

UK health regulator comparative data report 2016

Prepared by the GMC for the Chief Executive Steering Group

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1. Introduction

This report summarises the key findings from a short survey completed by the UK health regulators which gathered data on the following:

- Number of registrants
- Number of enquiries, complaints and investigated complaints
- Number of serious outcomes

The aim of the report is to provide comparable data and trends across the regulators for discussion by the Chief Executive Steering Group (CESG). The following regulators completed the survey:

- General Chiropractic Council – GCC
- General Dental Council - GDC
- General Optical Council - GOC
- General Medical Council - GMC
- General Osteopathic Council - GOsC
- General Pharmaceutical Council - GPhC
- Health and Care Professionals Council - HCPC
- Nursing and Midwifery Council - NMC
- Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland – PSNI

The survey was designed in consultation with all regulators in 2014 with clear definitions agreed to enable as close comparison as possible. However it should be noted that not all regulators define, classify and code data in the same way as each other. Where a regulator noted a variation to the data collected, this has been included in the appendix along with their full data tables and further details on the definitions used.

Please note that data is provided in financial year format. Where the year is shown in tables and charts, this is always for the end of the financial year.

If you have any questions or comments on this report, please contact the Intelligence and Insight Unit at the GMC at research@gmc-uk.org

2. Registrants

The relative size of each register varies significantly across the UK health regulators (figure 1). The NMC has by far the largest number of registrants eligible to practise (692,550) with the next closest, the HCPC, almost half this (341,745). In comparison, the PSNI¹ (2,303), GCC (2,788) and GOsC (4,519) have a much smaller number of registrants.

Over the last six years, all the UK health regulators have seen an overall increase in the number of registrants they regulate who are eligible to practise. Some regulators have seen a significant increase, for example HCPC regulates 60% more registrants compared to six years ago as they took full responsibility for the registration of social workers in 2013/14. Similarly, the number of registrants increased for the GPhC when the mandatory registration of Pharmacy Technicians (in addition to Pharmacists) came into force in July 2011.

Looking at the previous 12 months, all regulators have seen a modest increase of between 1-4%, with the exception of the GMC where the number of registrants eligible to practise has declined since 2014, with a 1% decrease over the last 12 months. This is due to increased English language requirements² introduced in 2014 and the introduction of revalidation meaning that those who no longer practise have relinquished their licence.

Figure 1: Number of registrants eligible to practice, 2011-2016

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	1 year % change	6 year % change
GCC	2,256	2,327	2,543	2,601	2,701	2,788	3%	24%
GDC	97,010	99,568	101,899	103,580	105,700	107,902	2%	11%
GMC	226,616	232,689	235,199	235,353	234,639	233,233	-1%	3%
GOC³	18,424	19,095	19,775	20,249	20,762	21,317	3%	16%
GOsC	4,078	4,225	4,293	4,413	4,389	4,519	3%	11%
GPhC	55,000	66,201	69,231	71,221	72,985	74,980	3%	36%
HCPC	213,290	218,988	219,162	320,552	330,887	341,745	3%	60%
NMC	670,016	672,630	675,296	680,895	686,810	692,550	1%	3%
PSNI	2,091	2,101	2,112	2,230	2,234	2,303	3%	10%

A small number of regulators also register bodies corporate and premises and data for these can be found in the individual regulator data tables in appendix 2.

¹ The PSNI regulates pharmacists in Northern Ireland and so is understandably much smaller. All other regulators cover the UK, with the exception of the GPhC which covers Great Britain.

² The minimum IELTS (International English Language Testing System) scores the GMC accepted as evidence of knowledge of English changed in June 2014 to a score of at least 7.0 in each testing area and an overall score of 7.5

³ The GOC also regulates student optometrists and dispensing opticians but that those figures aren't included here so that comparisons can be made with other regulators.

3. Enquiries, complaints and investigated complaints

In order to understand trends in complaints and the extent to which they result in an investigation, regulators were asked to provide a breakdown of the following:

- **Enquiries** – defined as ‘any piece of information received that needs to be assessed to see if it raises a concern about a registrant’s fitness to practise. This could include for example, mis-directed complaints.’
- **Complaints** – defined as ‘complaints include only those pieces of information that raise a concern about a registrant’s fitness to practise.’
- **Investigated complaints** – defined as ‘investigated complaints are complaints that meet the regulator’s threshold for a full investigation.’

Please note that some regulators are required to investigate everything they receive or do not record ‘enquiries’⁴. This means that data is omitted or duplicated for some regulators in accordance with the data they provided in the survey.

Figure 2 summarises the latest data for 2015/16 on the number of enquiries received, the number that raised a concern about an individual’s fitness to practise and the number that then resulted in an investigation. The rate is also provided to give a sense of scale in relation to the relative size of each regulator⁵.

The table shows that the GMC received the highest number of enquiries in 2015/16 (9,348) followed by the NMC (5,415) however when looking at the rate of enquiries, the GMC received a far higher number of enquiries given the size of its registrant base (40 enquiries per 1,000 registrants compared to 7.8 at the NMC). The GOsC received the highest rate of enquires (63.5) per 1,000 registrants⁶ and the PSNI the lowest (6.5).

In terms of complaints – those which raise a concern about a registrant’s fitness to practise – the GMC again had the highest number and rate of complaints of all regulators in 2015/16 (8,468 or 36.3 per 1,000 registrants) followed by the GDC (25.3) and GPhC (19.2). Although the HCPC and NMC received a high number of complaints, this is a much lower rate of complaints compared to the large size of their registrant base (6.2 complaints per 1,000 registrants at the HCPC and 6.5 at the NMC).

⁴ At present the GDC’s complaints process does not have a formal enquiries stage to enable a distinct count in this area. The GDC has noted that a project is planned during 2017 to amend its process to formally classify enquiries to enable separate and clear reporting.

⁵ For the GDC the majority of cases received relate to Dentists rather than Dental Care Professionals (DCP’s). Nonetheless, the split of the GDCs register is such that there are significantly more DCPs than Dentists (as of today 41.5k dentists and 67.5k DCPs). With this being the case, it should be noted that the presentation of numbers of cases per overall number of registrants throughout the report reduces the ‘per head’ figures significantly compared to if we were to look at cases per Dentist. A cases per dentist figure would give more of an indication of the real rate of activity amongst the main cohort of the register.

⁶ A large number of GOsC enquiries in 2015/16 were about advertising and did not become complaints as they were closed under the threshold criteria.

The average rate of complaints that meet the regulators' threshold for an investigation – investigated complaints – is 6.6 per 1,000 registrants but varies across the regulators with HCPC, the NMC and PSNI all with a fairly low rate and GPhC, GDC and GCC higher.

The final column shows what proportion of complaints resulted in an investigation. For those required to investigate all complaints this figure is 1,000 however, there is quite a variation across the other regulators, for example the GOsC, NMC and GDC have a much higher proportion of complaints than the GMC and HCPC.

Figure 2: Volume and rate of enquiries, complaints and investigated complaints, 2016

	Registrants	Enquiries	Enquiries per 1,000 registrants	Complaints	Complaints per 1,000 registrants	Investigated complaints	Investigations per 1,000 registrants	Investigated complaints per 1,000 complaints
GCC	2,788	-	-	50 ⁷	17.9	50	17.9	1000
GDC	107,902	-	-	2,725	25.3	1,870	17.3	686
GMC	233,233	9,348	40.1	8,468	36.3	2,090	9.0	247
GOC	21,317	343	16.1	223	10.5	223	10.5	1000
GOsC	4,519	287	63.5	52	11.5	49	10.8	942
GPhC	74,980	1,941	25.9	1,437	19.2	1,437	19.2	1000
HCPC	341,745	-	-	2,127	6.2	787	2.3	370
NMC	692,550	5,415	7.8	4,512	6.5	3,245	4.7	719
PSNI	2,303	15	6.5	11	4.8	11	4.8	1000
Total	1,481,337	17,349	16.9	19,605	13.2	9,762	6.6	498

The following pages take a more in-depth look at trends over time for enquiries, complaints and investigated complaints.

For those regulators who record **enquiries** (figures 3, 4, 5) the picture over time is mixed. Overall, the rate of enquiries across regulators has increased compared to six years ago from 12.9 enquiries per 1,000 registrants in 2011/12 to 16.9 in 2015/16, however this varies by regulator. For the GOsC and GPhC there have been fluctuations over the last six years but with an overall upward trend. The GOsC saw a large increase in 2015/16 which was due to a large number of complaints about advertising, the majority of which did not become complaints as they were closed under the threshold criteria. For the GPhC the overall increase may be related to increased awareness of their role as a regulator.

Looking at **complaints** (figures 6, 7, 8) all regulators saw an overall increase in the number and rate of complaints compared to six years ago, with the exception of the PSNI and the GCC who have seen a decrease. However, there have been fluctuations and some regulators (GDC, GMC and PSNI) have seen the number of complaints fall each year since 2014 and the majority of regulators

⁷ The GCC received 75 complaints about advertising that have not been included within the number of "complaints" referred to in this report.

(six out of nine) have seen complaints fall in the last 12 months, suggesting a levelling off which may require monitoring over the longer term.

