



**Trustees' Annual Report and Statement of Accounts**  
**Pharmacists' Advice and Support Services**

**For period ended 31 May 2023**

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## Governance Arrangements

Pharmacy Forum NI (the Forum) is the professional leadership body for all pharmacists registered to practice in Northern Ireland. The elected Board Members of the Forum are also the Trustees of the Pharmacists' Advice and Support Services (PASS). The remit in which the Forum and Trustees operate is set out in a legal scheme of delegation between the Pharmaceutical Society NI and the Forum.

## Background

The Pharmaceutical Society NI is legislated through the 1976 Pharmacy Order (NI) and subsequent amendments in 2012 to regulate and to provide leadership for the pharmacy profession in Northern Ireland.

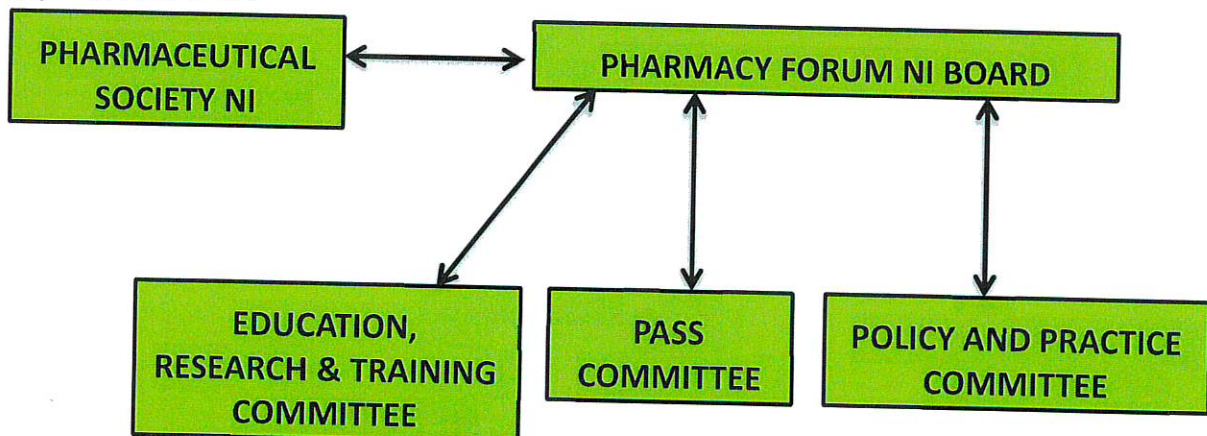
Pharmacy Forum NI was set up in 2011 to provide the professional leadership function enabling the Pharmaceutical Society to have a regulatory and leadership remit and yet achieve the separation of function consequent to the Government's wish to decouple professional leadership and regulation.

A legal scheme of delegation exists between the Pharmaceutical Society NI and the Pharmacy Forum NI. It outlines the remit, delegate powers and responsibilities of the Pharmacy Forum NI specifically in relation to PASS under section *Delegated Functions to the Pharmacy Forum Management Board, Item 1, Delegated functions to the PFMB, 1 (c) To provide relief for distressed persons as defined in the Pharmacy Order.*

Please note PASS was historically known as the Chemist Benevolent Fund, however is now known as the Pharmacists' Advice and Support Services (PASS).

## Governance Structures and Documents

Organisational Chart



- The governing document for PASS is the Declaration of Trust, Pharmacists' Advice and Support Services Trust.

### **Information and Administration**

Pharmacists' Advice and Support Services (PASS)  
Society House, 73 University Street,  
Belfast  
Northern Ireland  
BT7 1HL  
NIC: 101811

PASS employs a Co-ordinator, who dedicates the equivalent of 2 full days over a working week to the activities of PASS. The Co-ordinator, working to an agreed business plan, reports to the PASS Committee and Trustees.

### **Trustees**

**All Trustees are elected members of the Pharmacy Forum NI Board. Please see below the list of members and their Board positions for the period ended May 31 2023:**

- **Sheelin McKeagney, Chair of the Board**
- **Oisin Kavanagh, Vice Chair of the Board**
- **Philip Boyle, Elected Member**
- **Andrew Cheung, Elected Member**
- **Neill Elliott, Elected Member**
- **Anne McAlister, Elected Member**
- **Glynis McMurtry, Elected Member.**

All Board Members are supported with general governance training provided by an experienced external training partner. Trustees are also provided with in house Trustee Training, at which they are provided the Trust Deeds for each of the charities for which they are Trustees. This rolling programme of training is aligned with the Pharmacy Forum NI Board Election process and term of board membership. A skills audit is conducted in the year following an election to enhance the training requirements of all Board Members and Trustees alike.

Trustees have delegated certain responsibilities to the PASS committee, outlined in the Terms of Reference for the PASS Committee. Regular updates on the activities and recommendations from the PASS Committee are provided to the Trustees.

