NEWSLETTER – November 2026



INTRO FROM THE CHAIR AND CE

Kia ora koutou

With the 2027/28 fees and levy consultation now open, there is a reasonable focus on confirming that we at the Pharmacy Council do our job well and efficiently, and provide good value for money to the profession. It's important that you get visibility into how we use your APC fees, so we really encourage you to look at our recently released our 2026 Annual Report, which covers what we have delivered in the last financial year and contains the independent auditor's report.

We have also made the final report of our recent performance review available. This independent review, led by the Ministry of Health, provides assurance to the Crown and the public that responsible authorities are performing their functions efficiently and effectively. You can read more about it in a previous newsletter, and we are pleased that the report confirmed we have fully achieved all our core performance standards.

Thank you to everyone who has already made a submission on our fees and levy consultation. There's still time to have your say by reading the consultation document and completing the survey, with the consultation closing **next week at 5pm on Monday 23 November**. Unfortunately, the biggest proposed increase has been for the disciplinary levy, which is needed to address the rise in volume and complexity of complaints received.

When consultation closes, every submission will be provided to the Pharmacy Council members at the December Council meeting. The Council members will consider the feedback before making a final decision. We can assure you that the outcome of the consultation is not predetermined - previous consultations have resulted in Council reviewing priorities and providing additional information in response to issues raised by the profession.

Also in this newsletter, be sure to catch up on our progress in the registration pathways and prescribing work, which are both projects that have flowed directly from your feedback on the discussion document earlier in the year.

Ngā mihi
John Roberts (Chair) and Michael Pead (Chief Executive)

IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO KNOW

FEES AND LEVY CONSULTATION NOW OPEN

The Pharmacy Council has opened consultation on the 2027/28 Annual Practising Certificate (APC) fee, disciplinary levy and other fees to seek your views on the proposed changes.

There are two parts to the fees paid by practitioners: the APC fee, and the disciplinary levy. Council uses these funds to deliver the legal functions as described in the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act) and any associated development to ensure the way we deliver the legal functions are fit for purpose.

The last fee adjustment took effect two years ago on 1 April 2025. When setting the fees for the next financial year, Council must estimate future costs and activities.

Proposed changes

This year, we are proposing to increase both the disciplinary levy and the APC components. We are also proposing changes to some specific fees, other miscellaneous fees, and a change to the way we charge for the cost of banking system payments.

All these proposed changes would mean the total fees payable (incl. GST) for the 2027/28 APC renewal period would be:

- $1,080 for Pharmacists (currently $1,020)
- $1,170 for Pharmacist Prescribers (currently $1,120)
- $751 for Interns (currently $669)
- $110 for the non-practising fee (currently $105)

You can find more detail about all these proposed changes on our website**.**

We will consider all submissions and feedback received prior to making the final decision.

You can email your feedback to consultations@pharmacycouncil.org.nz or respond via our online survey. **Submissions close at 5pm, Monday 23 November 2026.**

PRESCRIBING

The results of our discussion document showed that the profession strongly supports expanding pharmacist prescribing, if done safely and supported by robust training, governance, and information access.



The Council's current focus is on reviewing the current regulatory framework (the Pharmacist Prescriber scope), while acknowledging that the Pharmacy Sector Leaders Forum is working on the profession's future vision for pharmacist prescribing.

Our review of the Pharmacist Prescriber scope of practice includes exploring the case for an advanced scope (e.g., something like a 'Pharmacist Practitioner') and considering the support mechanisms needed to enable the safe expansion of prescribing practice.

A key priority is supporting less experienced prescribers as they transition into practice and ensuring prescribing decisions are based on demonstrated clinical competence, not qualifications alone. This safety-focused approach helps us meet our responsibility to protect the health and safety of the public.

Support for less experienced prescribers can include guidance from experienced mentors, support to safely manage changes in their practice, and advice on when and how to expand their prescribing responsibilities. Experienced mentors play an important role in helping new prescribers build confidence, develop clinical judgement, and deliver safe patient care.