In terms of **investigated complaints** (figures 9, 10, 11) there is a mixed picture but the overall trend seems to be a decline both in numbers and rate for the majority of regulators, as might be expected given the trends for complaints over the last 2-3 years. The average rate of investigated complaint per 1,000 registrants is now 6.6, a 2% drop from six years ago. However there are some regulators for whom investigated complaints have increased in the last 12 months (GPhC, GOsC and the NMC).

Enquiries

Enquiries are defined as any piece of information received that needs to be assessed to see if it raises a concern about a registrant's fitness to practise. This could include for example, mis-directed complaints.

- Mixed picture across regulators in volume of enquiries over time.
- GOsC upward trend, with large rise in 2015/16 due to concerns about advertising.
- GPhC fluctuated but with overall upward trend.
- Relatively stable for GMC and NMC with moderate increases.
- GOC and PSNI low volumes, downward trend last 12mths

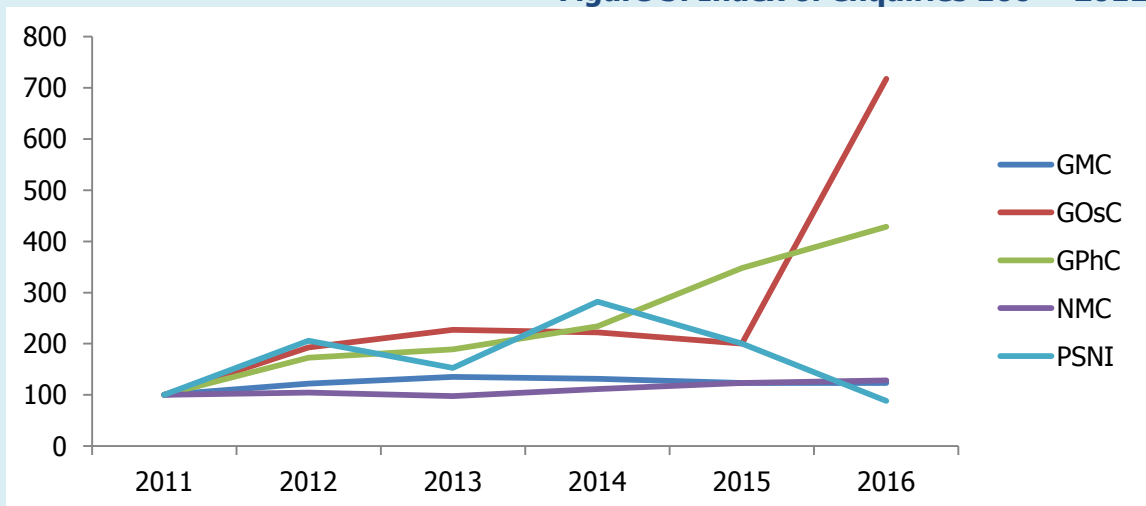
Figure 3: Change over 6 years

	2011 Enquiries per 1,000 registrants	6 year % change	2016 Enquiries per 1,000 registrants
GCC	-	-	-
GDC	-	-	-
GMC	33.5	20%	40.1
GOC	-	-	16.1
GOsC	9.8	547%	63.5
GPhC	8.2	214%	25.9
HCPC	-	-	-
NMC	6.3	24%	7.8
PSNI	8.1	-20%	6.5
Total	12.9	31%	16.9

Figure 4: Number of enquiries, 2011-2016

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	1 year % change	6 year % change
GCC	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	*
GDC	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	*
GMC	7,588	9,278	10,258	9,979	9,386	9,348	0%	23%
GOC	-	-	-	313	388	343	-12%	*
GOsC	40	77	91	89	80	287	259%	618%
GPhC	453	784	856	1,060	1,575	1,941	23%	328%
HCPC	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	*
NMC	4,211	4,407	4,106	4,687	5,183	5,415	4%	29%
PSNI	17	35	26	48	34	15	-56%	-12%

Figure 5: Index of enquiries 100 = 2011



Complaints

Complaints are defined as only those pieces of information that raise a concern about a registrant's fitness to practise.

- All regulators have seen an overall increase in the number of complaints compared to 6 years ago, with the exception of PSNI and GCC.
- The greatest increase has been for GPhC which has seen complaints rise each year, both in volume and rate.
- However some have seen complaints fall since 2014 and in particular the majority have seen a decrease in the last 12 months.

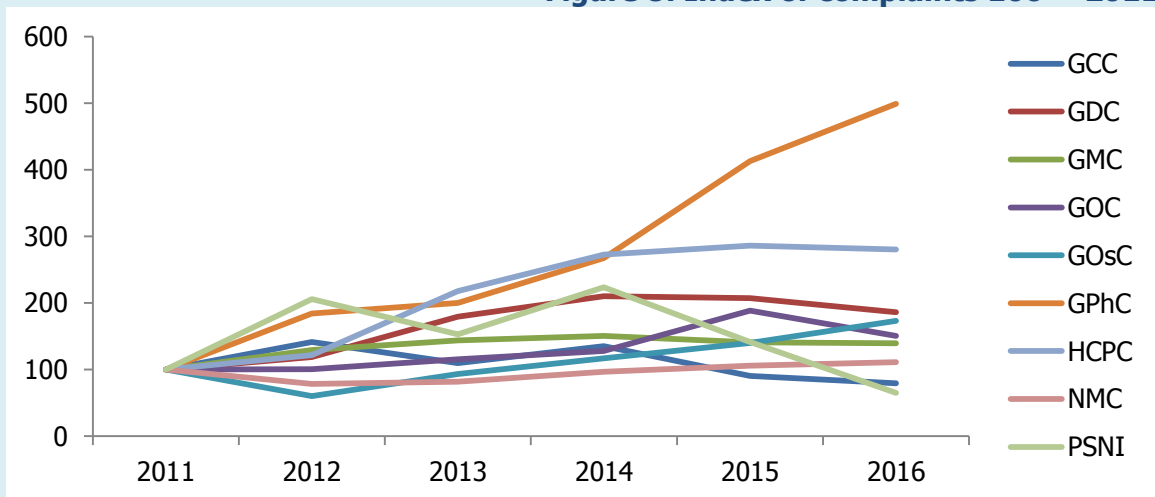
Figure 6: Change over 6 years

	2011 Complaints per 1,000 registrants	6 year % change	2016 Complaints per 1,000 registrants
GCC	27.9	-36%	17.9
GDC	15.1	67%	25.3
GMC	26.8	36%	36.3
GOC	8.0	30%	10.5
GOsC	7.4	56%	11.5
GPhC	5.2	266%	19.2
HCPC	3.6	75%	6.2
NMC	6.1	8%	6.5
PSNI	8.1	-41%	4.8
Total	10.0	32%	13.2

Figure 7: Number of complaints, 2011-2016

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	1 year % change	6 year % change
GCC	63	89	69	85	57	50	-12%	-21%
GDC	1,466	1,741	2,627	3,080	3,040	2,725	-10%	86%
GMC	6,071	7,865	8,722	9,133	8,552	8,468	-1%	39%
GOC	148	149	171	189	279	223	-20%	51%
GOsC	30	18	28	35	42	52	24%	73%
GPhC	288	530	576	770	1,190	1,437	21%	399%
HCPC	759	925	1,653	2,069	2,170	2,127	-2%	180%
NMC	4,058	3,190	3,310	3,925	4,302	4,512	5%	11%
PSNI	17	35	26	38	24	11	-54%	-35%

Figure 8: Index of complaints 100 = 2011



Investigated complaints

Investigated complaints are defined as complaints that meet the regulator's threshold for a full investigation.

- Mixed picture for investigated complaints.
- Some regulators have seen an increase both in the volume and rate of investigated complaints compared to six years ago (e.g. GPhC, GOsC).
- However others have seen a decline since 2014/15 as might be expected given the trends in complaints.

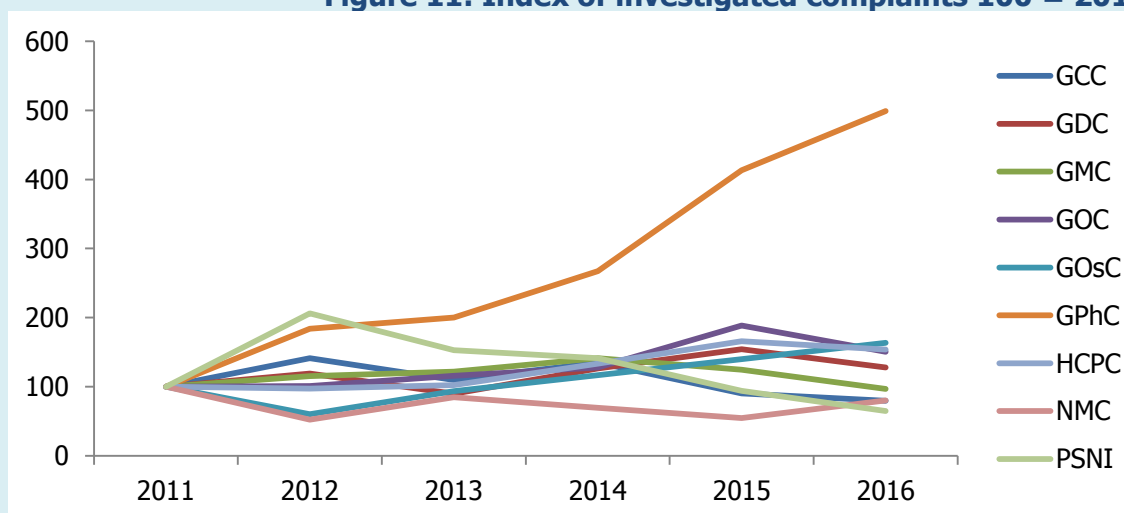
Figure 9: Change over 6 years

	2011 Investigated complaints per 1,000 registrants	6 year % change	2016 Investigated complaints per 1,000 registrants
GCC	27.9	-36%	17.9
GDC	15.1	15%	17.3
GMC	9.5	-6%	9.0
GOC	8.0	30%	10.5
GOsC	7.4	47%	10.8
GPhC	5.2	266%	19.2
HCPC	2.4	-4%	2.3
NMC	6.1	-23%	4.7
PSNI	8.1	-41%	4.8
Total	6.8	-3%	6.6

Figure 10: Number of investigated complaints, 2011-2016

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	1 year % change	6 year % change
GCC	63	89	69	85	57	50	-12%	-21%
GDC	1,466	1,741	1,313	1,853	2,258	1,870	-17%	28%
GMC	2,157	2,482	2,625	3,047	2,690	2,090	-22%	-3%
GOC	148	149	171	189	279	223	-20%	51%
GOsC	30	18	28	35	42	49	17%	63%
GPhC	288	530	576	770	1,190	1,437	21%	399%
HCPC	512	498	523	682	849	787	-7%	54%
NMC	4,058	2,127	3,435	2,809	2,207	3,245	47%	-20%
PSNI	17	35	26	24	16	11	-31%	-35%

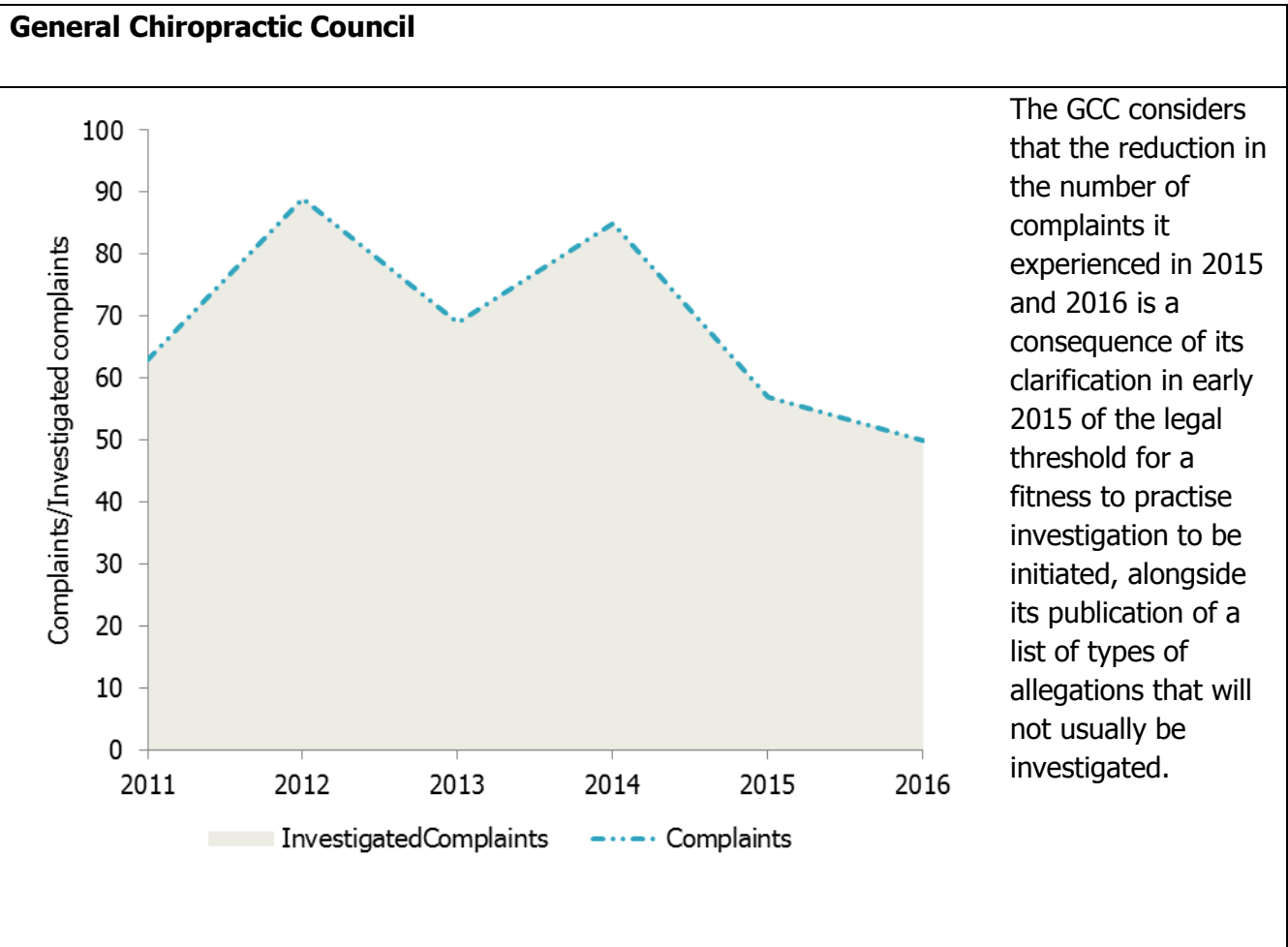
Figure 11: Index of investigated complaints 100 = 2011



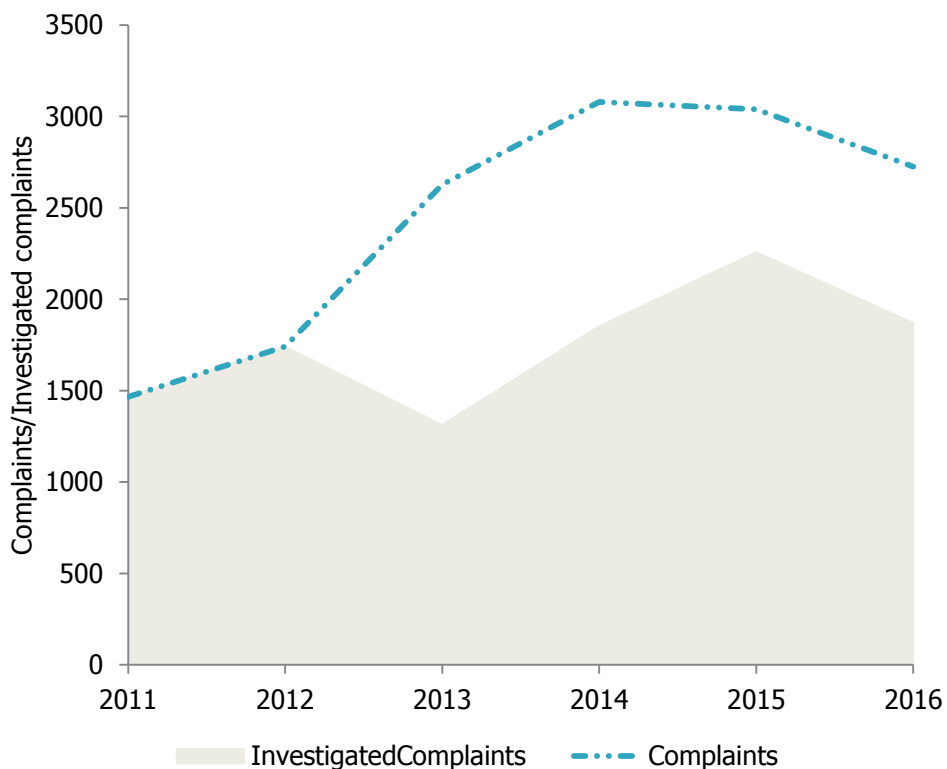
4. Trends in complaints by regulator

The following section shows the trends in enquiries and investigated complaints received over the last six years for each individual regulator. Where no enquiries figure has been provided, data for complaints has been used instead.

Each regulator was asked how they would explain the trends in complaints and whether they had undertaken any research to help understand them – this is included where a response was provided by the regulator.