### **Objective and Activities**

The Pharmacists' Advice and Support Services (PASS) exists to provide support services to pharmacists and pre-registration trainees of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland, as well as former pharmacists, surviving spouses/ civil partners and their dependants in times of need. PASS meets the public benefit requirement in two ways, as listed below:

- The prevention or relief of poverty; and
- The relief of those in need (by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage).

PASS meets these purposes in a variety of ways, most commonly through the provision of information and signposting, counselling and short to medium term financial support in the form of grants and interest free loans. The direct benefits which flow from this purpose include improved outcomes for those experiencing personal, professional or financial difficulty through the alleviation of some of the financial difficulties that the beneficiary is facing and also the ability to make better informed decisions after receiving counselling and advice. These benefits are demonstrated through on-going feedback from beneficiaries and in the form of a survey conducted with the membership and/ or service users. Trustees do not identify any harm as a result of the Charity carrying out its purpose.

The 'poverty exception' applies in this case as the relief of poverty is regarded as being for the public benefit even when there is a restricted group of beneficiaries. There is no private benefit flowing from this purpose.

### **Achievements and Performance**

#### **Financial Support**

During the reporting period PASS provided grants totalling £11,900 to applicants to alleviate financial difficulties experienced due to ill health and disabilities.

#### **Counselling and Support Services**

PASS also re-entered into an annual contract with Inspire Wellbeing (previously known as Carecall) to provide confidential telephone, online and face to face counselling services across Northern Ireland. During the reporting period, Inspire scheduled 49 counselling sessions for individuals. Eight new service users availed of the standard Inspire counselling, and the areas being dealt with included coping with stress and anxiety and support through ongoing

regulatory fitness to practice hearings. All eight pharmacists and trainees who received low intensity counselling were able to remain in work. In addition, PASS proactively helped in the relief of financial distress, with the provision of budgeting and debt advice in parallel and signposted 11 other service users to other sources of information and advice. All service users this year were pharmacists and most of them were aged between 20 and 50.

The PASS Co-ordinator's role is to receive and process enquiries and signpost to sources of support, information, guidance, and advice. During the reporting period, over and above general enquiries, PASS actively signposted 58 calls from service users to the full range of support available. Issues addressed included stress in the workplace, financial issues, issues at home, and personal stress. This is consistent with the public benefit requirements of the charity, as outlined above.

### **Development of service provision**

#### **Inspire Support Hub**

April 2023 saw an update to the current provision with the new Hub widening the support available to users as part of the employee assistance programme. It provides help right away, giving the user instant access to a range of information, guidance, screening and intervention tools tailored specifically to help care for the individual's wellbeing. Two new service users signed up across this period.

PASS continued its outreach activity in March 2023 through participating in the UCA-NI LTD network for Foundation Year Trainee students. PASS also had a visible presence at the calculations training workshops in May 2023 and at other events throughout the year.

During the period, PASS reviewed and updated its Reserves Policy and Risk Register, continuously reviewing and monitoring all risks including the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and potential impacts for the charitable fund. Online basic safeguarding training was this year organised for all trustees and designated Safeguarding Officer/Appointed Person Training was completed by the Pharmacy Forum Manager and PASS Coordinator.

We would like to extend our thanks, on behalf of those who have benefitted from PASS services to everyone who already donates. We thank our corporate donors who have provided useful funding in the period. As a charity, it is vital that we can continue to offer a range of services and the financial support received from pharmacists ensures that we can continue to do so.

### **Financial Position of PASS**

A review of the charity's financial position at the end of the year was provided in the Pharmaceutical Society NI's Annual Report. The Annual Report was laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under Articles 4C and 4D of the Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 by the Department of Health on 5 October 2023 As of 31 May 2023, the PASS investment fund

totalled £535,302 (2022: £523,523). For the same date, the bank account totalled £2,760 (2021: £10,755).

To ensure a level of sustainability and longevity for the fund, the investment is managed on a discretionary basis by Evelyn (previously Smith Williamson). During the period we are reporting on, the Investment Manager from Evelyn engaged Trustees during Quarter 1 in discussions regarding the investment strategy, the objective of the fund and risk reviews.

#### **PASS Risk Register**

During the period, PASS completed a full review of its standalone Risk Register to reviewing and monitoring all risks and potential impacts for the charitable fund.

#### **Summary of Financial Position**

Trustees of PASS are satisfied with the investment management of the funds. We are content with the level of spend on charitable objectives, operational costs and development of services and wish to further raise awareness of PASS.

#### **Trustees Signatures of Approval**

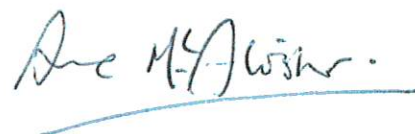
Signed and approved on behalf of the Board of Trustees for the Pharmacists' Advice and Support Services on 25 January 2024.



Sheelin McKeagney

Chair of the Board of Trustees, Pharmacy Forum NI

Date: 25 January 2024



Anne McAlister

Chair of the PASS Committee and Board Member, Pharmacy Forum NI

Date: 25 January 2024