A small advisory working group of experienced pharmacist prescribers has been formed to inform Council's exploratory work, and in February 2027 we intend to consult on a revised scope of practice proposed to replace the current prescribing scope, and ongoing practice requirements for less clinically experienced prescribers to ensure any proposed changes would support safe, effective practice.

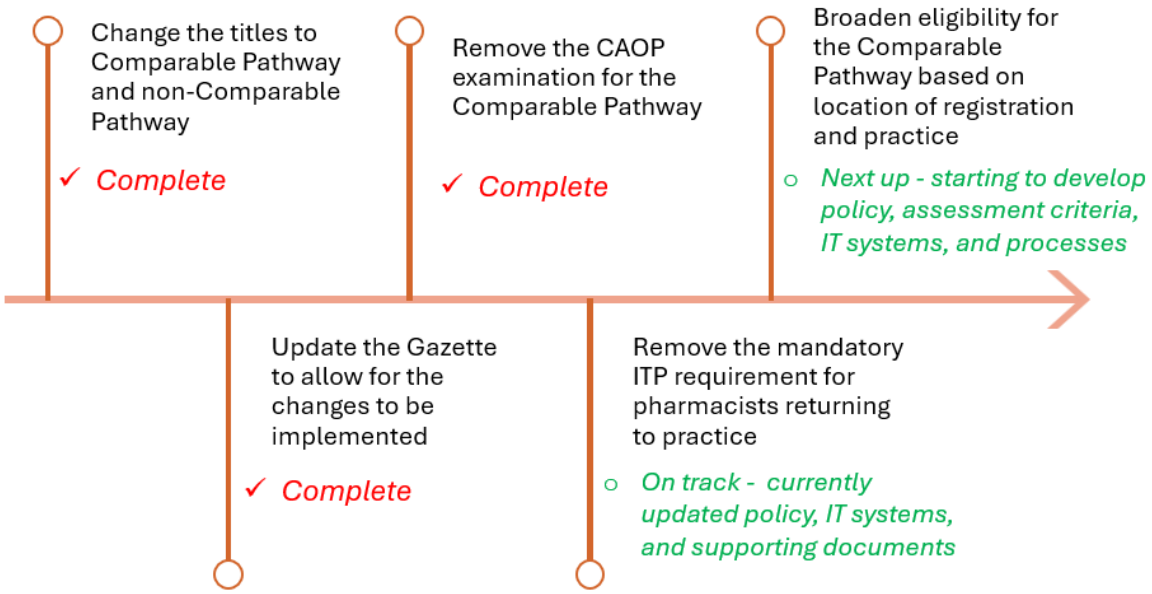
Regulating for prescribing practice based on the Right-Touch regulation framework considers the three lines of defence that support safe and effective practice:

- **The first line of defence is the practitioner** – pharmacist prescribers with the ability to recognise and work within their limits of competence and individual professionalism
- **The second line of defence is the employer** – having robust clinical governance arrangements (such as policies and procedures, supervision and oversight, and quality assurance processes)
- **The third and final line of defence is regulatory intervention,** needed only when the safeguards of professional practice and organisational governance are insufficient.

As our work progresses, there will be opportunities for pharmacist prescribers, pharmacists and other interested parties to help refine and confirm our approach. Please keep an eye on our newsletter if you are interested in contributing to this work.

REGISTRATION PATHWAYS PROGRESS

Following on from your feedback in the discussion document and the registrations pathway consultation, we have been hard at work updating our registration pathways. The progress so far and the milestones we are working towards are as follows:



Many of the quicker changes have been put in place already, and we are currently developing the policy, guidance and system changes needed to implement the return to practice policy.

We are hoping to implement these changes this year, so if you are considering a return to practice under current Category 4 (you last practised 8 or years ago) and are planning to wait until the updated requirements are in place before applying, please email us to register your interest and we will contact you when the new policy is available.

Our focus will then turn to expanding the eligibility criteria for the Comparable Pathway. We will be looking at where overseas pharmacists have been registered and practising, rather than basing eligibility on country of qualification. This has the potential to open the pathway to more people – particularly pharmacists who gained their qualification in Europe but have worked in the UK or Ireland.

There is a lot of work happening in this space, so please keep checking the website and newsletter for updates to the registration pathways.