General Dental Council



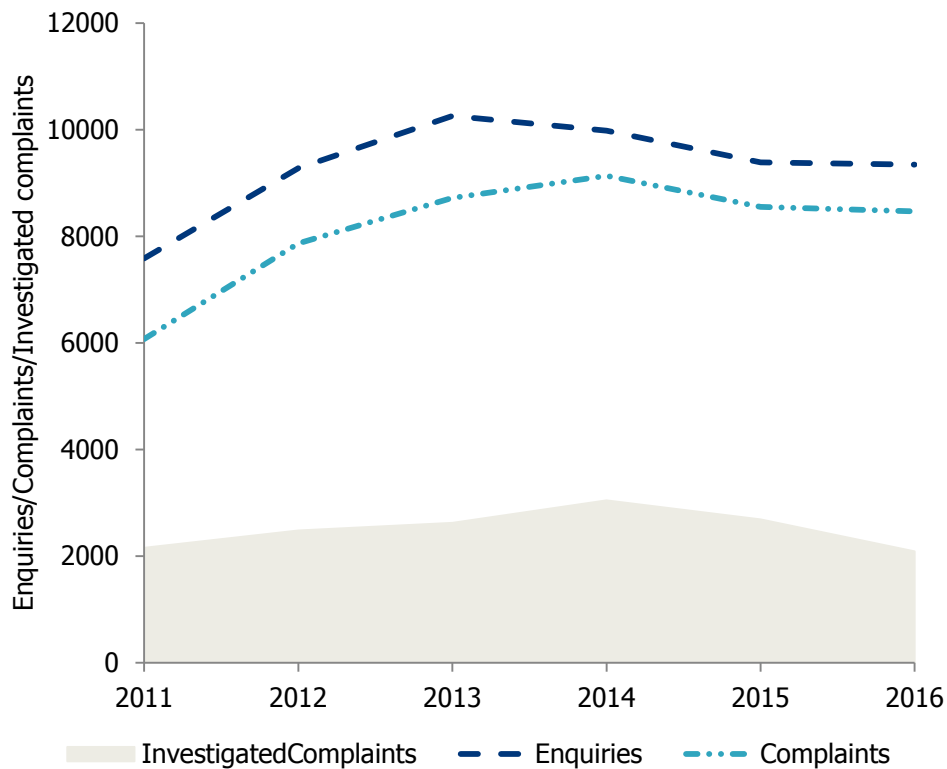
The GDC experienced a significant rise in complaints from 2010 to 2014. The previously clear rising trend has subsequently levelled off since this point. The GDC is yet to conclusively determine what this levelling off is indicating for the longer term and are continuing to monitor case receipt data to assess whether or not a definite change in trend has taken place.

The GDC has not yet published specific research regarding the rise in complaints and the ongoing factors that contribute to levels of dental complaints. The GDC recognises that many factors are likely to have a bearing on this, however, foremost in their current thinking is that the comparative weakness of clinical governance versus other forms of healthcare is a factor likely to have had a particularly significant influence on rises over recent years.

The GDC have noted they are continuing to explore incidence factors as they contribute to ongoing work as part of the Regulation of Dental Services Programme Board with other key stakeholders in the dental regulatory system (including the NHS, Care Quality Commission, Department of Health and Healthwatch).

Whilst the volume of incoming complaints has levelled off since 2014, the GDC's complaints system has continued to carry out significant levels of work resulting directly from the case rise in previous years. For example, the increase in the GDC's Hearings activity (See Figure 13: Number of fitness to practise hearings/committees, 2011-2016) in 2015 and 2016 partly due to the fact enough time has now passed that a large number of higher volume of cases that arrived around 2013/14 have since progressed through to the later stages of the system, as well as a wider increase in the number of GDC cases requiring a hearing (some cross regulatory comparison may help to identify comparative referral rates between the Investigating Committee and Hearings stage). One of the lessons the GDC has learnt over recent years is that the sharp rise in case receipt has led to an ongoing long term need to commit significant resources to dealing with the legacy of the rise in previous years.

General Medical Council

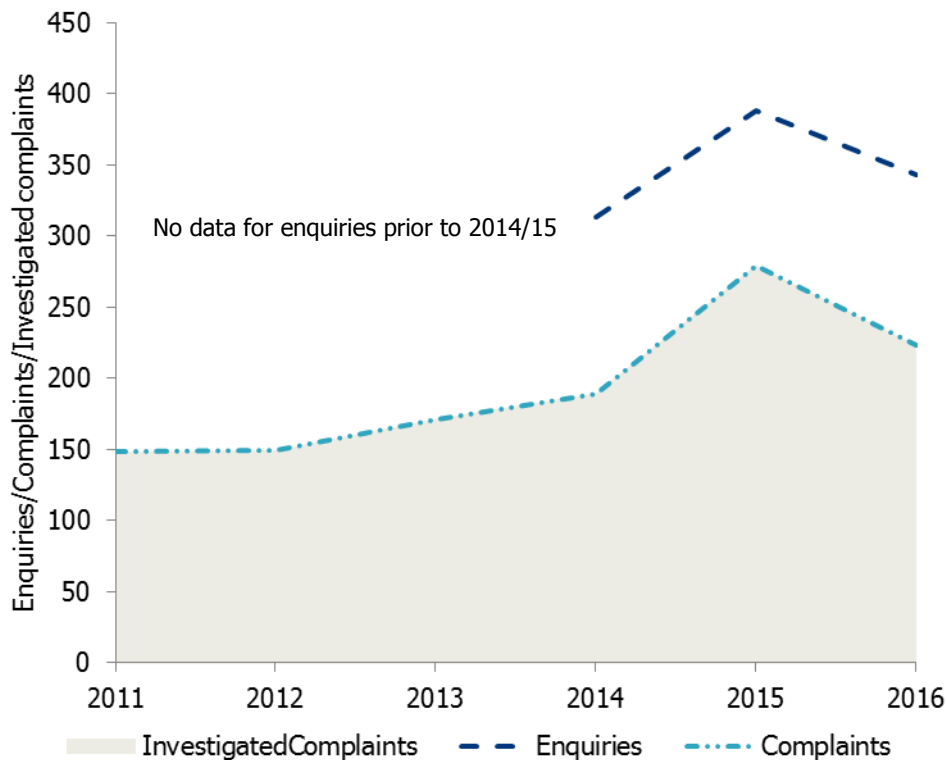


The GMC has recently published its annual [State of medical education and practice in the UK \(2016\)](#) which provides in-depth analysis on complaints about doctors.

The GMC experienced a rise in enquires, peaking in 2013 and declining in the following years. Over the last 12 months the level of enquiries has remained stable.

Investigated complaints have also decreased from 2014 which may reflect the reduced number of enquiries and reforms of the initial triage process which have meant staff can more accurately judge which complaints merit an investigation.

General Optical Council

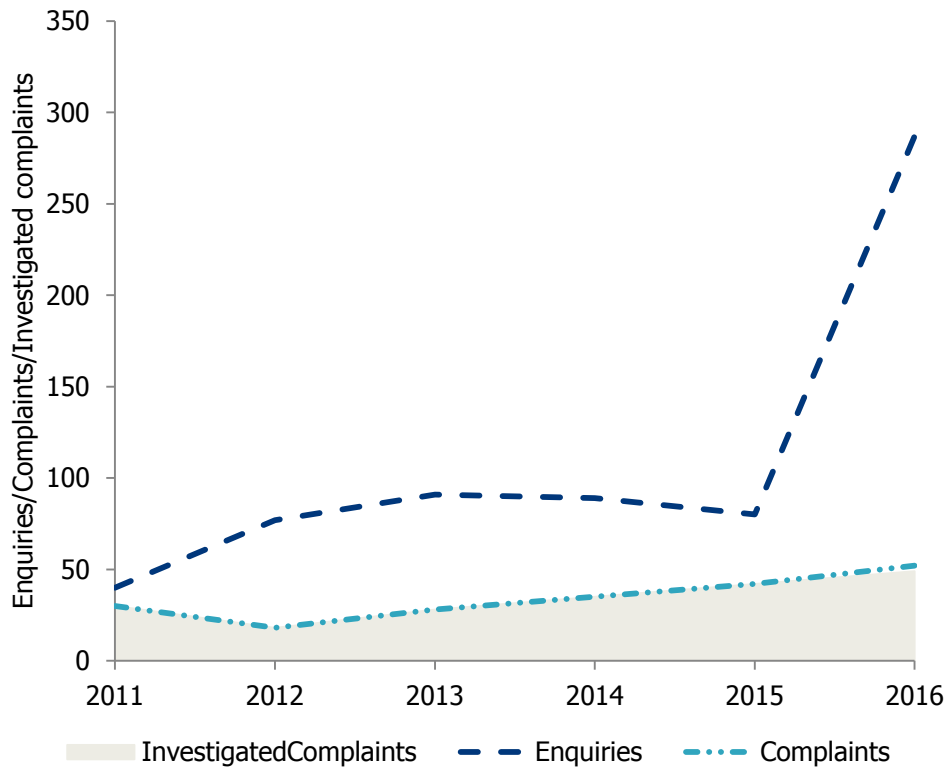


The GOC experienced a significant increase in complaints in 2014-15 (48%). This subsided in 2015-16 to the levels shown although the number of complaints investigated was still higher than in 2013-14.

The GOC has no specific explanation for recent trends, save that the 2014-15 increase may well have been Francis-related

(general increase in awareness among the general public of the right to complain about a healthcare professional) and, very specific to the GOC, the increased visibility of the Optical Consumer Complaints Service (OCCS) may have diverted some referrals to that organisation (low-level referrals that the GOC may otherwise have had to take on due to our very low threshold). The increase in the number of cases being handled by the OCCS in 2015-16 does add weight to this. The GOC has not undertaken any specific research on the subject.

