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24 March 2016

Dear Consultee

REVIEW OF PHARMACY REGULATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND – CONSULTATION

Pharmacy professionals and their teams in Northern Ireland deliver an excellent service to a high professional standard. However, it is important to ensure that regulation of the sector is able to keep pace with the expected change that will arise from the transformation of the delivery of Health and Social Care here.

Currently, the regulatory and professional leadership functions of the pharmacy profession in Northern Ireland are performed by one organisation, the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (the Society). The Department considers that this dual role does not align fully with modern thinking across the UK on what constitutes effective and efficient regulation of healthcare professionals.

It is considered that to operate effectively in the public interest, a modern regulator must be totally and demonstrably independent from the profession it regulates. It must also be impartial, and be seen to be impartial, in its decisions and its actions.

Accordingly, a number of proposals have been developed which seek to reform the current dual role of regulation and leadership performed by the Society. The objective is to provide the public and healthcare professionals with greater assurance and confidence in the governance and delivery of pharmacy services.

I am now writing to inform you about the commencement of a 12 week period of consultation on potential options for the future of pharmacy regulation in Northern Ireland. This consultation is a key part of developing an evidence base upon which a decision on the preferred option for new regulatory arrangements will be made. The Department welcomes any contribution that you may wish to make to this consultation.

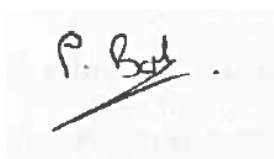
The consultation was launched on 22 March 2016. A copy of the consultation document is available on the Department's website at: www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/consultations. The closing date for responses is 5pm on the 14 June 2016.

Responses to the consultation should be sent to:

- (i) email: pharmacyregulation@dhsspsni.gov.uk or
- (ii) by post to: Work Force Projects Branch, DHSSPS, Room D1, Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast, BT4 3SQ

If you require assistance in responding to this questionnaire we are happy to provide advice by phone or email if requested. Please contact Ian McFaul on 028 90 523172 or ian.mcfaul@dhsspsni.gov.uk in the first instance if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Barbour', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Peter Barbour
Assistant Director
Workforce Policy Directorate
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety