



AN RIALTÓIR CŌGAISIÓCHTA
THE PHARMACY REGULATOR

Consultation Responses

Public Consultation on the proposed Temporary Absence of Pharmacist Rules

June 2017

Introduction

Under the Pharmacy Act 2007 it is an offence to operate a retail pharmacy business (a pharmacy) other than in accordance with particular conditions, one of which is that the sale and supply of medicinal products must be carried out by or under the personal supervision of a registered pharmacist at all times (Section 26). However, the Act also provides that no offence is committed where a registered pharmaceutical assistant acts on behalf of a registered pharmacist during the temporary absence of the registered pharmacist (Section 30).

In circumstances where the registered pharmacist is temporarily absent from the pharmacy a registered pharmaceutical assistant may act on his or her behalf and carry out the functions of the pharmacist (except functions restricted to pharmacists under specific medicines legislation e.g. vaccination services).

About the Consultation

In March 2016, the PSI consulted on [draft rules](#) (draft Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016) in consideration of what constitutes the temporary absence of a pharmacist, as provided for under Section 30 of the Act. With this, other background information was provided on the PSI website on this very particular topic.

The public consultation was conducted over four weeks and received a high volume of responses from pharmaceutical assistants, pharmacists, pharmacy owners and operators, public and pharmacy representatives and members of the public. Responses were received by post and by email, and those submissions are provided below as part of our commitment to make available information that we receive during public consultations. In line with our policy on consultations, any individual names and organisations that were provided have been listed in this document, and we have made every effort to remove other personal information where it was included. We have also made every effort to transcribe handwritten submissions and signatures.

Responses to the consultation that were received after the closing deadline, are not included in this report.

Contents

Consultation responses received in relation to the proposed Temporary Absence of Pharmacist Rules 2016.

Reference Number	Submission received from
1.	Rita O'Brien
2.	Una Heneghan
3.	Breda Cleary
4.	Mary MacAdam
5.	Fiona Lappin
6.	Gertrude Nestor
7.	Anne O'Dwyer
8.	Valerie Kinlehan
9.	Anne Mannion
10.	Kathleen Thompson
11.	Una Heneghan (2)
12.	Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) - Representative body for 2,160 pharmacists and 1,715 pharmacies
13.	Reg McDonald
14.	Elaine McLaughlin
15.	Jacinta Timmons
16.	Margaret Hayes
17.	Shirley Geurin

Reference Number	Submission received from
18.	Joseph Britton
19.	Sheila McCarthy
20.	Bernadette McCann
21.	Patrick Brady
22.	Michael Wade
23.	Bernie English
24.	Susan O'Keefe
25.	Kathleen Curley
26.	Phil Keating
27.	Niamh Gallagher
28.	Liam Grogan
29.	Nuala Curry
30.	Margaret McGrath
31.	Mary Martin
32.	Ivan Dixon
33.	Louise Kennedy

Reference Number	Submission received from
34.	Francine Kivlehan
35.	Mary O'Malley
36.	Brian McDonald
37.	Pauline Kavanagh
38.	Laura Bashford
39.	Ailbhe Byrne
40.	Conor Heneghan
41.	Jarlath Heneghan
42.	Darragh Heneghan
43.	Michael Heneghan
44.	Louis Heneghan
45.	Michele Durkan
46.	Michele Parle
47.	Maura Doyle
48.	Celine Culkin
49.	Dympna Doyle
50.	M J Heneghan
51.	Linda McDonald

Reference Number	Submission received from
52.	Patria Jordan
53.	Deirdre Lynch
54.	Gary Stack
55.	Sean Doyle
56.	Pauline Murphy
57.	Aishling Melvin
58.	Marc MacSherry
59.	John O'Donovan
60.	Helen Devaney
61.	Edel McDonald
62.	Michael John Hayes
63.	Alan O'Gorman
64.	Paul O'Gorman
65.	Ann Tynan
66.	Geraldine Lynch
67.	Siobhan Byrne-Savoie
68.	Annunciata O'Dwyer
69.	Pauline Cormack

Reference Number	Submission received from
70.	Mary O'Riordan
71.	Julie Jacob
72.	Maria Mooney
73.	Augustine Browne
74.	Catherine Jennings
75.	Maura Coyle
76.	Catriona Donohoe
77.	Marion Melvin
78.	Orla Buckley
79.	Clodagh Melvin
80.	Anne Gaughan
81.	Niamh Winters
82.	Kate O'Brien
83.	Riona Baldwin
84.	Gertie Kavanagh
85.	Charles Byrne
86.	Una O Halloran

Reference Number	Submission received from
87.	Joan Baker
88.	Emily Holmes
89.	Sadie Harrington
90.	Ciara Mulane
91.	Ferdia Byryne
92.	John Holly
93.	Flora O Callaghan
94.	Denise Hughes
95.	Anne McLaughlin
96.	Eileen Mulconroy
97.	Michelle Farrell
98.	Michael McDermot
99.	Mary Healy
100.	Mary Ring
101.	Phil O Byrne
102.	Diarmuid O Riordan
103.	Anne Flattery
104.	Angela Smyth

Reference Number	Submission received from
105.	Mary Baker
106.	David Bradford
107.	Caroline Smyth
108.	Brenda Morris
109.	Stephen Smyth
110.	Frances Ryan
111.	Shirley Baker
112.	Deirdre Phelan
113.	Deccla O'Leary
114.	Eileen Boyle
115.	Margaret Jacinta O'Sullivan
116.	Elaine Roche
117.	Teresa Sweeney
118.	Conan Burke
119.	Ciara McCABe
120.	Dei Doyle
121.	Mark Sajda on behalf of Sam McCauley group

Reference Number	Submission received from
122.	Eleanor Meaney
123.	Helen Stapleton
124.	Valerie McGrath
125.	Sheila Aideen Kelliher
126.	Pat the Cope Gallagher
127.	Doreen O'Rourke
128.	Helen Bashford
129.	Jimmy Flynn
130.	Jim Williamson
131.	Anne Balfe
132.	Angela Finn
133.	John Crimmins
134.	Vincent McElwee
135.	John Rutledgge
136.	Crona O'Reilly
137.	Siobhan Mary Vickers
138.	Rosemary Conway Smyth

Reference Number	Submission received from
139.	Neville Thom
140.	Thomas J. Stack
141.	Mona O Rafferty
142.	Austin and Kathleen Ledden
143.	Nuala Finn
144.	Ruth Doyle
145.	Kevin O'Shaughnessy
146.	Mairead (O'Driscoll) Dennehy
147.	John Lambe
148.	Francis Bonner
149.	James Cassidy
150.	Ursula Corcoran
151.	Paul Conroy
152.	Judith Tierney
153.	Freda Buckley
154.	Helene Daly
155.	Elizabeth Ryan