General Osteopathic Council

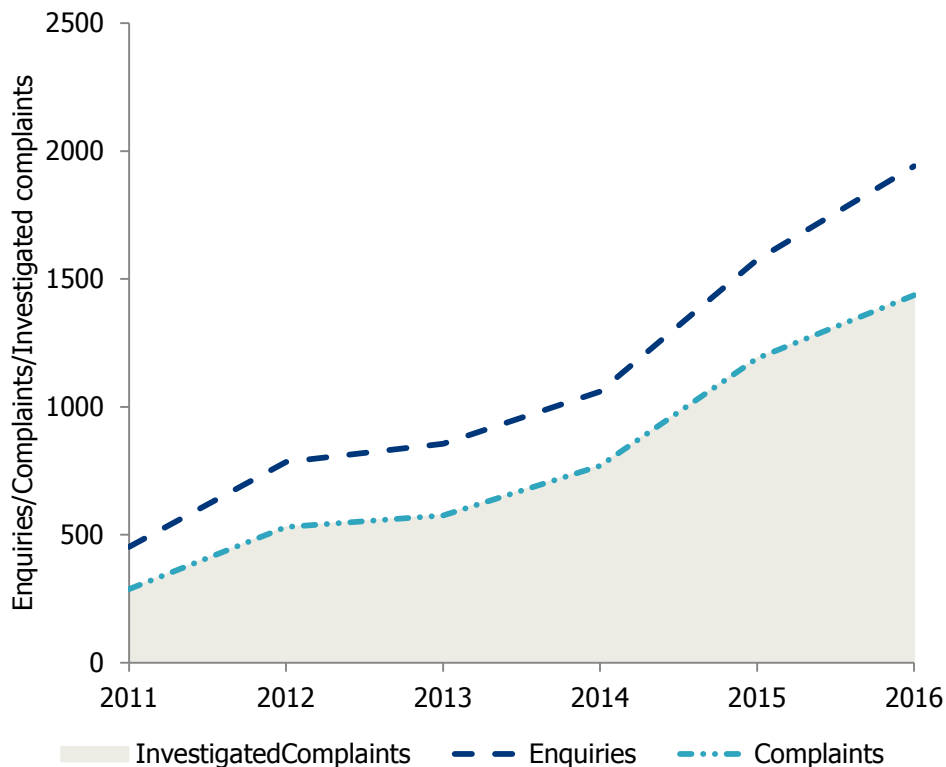


The GOsC has been experiencing a gradual increase in complaints over the past six years. It has been working with indemnity insurers and the Institute of Osteopathy to identify the nature of the concerns that arise about osteopathic practice and how these can be addressed through its new CPD scheme. Details of the research can be found at: <http://bit.ly/2qbRFpm>

The slight reduction in numbers of cases investigated is as a result of the introduction of new threshold criteria and the number of investigations may continue to decrease as these become embedded in the GOsC fitness to practise process.

The large increase in enquiries in 2015/16 is as a result of a campaign group submitting large quantities of material in relation to advertising.

General Pharmaceutical Council



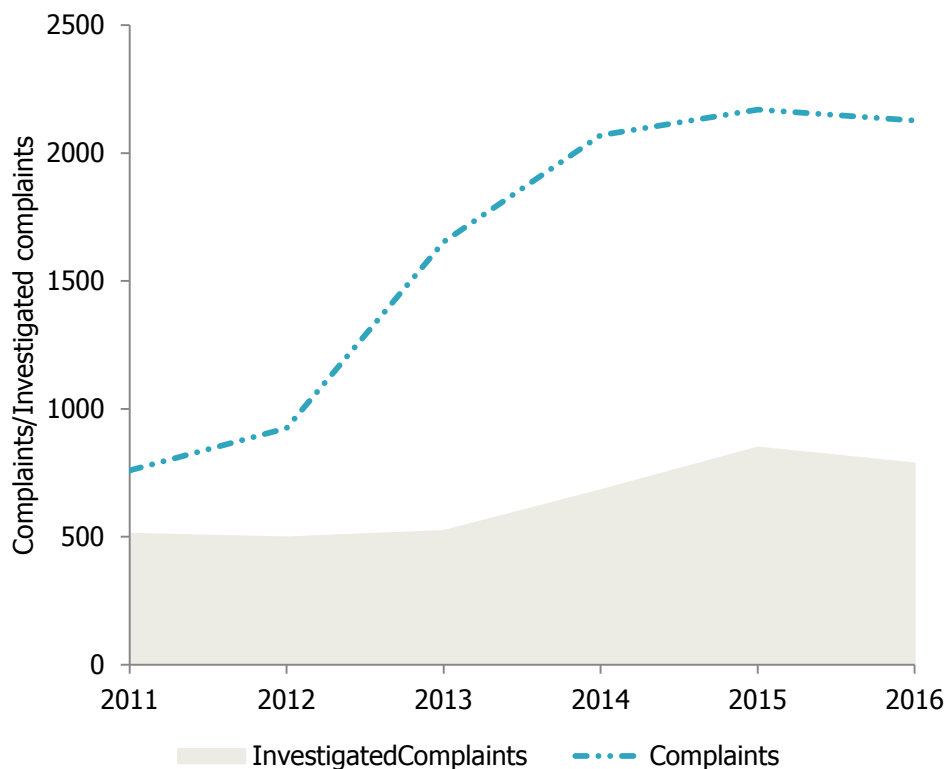
The GPhC has seen a rise in the number of concerns it has received over the past five years. This period of time is broadly similar to the length of time the GPhC has been in operation, so some of that rise may be attributed to increasing awareness of its role as a regulator.

The GPhC has not however to date undertaken research to test this hypothesis, or to ascertain whether there are other reasons for the increase in referrals. They continue to monitor the number of concerns they receive, and report these statistics to Council on a quarterly basis.

The figures contained in this report do not include the caseload inherited from the organisation's predecessor body, or the growth in the number of registrants, particularly as pharmacy technicians have been added to the GPhC register. These two factors make like-for-like comparison with other regulators difficult.

The figures presented in this report have also been corrected, compared to previous versions, to bring the reporting of fitness to practise outcomes in line with published annual reports and data submissions to the Professional Standards Authority.

Health and Care Professionals Council



The HCPC reports that trends are similar to previous years in that the largest number of complaints relates to Social Workers⁸ in England (approx 55%), and the largest source of complaints (across all professions) remains as members of the public/service users (at 43%). Complaints from employers (25%), and then registrants self-referring (20%) are

the next two highest sources. The Council revised the Standard of Acceptance in 2015, and this has changed the numbers of cases that HCPC closes at the earliest stage. This in turn has reduced the numbers of cases that are found 'No Case to Answer' at an Investigating Committee Panel.

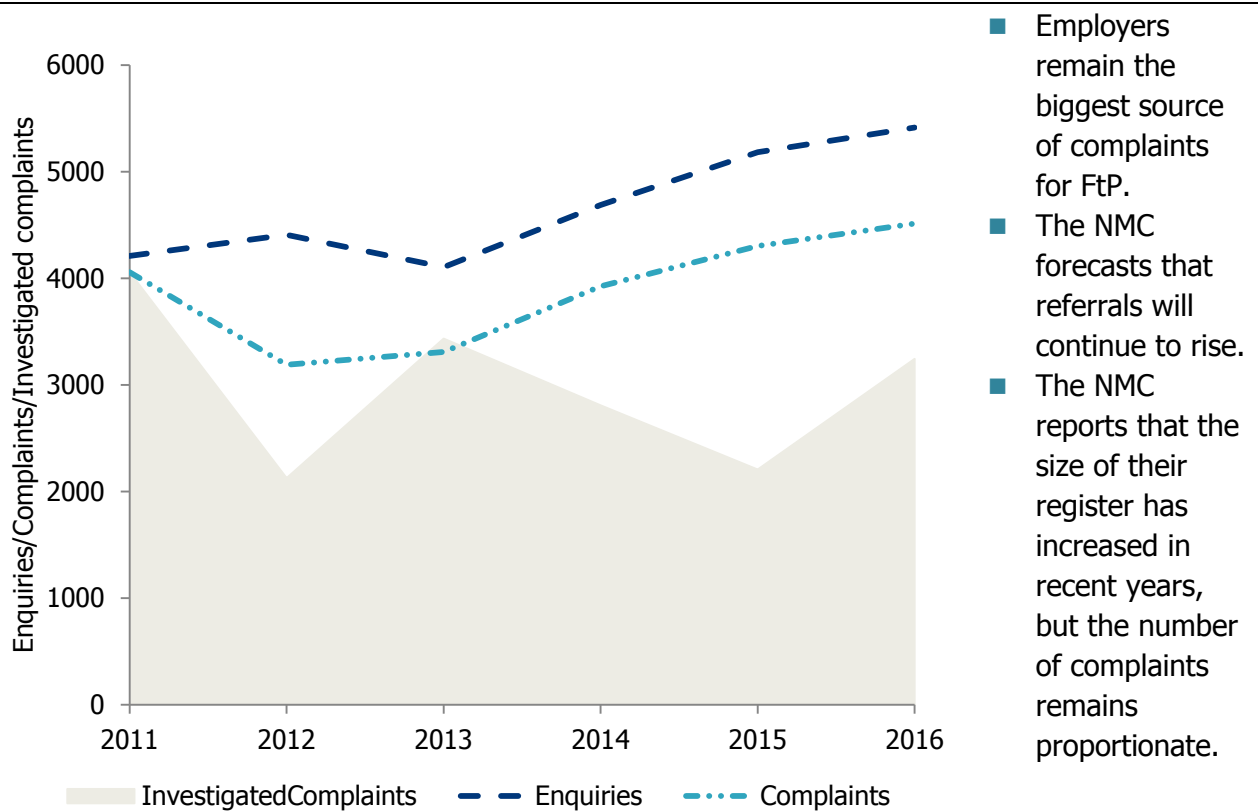
The number of reviewable sanctions at final hearings (conditions and suspensions) are increasing as a proportion, as are the numbers of disposals by consent. HCPC is also noting a change in the number of registrants who are represented at final hearings, and also who are representing themselves.

