Professional Bodies Interface: The General Pharmaceutical Council FAQs

Introduction

The Electronic Staff Record (ESR) is part of the Workforce Services Directorate within the NHS Business Services Authority. ESR is managed by the NHS ESR Central Team and offers the provision of an integrated hire to retire workforce management solution for the NHS in England and Wales.

To verify the professional registration credentials of NHS staff held within ESR, The ESR Professional Bodies interface is in place which currently includes the General Medical Council (GMC), the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the General Dental Council (GDC) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). By December 2021, the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) will also be included.

Data is shared with these Professional Bodies concerning their public registers which is used to verify and update the professional registration information held within ESR. As an example, employing authorities are alerted if an individual's registration status has changed unfavourably or if their professional registration has been renewed. Consequently, this interface assists employing authorities in managing and taking appropriate action around those holding professional registrations.

Document Purpose

This FAQ document has been developed to assist users with some common questions and to provide a brief overview of the interface functionality, specifically for the GPhC, as well as lending insight to key business process considerations and troubleshooting.

Contents

1. About the Interface

What is the purpose of the interface?

The GPhC has approximately 59,000 actively registered Pharmacists and 25,000 Pharmacy Technicians. Around 26,000 of these pharmacy professionals are recorded within ESR. To support HR staff within Employing NHS Organisations who manage these professional registrations in line with other Professional Bodies, the GPhC will be added to the existing ESR Professional Bodies Interface capability. This will allow NHS Organisations to benefit from the automated updates offered by the interface, saving HR staff time and ensuring data recorded in ESR reflects that held on the GPhC public register.

What is in scope for this interface?

The GPhC interface will only update records for individuals recorded in ESR who hold a GPhC registration as either a Pharmacist or a Pharmacy Technician.

Note that other registrant types, such as Provisionally Registered Pharmacy Professionals, Temporary Pharmacy Professionals and Pharmacy Students are not in scope of the interface, even if they are recorded in ESR. As such, their registration details will not be updated automatically by the interface process.

Does the interface automatically create GPhC records for me?

No, the interface updates information relating to existing GPhC records in ESR.

Which organisations are eligible for the GPhC interface?

This is a national interface offering: as such, all NHS Organisations using ESR will benefit from the addition of the GPhC to the Professional Bodies interface capability, assuming they allocate the correct notification role. This will be deployed automatically and no action is needed by the NHS Organisation to form part of the initial implementation.

When will this change happen?

The change is currently scheduled to be implemented by December 2021 and will be confirmed through a series of User Notices, starting from September 2021. Users are encouraged to refer to these User Notices for up-to-date information on the implementation of the GPhC interface.

What information is shared between the systems?

ESR receives data from the GPhC via the GPhC's Data Subscription Service for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians. Some data is received daily, while some is received weekly.

Daily Data
This reflects the current day's GPhC public register and shows individuals with the following statuses:
- Registered

- Suspended
- Erased

Individuals who are suspended are shown with a status of 'Suspended' for the duration of their suspension.

Individuals who have been erased are shown with a status of 'Erased' for 10 years, after which time they will not be shown.

The data received for these individuals is as per the table below.

Data item	Comments
GPhC Registration Number	The Professional Registration number of the Pharmacist or Pharmacy Technician
Surname	Last name
Forenames	First name and middle name(s)
Town	The town in which the Pharmacist or Pharmacy Technician is registered
Supplementary Prescriber	Yes/No
Independent Prescriber	Yes/No
Superintendent Pharmacist	Name of organisation
Status Description	Professional registration status of the Pharmacist or Pharmacy Technician
Expiry Date	The expiry date of the Pharmacist's or Pharmacy Technician's professional registration
Fitness To Practise Issues	Yes/No

Weekly Data

This data is made available by the GPhC on Mondays and shows all changes that have taken place in the preceding week with respect to registration status, encompassing joiners and leavers. Therefore, users should expect updates from these files to be processed at the start of the week.

Joiners to the GPhC register are individuals who are new, or returning to, the register and will have a status of 'Registered'. Note that these individuals may have already been received in the daily data from the day they joined or when their registration status changed to 'Registered'. As such, no further updates may be necessary.

Leavers of the GPhC register include individuals who are no longer present on the GPhC public register and have the following statuses:
- Voluntarily Removed
- Removed – failed to renew
- Removed – reval non-compliance
- Deleted

Other changes summarised in the weekly data is where an individual's status has changed to 'Suspended' or 'Erased'. Note that these individuals may have already been received in the daily data from the day their registration status changed to 'Suspended' or 'Erased'. As such, no further updates may be necessary.

The data received for these individuals is as per the table below.

Data item	Comments
GPhC Registration Number	The Professional Registration number of the Pharmacists or Pharmacy Technician
Surname	Last name
Forenames	First name and middle name(s)
New Registration Status	The new registration status of the Pharmacist or Pharmacy Technician

ESR does not return any data to the GPhC.