Reference Number	Submission received from
156.	Anette Meaney
157.	Dympna Collins
158.	Mary Meaney
159.	Noreen Shaw
160.	Martina Healy
161.	Elaine Healy
162.	Mary Bernard
163.	Anne Marie Flynn
164.	Bernadette Knowles
165.	Marina Gorey
166.	Margaret Fitton
167.	Patricia Coyle
168.	Monica O Sullivan
169.	Helena Napier
170.	Valerie Baker
171.	Anna Doyle
172.	John Boles
173.	Bridie Martin

Reference Number	Submission received from
174.	Frances Campion Cassidy
175.	Aine O Rioila, Nora White, Angela Lory & Aishling Reilly
176.	Niall O Sullivan & Marie Gavin
177.	Helen Blanchfield
178.	Therese Kavanagh
179.	Ken Baker
180.	Annette Halliday
181.	Sean Pilkington
182.	Josephine Faughnan
183.	Jacinta McGowan
184.	Catherine McKenna
185.	Breda McConnon
186.	Margaret Jacqueline Davis
187.	Jason Melvin
188.	Jennifer O Malley
189.	Carmel Morey
190.	Hannah McFadden

Reference Number	Submission received from
191.	Joan Fitzsimons
192.	Eva O'Leary
193.	Geraldine Fitzgerald
194.	Kay Healy
195.	Conor Martin
196.	Joseph Haire
197.	Cliona Connolly
198.	Margaret O Shea
199.	Ark Medical Centre
200.	Michael O'Neill-Mockler
201.	Elizabeth O'Connor
202.	Geraldine McCarthy
203.	Siobhan Cadogan
204.	Mary O'Neill
205.	Thomas Pringle
206.	Tony O'Dowd
207.	Josephine Patricia O'Neill
208.	Fergus Brennan

Reference Number	Submission received from
209.	John Minihan
210.	Brigid Edel O'Connell
211.	Claire Archer
212.	Edwina Ledwik
213.	Deirdre Fitzgerald, Eamon Murphy, Orla Slattery, Sinead Murphy
214.	Mat Deville, Sheila Sweeney, Joan Harding, Margaret Clarke, Charlei Dwane, Anne McCarthy, Eileen Moynihan, Timothy Moynihan, Philip Horan, Eamonn O'Connor & Cathleen O'Connor and others (not legible)
215.	Jennifer Scully, Noelle Cashin, Peter Going, Anne Marie Going, Patricia Conroy, Sharon McEvoy, Catherine Moore, Patrick Bourke, Jacintha Conroy, Robert Moore, Kathleen Bourke, Tom Conroy, Paul Ging, Claire Ging BsC, Noel Jennings, Mary Ging, Fergus Byrne, Serena Brennan, Shay Flannery, and others (not legible)
216.	John Brown, Michael Burke, Michael Murphy, Fiona Burke Brian Burke, Claire Burke, Helen Flynn,

	Marie Burke and others (not legible)
217.	Sandra Burke, Rita Malone and others (not legible)
218.	Rory McEvoy, Margaret Dunne, Grainne Dunne, Pat Kelly, Andy Dalton, Sean Delaney, John Kelly, Louise Kelly, Ange Delaney, Martha Dalton, Mia Arenace, Geraldine Duffy, Melissa Wood, A Bergin, Sheila Bergin, Dan O'Sullivan Eadaoin McEvoy, Anne Kelly, Margaret Kelly, Aileen Branagan, John Gorman, John Bracken, Padraig Kelly, Karen Plunkett, Aisling Bracken, Gerard Kelly, Paul Kelly, Mary Butler, Patrick Kelly, Salvatore Mezzapelle, Joan Mezzapelle, Antoinne Mezzapelle, Roberto Mezzapelle, Darina Wallace, D Phelan, Seamus McEvoy Kathryn Phelan, Caroline Keane, Martina Lawless, Grant McEvoy, Elaine Kelly, Sheerean Connolly, Glenda Forde, Trevor Maher, Deirdre Holland, Deirdre Maher, Jamie-Ann Cuddihy, Pat Smyth, Sean Brennan, Orla Dunne, Carmel Hogan, Pat Dunne, Margaret Smyth, Grainne Feeney

Reference Number	Submission received from
219.	Sean O'Murchu
220.	Geraldine Walsh
221.	Margaret McLoughlin
222.	Desmond Brady
223.	Rita Gamble
224.	Vivienne Jervis
225.	Martina Wimsey
226.	Donald H Lea
227.	Mary Reynolds
228.	Mary Lea
229.	P O'Reilly
230.	Ciaran O'Reilly
231.	Mary Morris
232.	Lena Townsend
233.	Gabrielle Manton
234.	Noel O'Gorman
235.	Frances Baker
236.	Eithne Tennyson

Reference Number	Submission received from
237.	Joanne Quinlan
238.	Miriam Forde
239.	Patrick Kilgarriff
240.	Cathy Mullarkey
241.	Mary Ellard
242.	Sinead Carron
243.	Angela Smyth/Kavanagh
244.	Carmel O'Loinsigh
245.	Emily Kelly
246.	Nora White, Angela Long & Ashling Reilly
247.	Donal O'Lamgsigh
248.	James Williamson
249.	Mary R
250.	Olive Thompson
251.	Pauline Comack
252.	Aideen Gillen
253.	Marian S Kelly
254.	Anonymous

Reference Number	Submission received from
255.	Anna McCarthy
256.	Thomas Kennedy
257.	Breda Dunne
258.	Mary O'Rafferty
259.	Daragh Corby
260.	Anne Costello
261.	Tony Buckley
262.	Gwen Poole
263.	Gillian Houg
264.	Morian Grennan
265.	Joanne McGrath
266.	Adrienne O'Keeffe
267.	Alison Vincent
268.	Willie O'Dea
269.	Tom Ginnety
270.	Carmel B O'Loinsigh
271.	Margaret O'Brien
272.	P Walshe

Reference Number	Submission received from
273.	Anne Dunne
274.	Anna May Daly
275.	Julianne Lawless
276.	Patrick Carragher
277.	Liam Farmer
278.	Brian & Fionnuala Lanigan
279.	Doreen Fitzgerald, Eileen McAuliffe, Peigi Ni Ruairc & anonymous person
280.	Ann Meerins, J Woolan
281.	Dr Michael O'Connor
282.	Martina Kelly
283.	Mary T. Burke
284.	Philomena Fortune
285.	T. McAuliffe
286.	Marie Jordan
287.	Martina Geraghty
288.	Helen R
289.	Pharmaceutical Assistants Association (PAA)

Reference Number	Submission received from
290.	Carmel O'Connor
291.	Bernard Grogan
292.	Carole O'Connor
293.	Margo Ryan
294.	Ruth Halliday
295.	Sean Hillery/Nora White
296.	Patrick Staunton
297.	Seana Hogan
298.	Karen O'Brien
299.	Danny Kelly
300.	Margaret Murphy
301.	Celia McGee
302.	Audrey Curtin
303.	Eileen O'Donovan
304.	Theresa Downing, Siobhain Downing, Lynda Downing, Christine Matthews, Lisa Downing
305.	Niamh Ryan
306.	Dervla Browne

Reference Number	Submission received from
307.	Brendan Dunne
308.	Deborah Carolan
309.	Marjorie Christina Corcoran
310.	Ian Ryan
311.	Marcus Breslin
312.	Michael Quinn
313.	Maria Ryan
314.	Caroline McGrath
315.	Luke Baxter
316.	Caroline Moynan
317.	Marion Kennedy
318.	Catherine Cahill
319.	Howard Coburn
320.	Margaret Deane
321.	Elizabeth Lang
322.	Siobhan O'Neill

Reference Number	Submission received from
323.	Vyra Nayar
324.	Catherine O'Reilly
325.	Marion Kiely
326.	Hazel Mansfield
327.	Patricia Whelan
328.	Nuala Daly
329.	Ann Blaney
330.	Tony Whelan
331.	National Women's Council of Ireland
332.	Susanne O'Mahony
333. E	Ellen Giltinan
334.	Aelish McMahon
335.	Aine Barrett
336.	Mary Ann Danaher
337.	Eimear Conroy
338.	John Barry

Reference Number	Submission received from
339.	Shane O'Reilly
340.	Maeve Jacob
341.	Claire Coleman
342.	Sheila Doran O'Reilly
343.	Daniel Gallagher
344.	Sean Cooke
345.	Jack Shanahan
346.	Bernie Conroy
347.	Dorothy McKane
348.	Sarah McGahon
349.	Imelda Kehoe
350.	Mary Spillane
351.	Noel Galvin
352.	Margaret Ryan
353.	Margaret Cullinan
354.	Mary Barry

Reference Number	Submission received from
355.	Fiona Hopkins 1
356.	Fiona Hopkins 2
357.	Patrick McGee
358.	Pat McGee
359.	Mike Mullane
360.	Kate Byrne
361.	Sarah Duffy
362.	Anthony O'Sullivan
363.	John Madden
364.	Theresa Adamson
365.	Maire O'Neill
366.	S.P. Kelly
367.	Philomena Crerand
368.	Therese O'Sullivan
369.	E Kelly
370.	Paul Farrelly

Reference Number	Submission received from
371.	Eugene Quinn
372.	Louise McDevitt
373.	Patricia Fitzpatrick
374.	Edward & Ann Larkin
375.	Kathleen Doherty
376.	Philip Brady
377.	Deirdre Brady
378.	Grace Kelly
379.	Thomas Lowthe
380.	Janet Lowthe
381.	Mary Philomena Dunne
382.	Jim Harrington
383.	Maire Reilly
384.	Dr Julie Dunne
385.	Anne Boyce
386.	Maureen Lambe

Reference Number	Submission received from
387.	Anita O'Reilly
388.	Marita O'Brien
389.	Mary Sammon Quinn
390.	Susan Mullane
391.	Katie Fitzsimons
392.	Jane Fitzsimons
393.	Gemma Fitzsimons
394.	Shane O'Donnell
395.	Aideen Tobin
396.	Anne Marie O'Reardon
397.	Brian Baker
398.	Eamonn Hopkins
399.	Anne McDonald
400.	Catherine Hopkins
401.	Roisin Adams
402.	Tracey Carroll

Reference Number	Submission received from
403.	Greg Ryan
404.	Fiona Black
405.	Mary Walsh
406.	Brigid Brophy
407.	Mairead Holmes
408.	Mary Ball
409.	Anne Wallace
410.	Susan McBride
411.	Ian O'Reilly
412.	Patricia O'Neill
413.	Nuala Daly
414.	Brid O'Reilly
415.	Dr Tony MacDonald
416.	Therese Cullen
417.	Kathleen O'Neill
418.	Elenora Hogan

Reference Number	Submission received from
419.	Marie McConn
420.	Aine O'Connor
421.	Emer O'Donnell
422.	Ronald Baker
423.	Sarah Baker
424.	Margaret Doherty
425.	Fintan Moore
426.	Cllr James McDaid
427.	Noel McCann
428.	Jim Fallon
429.	Eithne Morris
430.	Hilda Sayers
431.	Padraig McGuinness
432.	Brenda Kelly
433.	Teresa Murphy
434.	David Baker

Reference Number	Submission received from
435.	Mary P. Larkin
436.	Ita Staunton
437.	Paul Wright
438.	Niall Mulligan
439.	Anne Staunton
440.	Elaine McGrath
441.	Terry Doran
442.	Annmarie Nolan
443.	Tom O'Keefe
444.	Anne Lenehan
445.	Rosemary Cotter
446.	Gayle Purcell
447.	Denise Hughes (2)
448.	Helen Sweeney
449.	Anne O'Leary
450.	John Fitzsimons

Reference Number	Submission received from
451.	Jacinta Conroy
452.	Mary Fitzpatrick
453.	Paul Byrne
454.	Maureen Heneghan
455.	Charlie Browne
456.	Mary Kennedy
457.	Mary Daly
458.	Jessie Conroy
459.	Charles Kennedy

Reference Number	Submission received from
460.	Eugene Crerand
461.	Helen O'Meara
462.	Paddy Digan
463.	Anita MacCrossan
464.	Anonymous
465.	Kathleen Joyce
466.	Alicia Mary Rita Menton
467.	Marie Conroy
468.	Sinead O'Connor