HCPC has conducted [research into the cost effectiveness of its FTP process](#), and are about to start research into social worker complaints and prevalence.

They continue to work with employers to improve the timing and information submitted as part of their referral process.

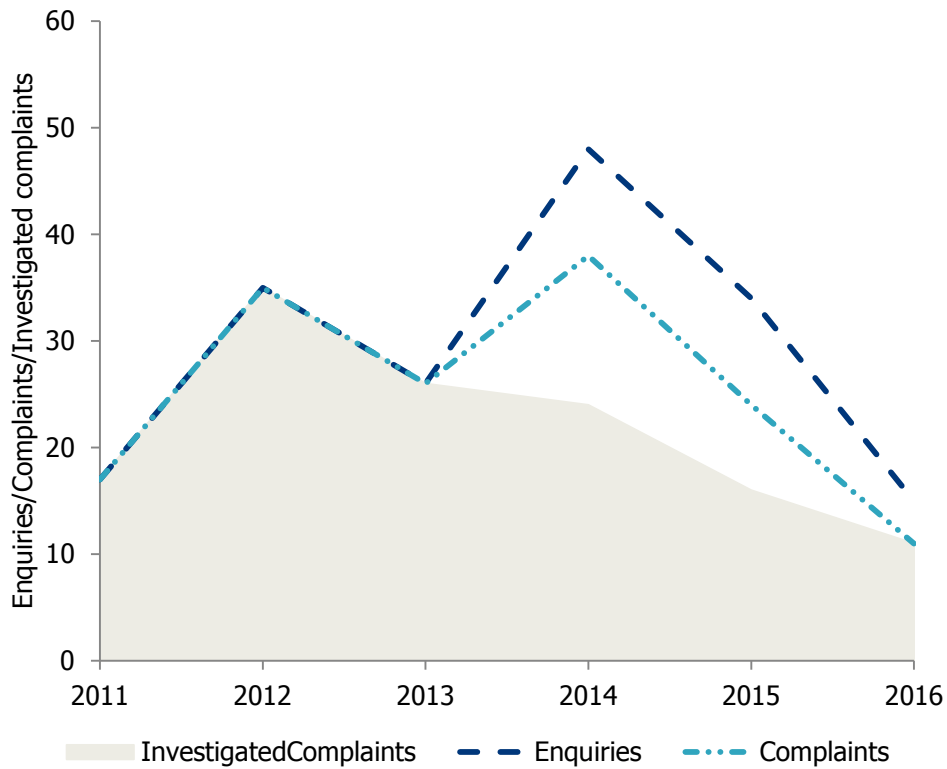
⁸ HCPC took responsibility for the full registration of Social Workers in 2013/14

Nursing and Midwifery Council



- Employers remain the biggest source of complaints for FtP.
- The NMC forecasts that referrals will continue to rise.
- The NMC reports that the size of their register has increased in recent years, but the number of complaints remains proportionate.

Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland



It is not possible to evaluate trends on such small numbers of complaints.

The inquiries PSNI screen out tend to be customer service issues and not FTP.

The numbers of performance, conduct and health cases remain consistent over the years with respect to their 2300 registrants.

5. Outcomes

This section of the report describes the number of fitness to practise hearings held and the outcomes resulting from complaints and investigations carried out by the health care regulators.

Please note that the data presented is for hearings and outcomes issued in that financial year and does not necessarily mean that the complaint was received and the investigation carried out in the same financial year.

Figure 13 shows the number of **fitness to practise hearings or committees** held by each regulator over the previous six years. The NMC held the most hearings in 2015/16 (960) followed by the GDC and HCPC (342 and 334 respectively). The PSNI, GCC, GOsC and GOC held comparatively few hearings in 2015/16.

There is no overall trend in the number of hearings held across regulators, with the exception of the GDC which has seen a year-on-year increase. The number of hearings have fluctuated for all other regulators.

In 2015/16, 1.5 hearings were held for every 1,000 registrants, a drop of 16% from six years ago. The GCC has the highest rate of hearings (9.0 per 1,000 registrants) followed by the GOsC (4.6 per 1,000 registrants). HCPC, GMC, GOC and the NMC all hold a lower rate than the average.

Figure 16 shows the number of **sanctions or warnings**⁹ issued in 2015/16 by regulator. Please note that the number of sanctions or warnings issued by PSNI is very low (5) and so should be treated with caution in this section.

When looking at the different categories of outcomes, the GDC, GMC and GOC issued a greater proportion of less serious outcomes (warnings, conditions, undertakings) while HCPC and the NMC issued a greater proportion of the most serious outcomes (suspensions and erasures).

On average 214 sanctions or warnings were issued for every 1,000 investigated complaints (figure 15). This rate is similar across all the regulators with the exception of GPhC at 100 and PSNI at 455. Looking at how this has changed over time (figure 17) most regulators saw the rate of sanctions or warnings issued for every 1,000 investigated complaints decline compared to six years previously with the exception of PSNI and the NMC, which may be a consequence of the fluctuating numbers of investigated complaints.

The average proportion of registrants given a sanction or warning in 2015/16 is 1.4 in 1,000 registrants (figure 18), an increase of 2% compared to six years ago. However the majority of regulators have seen this rate fall, with the exception of GPhC, the NMC and PSNI.

⁹ This includes warnings, conditions/undertakings, suspensions and erasures.

Fitness to practise hearings/committees

- As might be expected given the mixed picture in complaints and investigations, some regulators have seen an increase in the number of fitness to practise (FtP) hearings compared to six years ago, while others have seen a decrease.
- On average 1.5 FtP hearings were held for every 1,000 registrants, a drop of 21% from 6 years ago.
- HCPC, GMC, GOC and the NMC all had a lower rate of FtP per 1,000 registrants than average in 2015/16 while the GOsC had the highest.
- In addition, in 2011, 214 complaints about advertising were considered by the GCC's fitness to practise panel (the Professional Conduct Committee) at meetings rather than hearings. A further 336 complaints about advertising were considered using the same process during 2012.

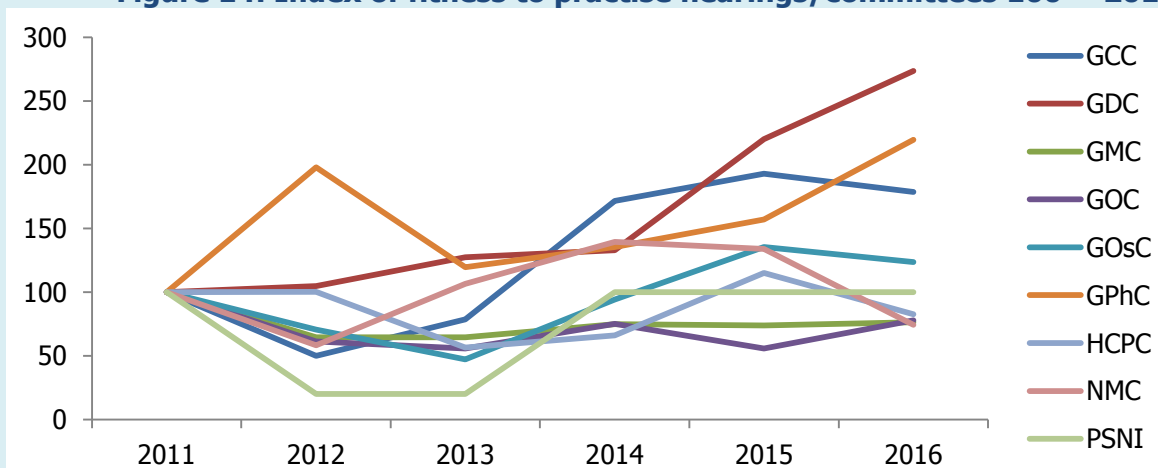
Figure 12: Change over 6 years

	2011 Fitness to practise hearings per 1,000 registrants	6 year % change	2016 Fitness to practise hearings per 1,000 registrants
GCC	6.2	44%	9.0
GDC	1.3	146%	3.2
GMC	1.4	-26%	1.1
GOC	2.0	-33%	1.3
GOsC	4.2	11%	4.6
GPhC	.9	61%	1.5
HCPC	1.9	-48%	1.0
NMC	1.9	-28%	1.4
PSNI	2.4	-9%	2.2
Total	1.8	-21%	1.4

Figure 13: Number of fitness to practise hearings/committees, 2011-2016

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	1 year % change	6 year % change
GCC	14	7	11	24	27	25	-7%	79%
GDC	125	131	159	166	275	342	24%	174%
GMC	324	209	209	242	239	247	3%	-24%
GOC	36	22	20	27	20	28	40%	-22%
GOsC	17	12	8	16	23	21	-9%	24%
GPhC	51	101	61	69	80	112	40%	120%
HCPC	404	405	228	267	465	334	-28%	-17%
NMC	1,294	753	1,377	1,805	1,732	960	-45%	-26%
PSNI	5	1	1	5	5	5	0%	0%

Figure 14: Index of fitness to practise hearings/committees 100 = 2011



Outcomes

Figure 15: Rate of sanction or warning per 1,000 investigated complaints and 1,000 registrants, 2015/16

- An average of 216 in every 1,000 investigated complaints resulted in a sanction or warning in 2015/16.
- When we look at the rate by registrant, an average of 1.4 in every 1,000 registrants received a sanction or warning in 2015/16. The highest rate was the GDC and the lowest HCPC.