How often are the systems updated?

As with the other Professional Bodies, ESR will be updated daily. The data items that are eligible to be updated in ESR by data from the GPhC are:

- Pharmaceutical Profession
- Postal Town
- Supplementary Prescriber
- Independent Prescriber
- Superintendent Pharmacist
- Status Description*
- Expiry Date
- Fitness To Practise Issues

***Please note:** as the new registration status for leavers of the GPhC register is only received as part of the weekly data, it may take up to a week for the interface process to update the value in ESR.

Individuals undergoing fitness to practice processes and those who have been suspended or erased from the GPhC register will be updated daily in ESR as this information is received in the daily data from the GPhC.

For ease of reference, a table has been included below which illustrates how often each registration status is updated in ESR.

GPhC Registration Status	Frequency of update in ESR
Registered	Daily
Voluntarily Removed	Up to weekly
Removed – Failed to renew	Up to weekly
Removed – Reval non-compliance	Up to weekly
Deleted	Up to weekly
Suspended	Daily
Erased	Daily

How are Fitness to Practise issues handled?

Any Fitness to Practise issues will be handled as per the processes in place at the GPhC. This may involve the 'Fitness to practise issues' flag being set to 'Yes' on the daily register files, or could involve a change to an individual's registration status. The interface will make updates in ESR as per those held on the GPhC register. Only individuals with a status of 'Registered' can practise.

For more information on Fitness to Practise processes within the GPhC, users are encouraged to visit the GPhC website: https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/raising-concerns

What ESR notifications are sent?

As with the other Professional Bodies, the GPhC will benefit from the two main Professional Registration Notifications: Update Notifications and Decision Notifications.

Update Notifications
Matching criteria for GPhC: Professional Registration Number, First Name and Last Name.

Where a full match is made on the matching criteria when comparing the ESR person record with the Professional Body details, the ESR Professional Body record is updated and a notification is sent to the role holder highlighting the new details.

Updates of the same colour will be grouped into one notification i.e. all the green updates will be received in one single notification, red updates in another, and amber in another. This is ordered according to a RAG status against the registration status. See below:

RAG Status	GPhC Registration Status	Fitness To Practice Issues
Green	Registered	No
Amber	Registered	Yes
Red	Voluntarily Removed	Yes or No
Red	Removed – Failed to renew	Yes or No
Red	Removed – reval non-compliance	Yes or No
Red	Deleted	Yes or No
Red	Suspended	Yes or No
Red	Erased	Yes or No

This approach identifies the records that need the user's urgent attention (highlighted in red), through to those records that have no registration issues (highlighted in green).

Decision Notifications
Where there is a mismatch on First Name or Last Name, but the Professional registration number matches, this notification will be sent to the role holder asking them to confirm whether the details for the person are correct. If the role holder accepts the match, then the Professional Registration changes are applied to the Professional Registration record.

A common discrepancy is where an individual has different names recorded on the GPhC register and on ESR. For example, a pharmacy professional may practice in their maiden name, but have their married name recorded within ESR. Likewise, a shortening may be recorded in one system and not the other e.g. 'Cathy' vs 'Catherine'. Unless the appropriate update(s) is made to make the names match, either on the GPhC register or on ESR, this discrepancy will continue to be flagged.

Supplementary Notifications

In addition to the Update Notification and the Decision Notification, a Workflow notification will be generated weekly which lists invalid, erroneous and incorrectly assigned registration numbers ('Data cleanse notification'). The notification will list registration numbers that have been found to have an invalid format, assigned to incorrect individual(s)*. The receiver of the notification is asked to check with the GPhC Public Register and update any registrant information as appropriate.

This refers specifically to where two or more individuals within ESR in different VPDs hold the same GPhC registration number, but have differences on first name, last name and date of birth, thus it is highly likely they are two different people. Consequently, the GPhC registration number will have been incorrectly assigned to one or more of these individuals. A check is performed against the GPhC register to identify which individual most likely has the incorrectly assigned professional registration number and the data cleanse notification will be sent to the appropriate role holder for the corresponding VPD.

Who receives the ESR notifications?

The individual(s) assigned to the '**Pharmacy Prof Registration**' notification role will receive the Update, Decision and Supplementary notifications. This role must be allocated in order for the capability to work and for Employers to understand the changes being made to the system.

It is a local decision on which individual(s) is best placed to be allocated this role. Often, this may sit within the Medical Staffing/HR department.

How do I assign the Pharmacy Prof Registration Notification Role?