No.	Submission received from	
1.	Rita O'Brien	
	<p>I want to officially document my objection to the proposed definition by the PSI on the historic term Temporary Absence which is enshrined in law since 1890.</p> <p>The PSI has decided to define the term based on a "fair and workable model which also provides public assurance of safe pharmacy practice"</p> <p>This proposed definition will alter the terms of my qualification post conferral. This qualification was formulated, validated and examined by the PSI. I entered in to a contract with the PSI under the terms of "The Articles of Pupillage"to study for 3 years with a PSI approved tutor pharmacist followed by an academic year at the PSI supervised College of Pharmacy. I passed all the examinations required in Pharmaceutics, Pharmacology ,Physiology, Pharmacognosy and Forensic Pharmacy. I was then certified by the PSI to be qualified to perform all the functions of a pharmacist in the latter's temporary absence. This certification did limit my scope of practice to a non managerial role stating I could not "manage or keep open shop in my own right"</p> <p>I have adhered to the terms of my certification. My role was to deputise for a pharmacist. This I did for weeks, days, holidays, sick leave and unscheduled short absences as the need arose.</p> <p>Under these PSI proposed conditions I can now only cover for 12 hours per week if I have provided 12 hours of skilled assistance in the previous month. How can this new conditionality on my qualification be deemed fair or workable. This new condition would mean I provide 12 hours of skilled assistance each month for the rest of my working life. It would also mean I am a qualified professional for 12 hours and become a criminal one minute after the 12th hour. Explain to me the logic of this !</p> <p>Addressing the second element of providing public assurance of safe pharmacy practice what steps have the PSI taken to document that pharmaceutical assistants are or historically ever were a danger to the public? What steps have the PSI taken to improve public safety by the introduction of this definition of temporary absence. It would be better to ensure safety to the public to introduce "Fitness to practice" regulations and CPD for all professionals who dispense medication.</p> <p>The PSI have made other attempts in the past to define temporary absence. One attempt resulted in Judge Costelloe stating that temporary absence could only be defined in a court of law and on a case by case basis. The 1994 code, so heavily relied on by the PSI inspectorate, is an unsigned code that is not legal as the old PSI were not vested with powers to define a clause of an Act of law.</p>	

I have always stated that the 1994 code was not legal for the following reasons

1) The terms of my qualification state I am qualified to perform all the functions of a pharmacist in temporary absence stated in the Pharmacy Act 1890 and updated in the 2007 Act section 30.

2) Barristers opinion states that the old PSI acted ultra vires in implementing this code

3) At the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association 's AGM in 2008 the PSI expert on the 2007 Act Ms Marita Kinsella addressed the meeting . She spoke of the contents of the Act with reference to Pharmaceutical Assistants and section 30 and never included any reference to the code. I was reassured that the terms of the Act were the most up to date legal situation. When asked about the temporary absence clause she assured us that the PSI did not intend defining it.

4) Reassurance has been given by various Ministers of Health that the legal rights of assistant pharmacists (their term for us) will not be eroded. In the 1960 s in discussions on the 1961 Pharmacy Act Mr MacEntee Minister of Health reiterated the existing rights of assistant pharmacists in both their qualification right to perform all the functions of a pharmacist in temporary absence and existing right to take examinations to become pharmacists.

The PSI now in 2016 have decided there is a need to define the temporary absence clause. They have decided to define it by curtailing hours of cover to 12 per week. The natural extension of this thought process would be that the PSI qualification is not fit for purpose as it needs to change the working conditions of its graduates. If that is the case hundreds of pharmaceutical assistants have been practicing for many years with faulty certification. I assume that the PSI defend their own validated qualification and registration and so I am still entitled to practice pharmacy as I have done since my conferral.

I also want to comment on Rule 9 of the public consultation where a supervising pharmacist must ensure satisfaction that a Pharmaceutical Assistant has the requisite skills including language skills and fitness to act in his temporary absence. The fact that we hold a PSI validated qualification and are accepted as registrants of the PSI must certify we have the necessary skills. I do agree

	<p>that the supervising pharmacist must vouch for the ability of all staff in their employ, pharmacists, pharmaceutical assistants and front of shop staff so the need to add in the extra specified requirement for pharmaceutical assistants is not necessary. A locum pharmacist sent from an employment agency will be deemed qualified by virtue of their registration and the supervising pharmacist might never meet that pharmacist personally. The locum agency, staffed in some instances by people with no pharmaceutical background, are vouching for the fitness of that pharmacist to work in a locum position.</p>	
<p>2.</p>	<p>Una Heneghan</p>	
	<p>When I received this email yesterday , my heart sank. I thought here goes ..this is the start of it ! The start of demeaning our qualification and reducing us to mere shop assistants ! I didn't open the link because I was afraid to. But my sister XXXXX who is also an assistant rang me last night in tears and confirmed my fears . Myself and my sister have been in this wonderful business of pharmacy for almost 100 years between us . We were born into it . We lived over the shop and spent many an evening with my Dad down in the shop learning . We learned from a master and giant of a man proud and passionate in his chosen profession .</p> <p>We have passed on to many a young pharmacist things we learned from him .. Things that money couldn't buy ... Kindness and respect for customers high on his list .His name was XXXX MPSI .He passed away 2 years ago . He retired from our wonderful business at the age of 80 . This is how long we have served . I cannot understand who is pushing for these changes and most of all Why? There are only a couple of hundred of us left, most of us hitting 60 and more ! Most of us probably working part time and most of us probably retiring in the next couple of years .</p> <p>Please let us go in peace and leave us with a little bit of pride and dignity . I daresay whoever is drafting these proposal were not even born when we were in the throes of our learning .</p> <p>Thank you for your time . Please leave us be .. We deserve it . Respectfully yours</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Breda Cleary</p>	
	<p>I would like to make a submission. I am a Qualified Assistant since 1973 and a Registration Fee has been paid for the past 42 years. I never agreed to the draft Code of Practice and I believe it was not a legal document.I have not been working in accordance with the Draft Code of Practice but have been employed based on a different understanding of'Temporary Absence'.My employer owns 8 pharmacies.I work opposite a Manager on his 2 days off per week.I also cover some holiday days when asked as it gives continuity to the working life of the pharmacy. From time to time,I cover day's off in other pharmacies in the group. Each pharmacy in the group have the same systems and is easy to slot in as all the staff know and support each other.</p> <p>I work 18-20 hours per week as working day is usually a 10 hour day.</p>	

	<p>The issue of 12 hours per week would be devastating for me.I was diagnosed with XXXXXXXX on 12/12/2012.I was X months on sick leave and the reality was very hard.I am a single person and financial consequences were huge and uncertain.I have given 42 years service and experience to pharmacy and loved it most of the time.I am 10 years in my present employment and have no wish to manage or be involved in pharmacy ownership.My big question is; Will The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland compensate me for loss of all future earnings?</p> <p>Hope loyalty,appreciation and some commonsense will prevail.</p>	
4. Mary McAdam		
	<p>I QUALIFIED AS A PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANT IN JUNE 1975 I COMPLETED THE 4 YEAR COURSE WHICH WAS VALIDATED EXAMINED AND RUN BY THE P.S.I I HAVE WORKED FULL TIME SINCE THEN AS MY HUSBAND DIED YOUNG AND I HAD X CHILDREN.I HAVE NEVER SOUGHT TO MANAGE OR OWN MY OWN PHARMACY BUSINESS.</p> <p>I HAVE NEVER AGREED TO A DRAFT CODE OF PRACTICE AS TO MY KNOWLEDGE IT IS NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT.I HAVE ALWAYS COVERED DAYS OFF HOLIDAYS,SICK DAYS ETC IN THE PHARMACIES WHERE I WORK.I CANNOT ACCEPT ANY DIMINUTION OR CONDITIONALITY OF MY QUALIFICATION POST CONFERRAL.</p> <p>WHEN I QUALIFIED NO PERSON FROM THE P.S.I SPOKE OR DEFINED "TEMPORARY ABSENCE" TO ME. IF TEMPORARY ABSENCE WAS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DEFINED AT THAT TIMEI HAVE NEVER THOUGHT MYSELF AS WORKING "ILLEGALLY".it was the responsibility of PSI then and since then to look after all of us Q.A,s</p> <p>WE PAY OUR REGISTRATION TO THE SOCIETY EVERY YEAR. I FEEL VERY DISTRESSED AND ACTUALLY BULLIED BY ALL OF THIS WE ARE A GROUP OF MOSTLY OLDER WOMEN WHO HAVE WORKED HARD AND SERVED THE PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR FOR MOST OF OUR LIVES ARE THE P.S.I NOW GOING TO SAY THAT I HAVE WORKED ILLEGALLY ALL MY LIFE. I THINK I HAVE ALWAYS WORKED LEGALLY AND MAYBE THE P.S.I WANT TO MAKE US REDUNDANT.THAT IS MY PROSPECT IF THE PROPOSAL IS PASSED ITS BEEN 40 YEARS I AM REALLY VERY ANXIOUS,</p>	
5. Fiona Lappin		
	<p>I am writing to you in relation to the issue of Temporary Absence.</p> <p>I am a Qualified Assistant having gained my certificate on the 24th April 1980, signed by the Registrar of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland Mr.Martin J.Cahill, stating that I am entitled to cover the Temporary Absence of a Pharmacist as long as I do not conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my own account.</p>	

	<p>I fully expect the PSI to honour my qualification as stated on my certificate and not to demean it in anyway that will have a detrimental effect on my work practice .</p> <p>I have over thirty years experience having worked in the same pharmacy for the said number of years. I work thirty two hours a week out of which I cover eighteen hours in temporary absence,I also cover holidays and any unexpected absences If the PSI adopt 12 hours per week as the time allowed to cover in the Temporary Absence of a pharmacist then I fear my employment will be terminated .</p> <p>I am a fully paid up member of the Society and expect to be treated as a Pharmacy Professional and not have my qualification eroded by what I see as an illegal Code of Practice which I have not seen and to which I am not party.</p> <p>I trust the Society will come to a fair decision and that I will not have to take any legal action in order to protect my qualification and to vindicate my rights under the Constitution and as provided for by natural law.</p>	
6.	Gertrude Nestor	
	<p>I am an old age pensioner who gets a prescription every month from the chemist. I want to have my say about what you are doing to the person that gives me my medicine.</p> <p>I do not like what you are doing. Do not think you are doing this on my behalf.</p> <p>How could it be fair to make rules that take away peoples rights. Rights they have had for 30 years or more. These rules change the qualification these people have for a long time. What kind of people could think this is fair.</p> <p>I never heard of a college changing the meaning of a qualification years after someone passed their exams and worked for over 30 years at the same job.</p> <p>How could it protect my health safety and well-being by stopping people from doing the same work at 5 minutes past the 12 hours a week. How are they a risk after 12 hours and not before that. I do not understand the reason for these rules. Would they get a criminal record for being in a shop if the chemist is late or sick ?</p> <p>Qualified Assistants should be allowed to work when the chemist is not there. Thats the way its always been. There has to be a chemist responsible for every shop and his assistant is as you say yourself competent to transact the business when the chemist is not there. That should be enough . Thats what fair is</p>	

7.	Anne O'Dwyer
	<p>Temporary Absence is when the Pharmacist is absent from work due to illness, holidays, days off e.g family occasions, business ect.</p> <p>I understand an Assistant would have at least 30 years experience, upskilling her/himself with relevant lectures at intervals during that time. That experience should mean they are competent to cover for the Pharmacist which they did for all the years prior to 2007.</p> <p>Why should those Assistant Pharmacists be deprived of their qualification now especially when they were never given notice that changes were forthcoming or opportunities to further their education in this field. It seems very unfair to me.</p>
8.	Valerie Kivlehan
	<p>I am a registered pharmaceutical assistant reg xxxxx and qualified in 1980.</p> <p>I have worked according to the terms of my qualification under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890. I do not seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my own account.</p> <p>I never agreed to the draft Code of Practice, and have not been working in accordance with it but I have been employed based on a different understanding of 'temporary absence'</p> <p>I can work up to 30 hours on a weekly basis in 'temporary absence', which can include holiday leave, leave for funerals, sickness etc. The shop is open 60 hours in the week.</p> <p>I have worked in the same pharmacy for 27 years. Should these draft rules come in to law, my hours and income will be significantly reduced and in all likelihood I will be unemployed. I am the sole provider in my household and have dependants.</p> <p>I am valued and trusted by my employer and shop clientele who have had to endure many qualified staff changes over the years. The standard of my work is constant, dependable and above reproach.</p> <p>I feel I am being bullied by the PSI with these rules and ask the question as to why they are now defining 'temporary absence, after all these years?</p> <p>I do not agree with these draft rules nor to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferral and registration in 1980. At the time of conferral, temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to my employability. I have always been legally entitled to cover a pharmacist in their</p>

	<p>temporary absence for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover and sick leave, etc.</p> <p>I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI. It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 30 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.</p>	
9.	Anne Mannion	
	<p>My name Anne Mannion and I am a qualified assistant.</p> <p>I have been working in my presence employments for the past 38 years according to the terms of my qualification under section 18 of pharmacy act 1890.</p> <p>I have worked diligently and within the law since I qualified.</p> <p>I have been entitled to cover short absences such as lunch hours, one day off over week, standard 2 week holidays and never exceeded my 14 day max.</p> <p>I have read never worked to the draft code of practise as this was not a legal document.</p> <p>This new proposal will make a huge change in my work practise.What chemist would want to employ us now under these conditions with so many new chemists being conferred each year?</p> <p>I feel very let down by the PSI as I have done my 3year apprenticeship,1year college ,38 years practice ,countless CPD courses and now E-portfolio.And guess what? After all that to be downgraded,It is quite humiliating, Is Mise le Meas Anne mannion Reg no xxxxx</p>	
10.	Kathleen Thompson	
	<p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant working for over thirty years. I never agreed with the draft Code of Practice which was not a legal document. I have not been working in accord with the draft Code Of Practice. All my working life I have covered for the pharmacist in 'the temporary absence' be it days off, sick days or holidays.Presently I work part time and also cover holidays for the pharmacist. If the proposed change were to go through it would have a detrimental effect on my financial position consequently on a relatively secure lifestyle.</p> <p>Previous to my current position I worked for nineteen years in another pharmacy.However due to the closure of that Pharmacy I found myself unemployed at the age of 55. It was very difficult to find employment,I emailed my cv and even handed it in person to every pharmacy in Kerry and Limerick but to no avail. This experience made me feel I was being shunned in a job that at one time I enjoyed a good standard of living.</p> <p>I have always worked in accordance with the terms of my qualification under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act- never sought to</p>	

	<p>conduct or manage a business or open a shop on my own account.</p> <p>I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferral and registration in 1982. At the time of my conferral temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to my employability. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover,sick leave etc.</p> <p>I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I understood in good faith which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI, It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 33 years in now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.</p>	
11.	Una Heneghan	
	<p>I am a proud Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant for nearly 40 years now! My registration number is xxxxx</p> <p>I never agreed to the Draft Code of Practice .</p> <p>I have not been working in accordance with the Draft Code of Practice but have been employed based on a different understanding of temporary absence.I work 24 hours weekly and 32 hours one week a month .The hours I work weekly in temporary absence are varied from week to week . I cover days off for different reasons from doctors appointments , pharmacy meetings etc.</p> <p>If this proposal goes ahead it will have a fiercely negative effect on my earning and employment possibilities. I am nearly 60 but I still need to work to cover mortgage payments and other financial commitments.</p> <p>I have worked 38 years as an assistant! I have worked almost 20 years in my current employment. I have worked according to the terms of our Qualification under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890.</p> <p>I do not seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop.I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferral and registration in year 1978. At the time of conferral , temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regards to my employability . I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for their entitlements to days off , holidays and for sick cover etc. I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated , validated, examined and privately run by the P.S.I</p> <p>It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner</p>	

	<p>for over 38 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years!</p> <p>It doesn't make sense at all !</p>	
12.	IPU	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Submission by the Irish Pharmacy Union to the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland on the draft PSI (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016</p> <p style="text-align: right;">February 2016</p> <p>The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU), the representative body for 2,160 pharmacists and 1,715 pharmacies, welcomes the opportunity to make a submission, on behalf of our members, to the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) on the draft PSI (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016.</p> <p>Current PSI Code of Practice</p> <p>The current <i>PSI Code of Practice Governing the Temporary Absence Clause of the Pharmacy Act 1890</i> has been in place since 1994. The following are the key points in the Code which are of most relevance to the new draft rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assistant who will be performing professional duties of the pharmacist in his temporary absence shall be employed in the pharmacy concerned on a permanent basis for not less than 15 hours per week. • The assistant shall be entitled to cover short absences, such as lunch hours, two half days or one day off per week and unscheduled short absences. • In the event of the temporary absence caused by illness of the pharmacist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Society shall be notified as soon as possible, but not later than one calendar week from the date of first absence. ➤ If the pharmacist has been absent for a second calendar week the Registrar shall be so informed and the direction of the Registrar in relation to the continuation of cover shall be acted upon by the pharmaceutical assistant who has been covering in the event of such an illness. • In the event of the temporary absence caused by the pharmacist's holiday entitlements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The pharmaceutical assistant shall be entitled to cover two working weeks per annum. 	

- The maximum number of days which the pharmaceutical assistant can cover shall not exceed 14 calendar days in any single absence.

Pharmacy Act 2007

When the Pharmacy Act 2007 was being drafted, it was our understanding that the PSI was not minded to be too prescriptive about the definition of temporary absence, as the cohort of pharmaceutical assistants was finite and had not given the PSI any cause for concern. Consequently, this is a self-limiting issue as most pharmaceutical assistants are going to reach retirement age over the next few years.

However, over the past number of years, during pharmacy inspections, PSI inspectors have insisted that pharmacy owners abide by the above-mentioned Code, i.e. that the pharmaceutical assistant must be employed in the pharmacy for a minimum of 15 hours per week before they can cover in the temporary absence of the pharmacist, such as lunches, one day off per week, two weeks holiday per year and unscheduled short absences.

It is unfortunate that the PSI has only now decided to address this issue, after the vast majority of pharmacies have been inspected and full compliance with this Code has been enforced, with the result that pharmacy owners have either changed the working hours of their pharmaceutical assistants or even made them redundant in circumstances where the pharmacy business could not economically sustain the working hours required by the PSI.

Draft PSI Rules on Temporary Absence

The draft *PSI (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016* propose the following key changes to the above-mentioned Code:

- The period of temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week.
- The pharmaceutical assistant must have provided 12 hours of skilled assistance in the previous month at the same registered retail pharmacy business.
- A pharmaceutical assistant, in the temporary absence of a pharmacist, can carry out activities related to the sale and supply of medicinal products but not those functions that would be specifically associated with the roles of superintendent pharmacist (i.e. responsible for overall professional and clinical management of the pharmacy) and/or the supervising pharmacist (i.e. responsible for all the ongoing operations of the pharmacy).

On the face of it, these new rules do seem to allow more flexibility in that the pharmaceutical assistant is only required to provide 12 hours of skilled assistance in the previous month to allow them to provide 12 hours per week temporary absence cover. It

would be useful to clarify whether this 12 hours per week requirement is inclusive or exclusive of any lunchtime cover that the pharmaceutical assistant may provide during the days that they are working under the supervision of a pharmacist.

The rules do not appear to provide for the pharmaceutical assistant covering for 14 days of a pharmacist's holiday or unscheduled short absences such as illness or funerals. It makes no sense that a pharmaceutical assistant, who is trusted to work 12 hours a week for 52 weeks in the temporary absence of a pharmacist, can't cover a 2 week holiday or an unscheduled absence. We propose that this provision be reinstated in the rules.

CPD and Fitness to Practise

Currently, pharmaceutical assistants registered with the PSI are not subject to mandatory CPD and Fitness to Practise. It has never been made clear why this is so.

The Department of Health is in the process of drafting the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill to amend the Medical Practitioners Act 2007, the Dental Act 1985, the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005, the Pharmacy Act 2007 and the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011 to update Fitness to Practise regulations for all such healthcare professionals. It would make sense for the PSI to use this opportunity to include pharmaceutical assistants in this legislation.

The Department of Health recently published the PSI (CPD) Rules 2015, which make CPD mandatory for pharmacists. An opportunity was missed on this occasion to extend mandatory CPD to pharmaceutical assistants. The new Temporary Absence Rules require that the superintendent pharmacist shall ensure that the pharmaceutical assistant has the requisite knowledge and skills. It would make more sense for the PSI, as keepers of the register of pharmaceutical assistants, to ensure that pharmaceutical assistants have such skills through mandating CPD, rather than seeking to abdicate their responsibilities to superintendent pharmacists.

We would be happy to meet with the PSI to discuss or clarify any of the issues raised in this submission.

13. Reg McDonald

	<p>I am writing in response to the draft rules on temporary absence cover by qualified assistants.</p> <p>I am a regular customer in a pharmacy as I need medication on a monthly basis. I have read your draft rules and I am surprised by the need to be so restrictive in defining temporary absence. I also watched your video on the role of a supervising pharmacist and cant understand why a common sense approach cannot be used in defining what is temporary absence when you are happy to use the common sense approach when defining what whole time charge is. If as suggested a pharmacist is present in a shop for a substantial amount of the operating hours of the pharmacy why can't the time the pharmacist is absent be considered that pharmacists temporary absence.</p> <p>What happens after 12 hours per week to the ability of the assistant to carry out the same duties they did for the 12 hours when they were allowed to provide cover. It does not make sense to me nor do I consider it fair to change the definition of a persons qualification more than 30 years after they qualified. No other profession I know of would do something like this. It is nonsense makes no sense to me at all. Qualified assistants were always able to cover a pharmacists holidays. Maybe this is an oversight. what about something unexpected happening ? would the shop have to close even though a qualified person was there ?</p> <p>I hope you will reconsider what you are proposing as I do not consider it to be fair or workable as you suggest.</p>	
14.	Elaine McLaughlin	
	<p>I would just like to comment on the draft proposal for temporary absence cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants. I don't believe it a necessity at this stage to make any huge changes to the previously agreed arrangements for assistants. Of the number of them left I'm sure most of them have only a few years until retirement and have worked regularly for the same employers for many years thus providing valuable assistance to their employer.</p> <p>By reducing the hours they can cover temporary absence at this stage you are affecting their livelihood. Also many pharmacies in rural areas depend on these assistants to provide cover when often it is impossible to obtain a locum pharmacist.</p> <p>In the chemist I work in we don't employ an assistant but in talking to other pharmacists I know many of them depend on the assistant and they feel by reducing the hours to a maximum of 12 may not always be feasible.</p> <p>I would just ask that you review these guidelines or maybe survey pharmacists to see what the general opinion is?</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment,</p>	
15.	Jacinta Timmons	
	<p>I commenced a four year programme of work / study in a pharmacy under the tutelage of a Registered Pharmacist over forty years ago. After three years practical training in all aspects of community pharmacy I studied full time for a further year in the College of Pharmacy in Shrewsbury Road and graduated as an Assistant Pharmacist in 1975. I was (and am) proud of my qualification</p>	

entitling me to work alongside a Registered Pharmacist (RP) and deputising for the RP in his Temporary Absence.

After graduating I obtained a position with another community pharmacist and conducted all aspects and duties of a pharmacist from that date onwards. I took charge of the pharmacy during the proprietor's / pharmacist's absence on holidays and on days off. In 1977 I moved to xxxxxx and again undertook all the duties and responsibilities of a Registered Pharmacist when working alongside him or when he was absent, ill or on holidays. On my return to xxxxxx in 1984 I was employed as an Assistant Pharmacist in three different pharmacies, undertaking all the duties and responsibilities as before.

I have always deputised for the Pharmacist in his/her Temporary Absence whether for an hour / day / illness / holidays over 39 years.

I obtained my qualification from The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI). I pay a yearly Registration fee to the PSI. I find it difficult to understand that the PSI did not consider the needs of their Assist Pharmacist members when setting up a degree qualification for Registered Pharmacists. The PSI should have introduced a "pathway" to allow interested Assistants obtain degree status. Too late now – But you must immediately include Assistants in your programme for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Fitness to Practise Regulations.

It appears that the PSI are introducing new rules and regulations diminishing the Assistant Pharmacist's role and status. I would like to be provided with a copy of these new regulations and details of why they are being introduced and who authorised them. No self-respecting Professional or Trade Unionist or upright citizen would allow their livelihood to be dismembered in such a manner. To think that my Professional Body is doing this to me is really absurd. Your membership does not consist solely of Registered Pharmacists – Assistant Pharmacists are your members also. I demand that you look after our (my) interests also.

It is also interesting to note that no Assistant Pharmacist has obtained a qualification for the last thirty years. Why try to reduce our role at this stage? Almost all Assistants are female – the PSI actions could be considered discriminatory!

I consider myself fully competent to carry out my duties in the temporary absence of the Registered Pharmacists. However I was made redundant as my Pharmacist was extremely worried that she would be censured by the Society if she was not present when and if an inspection took place! I was known and trusted by our customers. I have more practical experience (knowledge?) than any Locum who has only recently graduated.

THE PSI should and must look after the Assistant Pharmacist's interests. We have served the Registered Pharmacists well. We are members of the same Professional Body. We just want fair play and be allowed to work professionally and under the same terms

	<p>as heretofore.</p> <p>Jacinta Timmons xxxx</p> <p>PS I have also participated in the continuous education programme and even though out of work I continue to attend these programmes. Is there any shame amongst the PSI executive for what they are doing to professional Assistants?</p>	
16.	<p>Margaret Hayes</p> <p>I would like to comment on your proposed draft on temporary absence cover by a Pharmaceutical Assistant. I do not agree that temporary absence should be restricted to 12 hours weekly. Since I qualified in 1978 I have always covered days off and holidays of the Pharmacist. I have attended many continueing education courses to keep me updated in the profession. I certainly do not consider your draft a fair and workable model. This new draft could lead to job losses and who is prepared to compensate us for loss of work.</p> <p>Temporary absence was not defined when I qualified in 1978 ans so rights were confirmed on me with regard to my employability. The new model is not workable as emergencies arise in a pharmacy eg sickness or berevements. Every chemist shop in the country has a Supervising Pharmacist so there is no PA running or managing a pharmacy.</p> <p>I see this new draft as a down grading of my qualification which was formulated validated examined and privately run by the PSI. I do not understand why you would want to jeopardize the working conditions of a group of mostly female workers who have supported and helped Pharmacists in providing a professional service to the public. The youngest PA is now about 55 years of age so your proposal in a very ageist measure.</p> <p>Hoping you can come up with a more realistic and improved draft.</p> <p>Thanking You, Margaret Hayes.</p>	
17.	<p>Shirley Geurin</p> <p>In response to the request for comment on the temporary absence cover by pharmaceutical assistants,</p> <p>I wish just to state that I have thus far in my work life worked with three such assistants and I went through university with a fourth.</p> <p>It is my experience that all were individuals of the highest character and all performed and continue to perform their duties to</p>	

very exacting standards.

I qualified abroad myself it was a revelation that such a qualification existed when I returned from the UK, but the enduring quality of the persons who emerged from the course couldn't fail to impress.