	Sanctions or warnings per 1,000 investigated complaints	Sanctions or warnings per 1,000 registrants
GCC	140	2.5
GDC	203	3.5
GMC	233	2.1
GOC	197	2.1
GOsC	204	2.2
GPhC	118	2.3
HCPC	250	0.6
NMC	249	1.2
PSNI	455	2.2
Total	216	1.4

Figure 16: Number of sanctions or warnings, 2015/16

	Warning	Conditions/ Undertakings	Suspended	Erased
GCC	3	2	0	2
GDC	187	78	77	37
GMC	148	168	93	78
GOC	28	3	4	9
GOsC	3	1	3	3
GPhC	83	11	47	28
HCPC	29	37	60	71
NMC	119	152	277	261
PSNI	2	0	0	3
Total	602	452	561	492

- 602 warnings or cautions were issued in 2015/16, with the GDC, GMC and NMC issuing the highest numbers.
- 452 conditions or undertakings were placed on registrants. The GMC accounted for over a third of these and the NMC almost a third.
- 561 registrants were suspended temporarily in 2015/16 (this does not include interim suspensions) and 492 were permanently erased or 'struck off' meaning they can no longer practise in the UK. Around half of all suspensions and erasures are by the NMC.

Outcomes

Figure 17: % change investigated complaints resulting in a sanction or warning, 2011-2016

- The average % of investigated complaints resulting in a sanction or warning has increased by 6% compared to six years ago.
- However the majority of regulators saw a decline from 2011.

	2011 % of investigated complaints given a sanction or warning	6 year % change	2016 % of investigated complaints given a sanction or warning
GCC	11%	26%	14%
GDC	25%	-19%	20%
GMC	25%	-7%	23%
GOC	71%	-72%	20%
GOsC	40%	-49%	20%
GPhC	15%	-32%	12%
HCPC	41%	-38%	25%
NMC	12%	103%	25%
PSNI	12%	286%	45%
Total	20%	6%	21%

Figure 18: % change registrants given a sanction or warning, 2011-2016

- The average % of registrants given a sanction or warning has increased by 3% compared to six years ago.
- However the majority of regulators have seen a decrease in the proportion given a sanction or warning (5 of the 9 regulators).

	2011 % of registrants given a sanction or warning	6 year % change	2016 % of registrants given a sanction or warning
GCC	0.31%	-19%	0.25%
GDC	0.38%	-7%	0.35%
GMC	0.24%	-12%	0.21%
GOC	0.57%	-64%	0.21%
GOsC	0.29%	-25%	0.22%
GPhC	0.08%	195%	0.23%
HCPC	0.10%	-41%	0.06%
NMC	0.07%	57%	0.12%
PSNI	0.10%	127%	0.22%
Total	0.14%	3%	0.14%

Appendix 1 – survey data definitions and guidance

Registrants	<p>This should be the total number of registrants eligible to practise in the UK as at the end of the financial year i.e. 31st March. By eligible we mean those who have a licence, a right or a permission to practise in the UK.</p> <p>Please do not include those on a non-practising register or who are not eligible to practise e.g. those who have taken a career break, are working abroad, do not hold currently hold a licence to practise, have been removed from the register for not completing CPD or not paying the retention fee.</p> <p>By 'registrants' we mean an individual practitioner e.g. a pharmacist, optician, doctor. The unit is one registrant.</p> <p>If your organisation registers bodies corporate or premises please provide these figures in the appropriate column. Please also provide the total number of individual registrants employed across these businesses or premises who are eligible to practise in column 1. Note that this figure should be for registrants eligible to practise only, not all staff employed in the business/premises.</p> <p>By 'bodies corporate' we mean a limited company or limited liability partnership that has been incorporated with Companies House, also known as business registrants. The unit is one business.</p> <p>By 'premises' we mean a physical premises such as a pharmacy premises. The unit is one premises.</p>
Enquiries	<p>By 'enquiries' we mean any piece of information received that needs to be assessed to see if it raises a concern about a registrant's fitness to practise. This should include anything through the door pre initial assessment or triage and includes for example misdirected complaints or complaints which you are not able to deal with.</p>
Complaints	<p>By 'complaints' we mean only those enquiries that raise a concern about a registrant's fitness to practise.</p> <p>Please note that these figures should be for the total number of complaints about registrants in that period and so may include multiple complaints about a single registrant.</p>
Investigated complaints	<p>By 'investigated complaints' we mean the total number of complaints that meet your threshold for a full investigation. If you are required to investigate all complaints please indicate this on the survey.</p> <p>Please note that these figures should be for the total number of complaints about</p>

	registrants in that period and so may include multiple complaints about a single registrant.
Closed with no further action	<p>By 'closed with no further action' we mean that a case has been closed either at the end of an investigation or at the end of a fitness to practise hearing or committee with no sanction or warning given. Please include here cases which have been closed with advice given or mediation ordered and cases where a finding of impairment has been found but no order or sanction imposed.</p> <p>Please note that these figures should be for the total number of complaints about registrants in that period and so may include multiple complaints about a single registrant.</p>
Fitness to practise hearing or committee	<p>By 'fitness to practise hearing or committee' we mean a formal hearing, meeting or public inquiry before a committee or panel to decide if fitness to practise is impaired.</p> <p>Please include the total number of outcomes for each year, irrespective of the year when the original complaint was made.</p>
Warning given	<p>By 'warning given' we mean that the registrant is given a warning, caution, reprimand or admonishment about some aspect of their work, but they can continue working in the UK with no restrictions imposed on their practice. This should include warnings given either at the investigation stage or following a fitness to practise hearing or committee and those which are shown on the register and those which aren't.</p> <p>Please include the total number of outcomes for each year, irrespective of the year when the original complaint was made.</p>
Conditions or undertakings	<p>By 'conditions or undertakings' we mean that restrictions, or conditions, are placed on the registrant which restricts their practice, for example working under supervision or further training.</p> <p>Please include the total number of outcomes for each year, irrespective of the year when the original complaint was made.</p>
Suspended	<p>By 'suspended' we mean that the registrant is suspended temporarily from practising in the UK. Please do not include interim order suspensions here.</p> <p>Please include the total number of outcomes for each year, irrespective of the year when the original complaint was made.</p>
Erased	<p>By 'erased' we mean that the registrant has been removed or 'struck off' from the register so they can no longer practise in the UK.</p> <p>Please include the total number of outcomes for each year, irrespective of the year</p>

when the original complaint was made.

Appendix 2 – regulator data tables and source notes

General Chiropractic Council

GENERAL CHIROPRACTIC COUNCIL	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of individual registrants	2,256	2,327	2,543	2,601	2,701	2,788
Number of bodies corporate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of premises	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total number of enquiries	*	*	*	*	*	*
Total number of complaints	63	89	69	85	57	50
Total number of investigated complaints	63	89	69	85	57	50
Closed no further action	57	73	64	75	49	36
Fitness to practise hearing or committee	14	7	11	24	27	25
Warning given/admonishments	3	1	1	5	6	3
Conditions or undertakings	1	1	1	0	1	2
Suspended	2	1	1	3	2	0
Erased	1	0	4	2	4	2

Notes:

- The GCC is required to investigate all complaints and therefore does not record **enquiries**, therefore no figure is given for investigations and the same figure is used for complaints and investigated complaints.
- In 2016, the GCC received 75 complaints about advertising. These have not been included within the figures given for “complaints” in this report.
- The number of **investigated complaints** in 2015/16 will be 50, however the GCC is still awaiting a decision on 12 cases from this period.
- The number **closed with no further action** in the 2015/16 is currently 36.