OUR ENGAGEMENT JOURNEY

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE - ACCREDITATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

One of the important functions that we are charged with under the HPCA Act is to prescribe qualifications for entry to pharmacy scopes of practice. Once a programme is approved by Council, it can be gazetted as a prescribed qualification, meaning that everyone who obtains this qualification is eligible for registration (subject to any other requirements that may be specified) and entry into the Intern Pharmacist, Pharmacist, or Pharmacist Prescriber scopes of practice.

Qualifications Advisory Group

There may be some significant changes coming up in the future that will affect the type of qualifications being offered. To help us understand the potential impacts of these changes, and how best to respond to them, we are forming a Qualifications Advisory Group (QAG).

The Pharmacy Council regularly employs groups made up of experts in academia, pharmacy practice, and regulatory risk mitigation to provide robust independent advice that informs Council's decisions and recommendations that bolster our regulatory knowledge. The QAG will help to inform Council's decisions on topics such as:

- the suitability of qualifications for prescribing,
- qualification equivalence,
- significant changes to prescribed qualifications, and
- the ongoing development of qualifications to support safe, competent and culturally responsive pharmacy practice.

Thank you to everyone who applied through our QAG expression of interest. We are currently reviewing the applications, and aim to confirm the appointments and hold a meeting before the end of the year.

Accreditations

The Pharmacy Council is responsible for accrediting education providers to ensure their programmes support the delivery of safe and competent pharmacists. We accredit both established and new pharmacy programmes to the Pharmacy Council Accreditation Standards.

There are several accreditations planned for 2027, including all the pharmacy programmes at the University of Otago (current accreditation expires 31/8/27) and the new programme at Waikato University (current accreditation expires 31/10/27).

We are putting together Programme Accreditation Teams to support this work, with accreditation visits planned for both universities in mid-2027.

WEBSITE UPDATES

Sometimes it can be hard to keep track of changes to the Pharmacy Council website, and you may miss useful information. To help you keep current, this section of the newsletter highlights any recent updates.

Since September, we have updated:

- The consultations page for the fees and levy consultation
- The vacancies page with five EOIs (now closed)
- The operations team page
- Resources and publications page with the latest Annual Report and RA review
- The HPDT page with information on a recent case

KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE

CHANGES WITHIN THE PHARMACY COUNCIL

Council must do the basics right, use our funding efficiently, and take every opportunity to improve.

Our goal is to ensure that the regulatory tools we use keep up with the developments and changes happening in the pharmacy profession. To support this, we have recently made some structural changes to the team, moving the registration function under the Registrar and creating a new Regulatory Development and Assurance team.

Bringing together the registration and compliance functions will ensure all registration matters continue to be managed effectively, while minimising duplication and the impact on the registration database, and ensuring full oversight of practitioners in one team.

This reorganisation of our team will help us to maintain our business-as-usual activities while also working on our strategic priorities like registration pathways and prescribing.

MYRECERT IS GETTING A NEW LOOK

Later this year, the MyRecert platform will be receiving a refreshed look and feel, focused on improving the user experience and the appearance of the platform. This update has been driven by software improvements and comes at no additional costs to the Pharmacy Council.

While pages, menus, and screens may look different, the recertification requirements and processes remain unchanged. You'll continue to complete the same activities and record your information in the same way.

To help you navigate the updated platform, step-by-step written guidance will be available within MyRecert. We'll also be updating our support videos over the coming months to reflect the new layout.

No action is required at this stage. We simply wanted to let you know about the upcoming refresh so that, when you next log in, the updated look won't come as a surprise.

SUMMARY OF THE RECENT HPDT FINDING

The Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (HPDT) holds disciplinary proceedings against health practitioners, including pharmacists, alleged to have breached standards of practice.

HPDT case decisions involving pharmacists are provided to Council as a learning opportunity for the profession to promote safe, competent practice.

The HPDT recently published a case against a pharmacist accused of professional misconduct. The charges are that he is guilty of professional misconduct in that he is said to have committed acts which amount to malpractice and/or negligence and has bought discredit to the pharmacy profession. You can read our summary of this case, and previous HPDT cases, on our website.