This role can be assigned to one or more appropriate individuals by your local ESR administrator, using the 'Maintain Roles' functionality. The screenshot below shows this location within ESR.
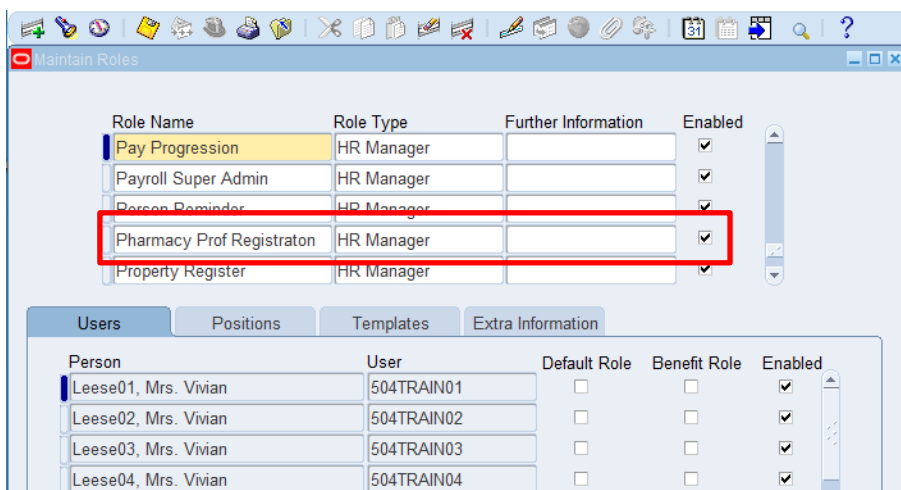
2. Business Processes

What roles in ESR need to be allocated?

Prior to the interface implementation, it is recommended that a review of internal business processes is carried out to ensure that the key notification roles and URPs have been allocated appropriately within your organisation and that best practice is being followed.

The key roles have been identified below. Please get in touch with your ESR Functional Account Manager for further support and guidance on their allocation and best practice use.

- Pharmacy Prof Registration Notification Role

Do I need to cleanse my data?

Prior to the interface implementation, it is recommended that a data cleanse of your organisation's GPhC information is performed within ESR. Key activities include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring pharmacy professionals (Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians) within your Employing organisation are recorded in ESR;
- Ensuring the professional registration number of pharmacy professionals is in the correct format and is accurately recorded in ESR. Remember, professional registration numbers for pharmacy professionals are 7 digits long and start with either a '2' (Pharmacists) or a '5' (Pharmacy Technicians);
- Ensuring details within the ESR Person Record are up to date and free from error, specifically around First Name and Last Name which are used to perform matches;
- Ensuring there is only 1 entry for the GPhC registration within ESR, per employee – as duplicates will be updated by the interface with the same information;
- Ensuring any historic ESR Person Records or Professional Registration records are closed down appropriately.

Cleansing your data will ensure that notifications are relevant and will help you make the most of the interface. Information provided in the Supplementary Notifications ('Data cleanse notification') is designed to assist in this process.

If you need help with how to cleanse your data in ESR, please contact your ESR Functional Account Manager.

What about Provisional and Temporary Registrants?

Both Provisional and Temporary Pharmacy Registrants are out of scope of the interface and as such, will not be updated by the interface process. If you choose to record these individuals in ESR, they must be maintained manually.

Please note that these individuals may appear on the Supplementary Notifications as their professional registration number does not conform to the format used by Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians, but no action may be needed.

For the latest information on Provisional and Temporary Registrants, please refer to the GPhC website https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/.

What do the registration statuses mean?

The definition of each professional registration status is provided below.

Registration Status	Definition
Registered	Used for new and returning registrants
Suspended	Used for registrants who have been suspended from the register. Suspended registrants must not practise.
Voluntarily removed	Used when a registrant has applied to leave the register.
Removed – failed to renew	Used if the registrant has not renewed their registration (this needs to be done annually).
Removed – reval non-compliance	Used if the registrant did not complete the required revalidation process by the renewal deadline.
Erased	Used if the registrant has been removed by the Fitness to Practise Committee due to their fitness to practise being impaired.
Deleted	Used if the registrant is deceased.

3.   Troubleshooting and Support

Who should I go to for help?

In the first instance, any queries should be investigated locally with the support of your ESR Lead.

If you need the assistance of the NHS ESR Central Team, please raise a Service Request on the ESR Service Desk where a member of the Support Team will be more than happy to help.

Updates on the timeline for implementation and key communications will be made via User Notices, therefore users are encouraged to review these carefully.

For further information on ESR functionality, please consult the 'Document Library' section or 'ESR User Manual' on the My ESR Hub: https://my.esr.nhs.uk/dashboard/web/esrweb/home.

Your ESR Functional Account Manager may be able to assist you with queries around ESR functionality, advice on best practice and assistance with activities in ESR e.g., data cleansing, allocation of role holders etc. Contact details for the ESR Functional Account Managers can be found on the My ESR Hub website.

The GPhC has a wealth of information on their website which may assist users and the register is publicly available. The link to their website is here: https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/.