General Dental Council

GENERAL DENTAL COUNCIL	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of individual registrants	97,010	99,568	101,899	103,580	105,700	107,902
Number of bodies corporate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of premises	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total number of enquiries	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total number of complaints	1,466	1,741	2,627	3,080	3,040	2,725
Total number of investigated complaints	1,466	1,741	1,313	1,853	2,258	1,870
Closed no further action	671	871	662	685	2,060	1,329
Assessment	352	532	442	473	1,470	918
IC	287	312	176	160	497	297
PCC/PPC	27	24	38	46	91	107
HC	5	3	6	6	2	7
Fitness to practise hearing or committee	125	131	159	166	275	342
PCC/PPC	102	104	125	139	254	305

HC	23	27	34	27	21	37
Warning given/admonishments	279	214	138	108	267	187
PCC/PPC Rep	7	5	14	13	18	27
IC	272	209	124	94	249	160
HC Rep				1		
Conditions or undertakings	34	32	31	42	54	78
PCC	23	22	19	34	49	62
HC	11	10	12	8	5	16
Suspended	30	35	38	41	64	77
PCC/PPC	23	21	22	29	51	65
HC	7	14	16	12	13	12
Erased	22	32	32	17	36	37
PCC/PPC	22	32	32	17	36	36
HC						1

Notes:

- The **Number of individual registrants** figures above are taken from a register snapshot report for Dentist and Dental Care Professional (DCPs) totals combined, as at 31 March each year. This does not include any Temporary Registrants, Visiting Practitioners or DCPs subject to Adaptation periods.
- The sections relating to **Number of bodies corporate** and **Number of premises** have been marked as 'n/a' as the GDC does not register either bodies corporate or premises, only those individuals successful in their applications to join the dental register.
- The section relating to **Total number of enquiries** has been marked as 'n/a' above. The GDC records all incoming items as 'complaints'.
- The section relating to **Total number of complaints** refers to all incoming complaints within each fiscal year between 2010-11 and 2015-16.
- For the section **Total number of investigated complaints**, the total incoming complaints figures have been quoted for the years 2010-11 and 2011-12. No formal triage process was in place before 2012. For the years 2012-13 to 2015-16, a reduced figure has been quoted which represents total incoming complaints minus those closed at an initial triage stage.
- For the section **Closed with no further action**, the following is provided for each fiscal year:
 - All cases closed with no further action at the Assessment stage;
 - All cases closed with Advice or with No Further Action at the Investigating Committee stage;
 - All cases closed with no further action at a Professional Conduct Committee (PCC)/Professional Performance Committee (PPC)/Health Committee stage. This includes where no formal sanction has been given at a hearing, and suspension or conditions orders have been revoked.
- Please note: the high figure for Assessment and IC no further action in 2014-15 includes all cases closed or given IC Advice or NFA as part of an extensive backlog project at these stages during this period. The increase at PCC/PPC in this period would include some initial cases referred from this project to hearings yet would also be higher due to a wider increase in the number of hearings scheduled and held in the reporting years, 2014-15 and 2015-16, of which there would have been the proportionate increase in hearings with no further action.

- For the section Fitness to Practise hearing or committee, figures have been provided for each fiscal year for all hearings that took place at the combined PCC/PPC stages, and at the HC stage.
- For the section Warnings given, figures have been provided for Published and Unpublished Warnings given each fiscal year at the IC stage, and also Reprimands (Rep) given at the combined PCC/PPC and HC stages.
- For the sections Conditions or undertakings, Suspended and Erased, figures have been provided for these sanctions as given at the combined PCC/PPC stages and for the HC stage.
- As in section 2, higher number observed in the years 2014-15 and 2015-16 versus previous years are due to an increased number of hearings scheduled and held during this period. It should be noted that these increases are not generally reflected in numbers for hearings outcomes at the Health Committee.

General Optical Council

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of individual registrants	18,424	19,095	19,775	20,249	20,762	21,317
Number of bodies corporate	1,504	1,548	2,094	2,365	2,475	2,545
Number of premises	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total number of enquiries	*	*	*	313	388	343
Total number of complaints	148	149	171	189	279	223
Total number of investigated complaints	148	149	171	189	279	223
Closed no further action	101	156	179	123	119	181
Fitness to practise hearing or committee	36	22	20	27	20	28
Warning given/admonishments	96	32	23	17	22	28
Conditions or undertakings	3	2	4	1	0	3
Suspended	2	4	3	4	1	4
Erased	4	6	4	6	9	9

Notes:

- The GOC has not included student registrants within the **Number of individual registrants**.
- The **Closed with no further action** figures quoted are the total number of cases which were closed with no further action (NFA) decisions and are not necessarily cases that were opened in the relevant year.
- 2014/15 **fitness to practise hearing or committee** there was 1 financial penalty also imposed.
- Please note that 2011 figures for fitness to practise hearings or committee, warnings given/admonishments, conditions or undertakings, suspended and erased include students. All other years do not include students.

General Medical Council

GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of individual registrants	226,616	232,689	235,199	235,353	234,639	233,233
Number of bodies corporate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Number of premises	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total number of enquiries	7,588	9,278	10,258	9,979	9,386	9,348
Total number of complaints	6,071	7,865	8,722	9,133	8,552	8,468
Total number of investigated complaints	2,157	2,482	2,625	3,047	2,690	2,090
Closed no further action	1,090	1,406	1,718	1,850	2,056	1,910
Fitness to practise hearing or committee	324	209	209	242	239	247
Warning given/admonishments	206	195	161	160	135	148
Conditions or undertakings	156	176	167	182	162	168
Suspended	96	88	64	82	98	93
Erased	81	55	58	72	67	78

Notes:

- The **fitness to practise hearing or committee** are carried out by the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service (MPTS) which is the adjudication service for UK doctors.
- **Conditions or undertakings** - undertakings are agreed and accepted by the doctor.

General Osteopathic Council

GENERAL OSTEOPATHIC COUNCIL	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of individual registrants	4,078	4,225	4,293	4,413	4,389	4,519
Number of bodies corporate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of premises	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total number of enquiries	40	77	91	89	80	287
Total number of complaints	30	18	28	35	42	52
Total number of investigated complaints	30	18	28	35	42	49
Closed no further action	13	11	10	8	20	10
Fitness to practise hearing or committee	17	12	8	16	23	21
Warning given/admonishments	6	5	5	1	5	3
Conditions or undertakings	1	3	0	4	1	1
Suspended	3	1	0	0	2	3
Erased	2	0	0	3	3	3

Notes:

- The **number of individual registrants** figure quoted in the years up to and including 2013/14 included non-practising registrants.
- The GOsC is required to investigate all complaints, however it introduced new 'threshold criteria' in 2015/16 which are reflected in the **total number of investigated complaints** figures.
- The **total number of enquiries** for 2015/16 reflects a large number of complaints about advertising, the majority of which did not become complaints as they were closed under the threshold criteria.

- The **fitness to practise hearing or committee** figures quoted for 2014/15 and 2015/16 includes 'Rule 8' cases which may be closed in some circumstances with an admonishment without a hearing (a form of 'consensual disposal').

General Pharmaceutical Council

GENERAL PHARMACEUTICAL COUNCIL	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of individual registrants	55,000	66,201	69,231	71,221	72,985	74,980
Number of bodies corporate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of premises	13,418	13,850	14,186	14,306	14,367	14,393
Total number of enquiries	453	784	856	1,060	1,575	1,941
Total number of complaints	288	530	576	770	1,190	1,437
Total number of investigated complaints	288	530	576	770	1,190	1,437
Closed no further action	129	514	447	449	807	989
Fitness to practise hearing or committee	51	101	61	69	80	112
Warning given/admonishments	8	88	63	61	95	83
Conditions or undertakings	18	18	11	15	30	11
Suspended	9	45	25	24	49	47
Erased	7	10	23	23	40	28

Health and Care Professionals Council

HEALTH AND CARE PROFESSIONALS COUNCIL	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of individual registrants	213,290	218,988	219,162	320,552	330,887	341,745
Number of bodies corporate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of premises	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total number of enquiries	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total number of complaints	759	925	1,653	2,069	2,170	2,127
Total number of investigated complaints	512	498	523	682	849	787
Closed no further action	468	586	1,014	1,433	1,419	1,889
Total of No Case to answer at ICP	218	246	222	322	377	272
Total of cases that were closed as they did not meet HCPC Standard of Acceptance	250	340	792	1,111	1,042	1,617
Fitness to practise hearing or committee	404	405	228	267	465	334
Warning given/admonishments	70	69	41	36	54	29
Conditions or undertakings	27	29	14	26	43	37
Suspended	49	55	61	57	70	60
Erased	62	56	44	52	66	71

Notes:

- No **enquiries** figures were provided.
- The **total number of investigated complaints** given was defined as the 'Total which went to ICP for consideration of case to answer (and were further investigated)'.

- **Warnings given/admonishment** was defined as 'Caution'.
- **Conditions or undertakings** were defined as 'Conditions of Practice'.

Nursing and Midwifery Council

NURSING AND MIDWIFERY COUNCIL	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of individual registrants	670,016	672,630	675,296	680,895	686,810	692,550
Number of bodies corporate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of premises	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total number of enquiries	4,211	4,407	4,106	4,687	5,183	5,415
Total number of complaints	4,058	3,190	3,310	3,925	4,302	4,512
Total number of investigated complaints	4,058	2,127	3,435	2,809	2,207	3,245
Closed no further action	1,929	1,278	1,492	1,814	1,564	1,967
Fitness to practise hearing or committee	1,294	753	1,377	1,805	1,732	960
Warning given/admonishments	101	98	163	240	204	119
Conditions or undertakings	62	51	160	261	265	152
Suspended	138	136	243	357	381	277
Erased	197	365	589	537	493	261

Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland

PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF NORTHERN IRELAND	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of individual registrants	2,091	2,101	2,112	2,230	2,234	2,303
Number of bodies corporate	154	161	165	178	173	176
Number of premises	543	548	549	551	552	550
Total number of enquiries	17	35	26	48	34	15
Total number of complaints	17	35	26	38	24	11
Total number of investigated complaints	17	35	26	24	16	11
Closed no further action	3	2	0	1	6	4
Fitness to practise hearing or committee	5	1	1	5	5	5
Warning given/admonishments	0	0	0	1	2	2
Conditions or undertakings	0	0	0	1	0	0
Suspended	0	0	0	3	0	0
Erased	2	2	1	0	3	3