmacists.
- Practice a more risk-based approach to the regulation of pharmacists and pharmacies that is increasingly driven by intelligence, data, and strategic learning.
- Embed a person-centred approach across our regulatory processes, commencing with the reform of our Fitness to Practise processes to support enhanced communication, transparency, and efficiencies in our processes.
- Collaborate with the Department of Health to develop a programme of reform of the Pharmacy Act to support the new strategic approach to our regulatory role.
- Collaborate with patients and the public to identify effective engagement methods that support a patient-centred approach and make certain the patient's voice is heard.



Intended Outcomes

How we will know we are successful

- We have designed and implemented standards to enhance the safety, effectiveness and quality of pharmacy practice. These standards are understood and supported by patients, the public, pharmacists, and pharmacy owners. They operate on a statutory basis and are reinforced by revised legislation.
- Our regulatory activities are risk-based and guided by data-driven insights, and our responses are increasingly tailored and coordinated based on issues and context.
- We have reformed our Fitness to Practise approach to be more person-centred, ensuring our processes and decisions are understood by the public, registrants, and all stakeholders. Legislative reform of the Pharmacy Act has evolved this process, ensuring our actions and outcomes are proportionate.
- Patients and the public are active partners in our regulatory model.



Objective 3

Enhance and Align our Organisation and People to Successfully Achieve our Strategic Priorities and Core Responsibilities

To deliver on our strategic objectives while continuing to carry out our core functions in accordance with good practice in the management and governance of public bodies, we must ensure that we have the right people, skills, structure, and culture in place. Furthermore, in common with all organisations, we must continuously strive for improvement, innovation and efficiency.

Our people are our most important asset, and we strive to create a culture where staff feel empowered and supported in achieving their individual and PSI's shared objectives. We are committed to fostering a positive environment and agile structure that supports our mission and strategic priorities. We also commit to ongoing professional development and a healthy work/life balance for all staff.

We are dedicated to further advancing the ongoing actions from our previous strategy, which includes completing our Business Transformation Programme and integrating new systems, data, and digital tools to support our regulatory mission. We will implement the recommendations of our Strategic Financing Review to ensure a sustainable financial position and appropriate funding.

We will continue to implement our ICT strategy to support our core functions in a blended working environment, leveraging AI where appropriate to enhance our operations. This includes ongoing strengthening of cybersecurity protection and awareness, as well as improving our business continuity and incident response procedures.

As a public sector organisation, we will continually evaluate the legislative landscape to ensure full compliance with Irish and European legislation. We are committed to actively playing our part in meeting key national priorities, including climate action, sustainability, eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and protecting human rights relevant to our functions and purpose. We are committed to creating the conditions for and implementing, in an ongoing manner, the public sector equality and human rights duty in the conduct of our functions (in compliance with Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014).

These initiatives will ensure that we have the capabilities needed to deliver our strategic priorities and core responsibilities throughout this strategy and beyond.





Actions

How we will deliver this objective

- Implement, monitor and review the recommendations of the organisational and strategic workforce review commenced in 2024.
- Implement our ICT strategy, ensuring agility and innovation in the use of technology and integration of services and data to increase efficiency, provide a better user experience, and improve the quality of service.
- Complete our current programme of Business Transformation.
- Complete and implement the findings of our Strategic Financing Review Project.
- Develop and implement a new HR People Strategy to attract, retain, organise, align and develop our people.
- Set out the policies, plans, and actions to address the human rights and equality issues relevant to our functions and purpose, as required under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. These can be found at <https://www.psi.ie/about-psi/commitment-equality-and-human-rights>.
- Proactively implement our Climate Action Roadmap, aligned to the Government's Climate Action Plan and the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate.



Intended Outcomes

How we will know we are successful

- We are organised for success. The right people, skills, culture and sustainable structures are in place to support the delivery of our strategic goals.
- We are a digital-first regulator with a single customer view, make decisions based on data insights and offer enhanced services that support our corporate objectives.
- Our financial position is sustainable, and we are appropriately funded.
- We are a workplace of choice, evidenced by our ability to retain and attract a skilled, diverse, and competent workforce to deliver on our strategic priorities.
- We have implemented our public sector duty action plan and embedded an equality and human rights focus in our work.
- We have met our targets in line with our Climate Action Roadmap.

Implementing the Strategy and Monitoring Progress

This strategy will be implemented over four years, from January 2025 to December 2028

As the Strategy represents an integrated four-year programme, some actions will be implemented over more than a single year. We will set out the specific actions to be progressed each year in our Annual Service Plan and, as the Strategy progresses, show which actions are being carried out on a multi-year basis.

Progress will be monitored on an ongoing basis through oversight arrangements via the PSI Advisory Committees and will be reported to the PSI Council at each of its public meetings. Full details on progress made will also be published in each year's Annual Report.







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