I haven't taken the time to look as yet, but as the PAs have a minimum number of hours to practise (15 hours – this is two days or 1.5 days in most places) – I would assume that this stipulation also applies to pharmacists – though I have to admit that I am not aware that it does – so that seems to me to be unfair and wonder at the basis of this, when it is not universally applied (not withstanding I am not 100% sure re this and its application to pharmacists). Furthermore, given the descriptions of the potentially suitable absences, provided for under the 1994 document this curtails their flexibility further, especially given that we are only discussing temporary absences. I do not know but it would be interesting to find out how the Pas still working are actually working nowadays, as I work with a PA here, who would most certainly be competent to act in my temporary absence, but this is so unlikely to come up that it is almost a moot point.

Similarly, I wonder at the rationale for the stipulation that their employment be permanent – as this is again not a requirement for pharmacists and this prevent “locuming” as it were – this is possibly the intention, though it greatly reduces the flexibility of their working.

It seems to me thought that it is a pity and frankly a legislative gap that they are not the subject of fitness to practise legislation.

Likewise in relation to CPD – this is very unclear and a great pity that the opportunity to make provision for this has not been made.

Finally, given the timing of this, in so far as most peoples working live now span 40 years and its now 30 years since the final class of PAs came out, with ten years left to work, I would be very personally disappointed if those persons has their potential livelihood undermined rather than protected by legislation.

The world of pharmacy has certainly changed a great deal since I qualified and more so since the final class of PAs qualified, but many will need to remain working to be in a position to retire without the threat of financial instability in retirement.

These are obviously personal views, but my most important point, in my own view is that these are persons off exceptional character and professionalism in the discharge of their duties, so I would be loath to make it difficult for them to earn a living, rather they should be supported by CPD etc to practise safely and well and through possibly greater flexibility with respect to permanent employment.

18.	Joseph Britton	
	<p>Re: Qualified Pharmacy Assistants.</p> <p>A qualified pharmacy Assistant is in full time employment in our pharmacy since 1979, AND honestly we would be lost with out her.</p> <p>In the event that I or our other full time pharmacist is absent for a full day I have always had the policy of also having a pharmacist employed for the day along with our QPA.</p> <p>Every locum over the years have commented on the amazing help she provides and the invaluable assistance in knowing each and every patient their medical and their usage needs which in the case of patient care and safety is invaluable.</p> <p>They the locum pharmacist can get a lunch break them selves in the confidence that there is a competent qualified person in charge in their absence.</p> <p>Personally in my career I find the experience of a long term serving qualified assistant superior than any pharmacist who has been on the register less than five years, I know many will disagree with me but ask any of our patients and their confidence in the competency in the professional staff present in our pharmacy.</p> <p>Every citizen in Ireland has a right to earn an honest living and personally I find the proposals are contrary to this.</p> <p>I understand there was an agreement between the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland and the qualified pharmacy assistants way back in 1994 and this agreement my own qualified pharmacy assistant stands by always .</p> <p>I would urge a reconsideration and review of the proposals, otherwise a retrograde step will be carried out. We have a very valuable and experienced asset to our profession in Ireland</p> <p>Please don't throw the baby (in this case the granny/granddad) out with the bath water.</p> <p>I look forward to your response</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration in this matter</p>	
19.	Shelia McCarthy	
	I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant working as same in pharmacy for 35 years. I carry out the business of a pharmacist in his or her	

	<p>temporary absence. It is with deep regret that it has come my notice that the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland wants to define temporary absence to less than 12 hours per week. If that becomes law, I will lose my job as I will be absolutely useless to my pharmacist. I qualified as a Pharmacy Assistant so it is just disgraceful that my qualification is being taken from me.</p> <p>Yours Truly,</p> <p>Sheila McCarthy</p>	
20.	Bernadette McCann	
	<p>To whom it concerns my name is Bernadette Mccann and I am a qualified pharmaceutical assistant. I qualified in 1982 and have worked in community pharmacy ever since. I cannot agree to defining of temporary absence as to do so would surely mean that I would be unemployable. I have always worked in the temporary absence of my employer and have done so in a very professional manner and am a very valued member of staff but if temporary absence is defined as you state then unfortunately this may not be the case. I wish to continue to work as I have always done covering the temporary absence of my employer and dont seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my own account. I feel that I 'm a very experienced employee who has given great service over the years. I take great pride in my work and am happy to do do any cpd required of me .I cannot accept any definition of temporary absence that limits my qualification and as this matter have been ongoing for a very long time I hope that it can be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. I know that qualified assistants have been an integral and invaluable part of pharmacy and hopefully that will continue into the future .As you are aware we are by and large a diminishing group of people with a lot of experience who have given professional service over the years and want nothing more than to continue to do so into the future. We are a very professional group who have worked alongside pharmacists for a long time and would like recognition for all our years of service by allowing us to continue to work in the very professional manner that we have always done and continue to cover the temporary absence of our employers. Temporary absence is just that and as such should not be defined in hours or days and we should be allowed to work as we have done since we qualified in a professional and dignified manner</p> <p>Yours sincerely Bernadette Mccann</p>	
21.	Patrick Brady	
	<p><u>Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016</u></p> <p>1 All PA's have to be registered to work and this statutory registration confers <u>obligations</u> and <u>benefits</u> on the registrant. The obligations are enumerated in the 2007 Act and 2008 Rules.</p> <p>2 The last graduate from the course which finished in 1985 is now over <u>30</u> years on the register and became a registrant under the</p>	

	<p>statutory regulations of section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890</p> <p>3 There is a non statutory code of practice agreed between PSI and PAA in 1994 which created an <u>understanding</u> between both parties as to what 'temporary absence' meant.</p> <p>4 There are approximately 400 PA's on the register and by a process of attrition and retirements this number is <u>decreasing</u> all the time with no new additions.</p> <p>5 The vast majority of PA registrants are female which in general creates more onerous work commitments where family are concerned in relation to full time employment</p> <p>6 Under section 6 of 1994 agreement PA 'shall be employed in the pharmacy concerned on a permanent basis <u>for not less than 15 hours per week</u>'. The PA could also cover 'annual leave' and ' <u>the maximum number of days shall not exceed 14 calender days in any single absence</u>'</p> <p>Any PA who completed the relevant academic and apprenticeship requirements and passed the examinations of the PSI could be registered and was then employable in a 'protected profession' (benefit). As a consequence of this, PA's had a <u>REASONABLE EXPECTATION</u> of their career path and the economic benefits of being regulated by statute and the rules that applied at that time (Pharmacy Act 1890) The proposed changes in the RULES 2016 will alter the work parameters of the registrant and as a consequence the ' reasonable expectation' of their chosen career.</p> <p>Where a locum pharmacist is employed - even for a day or two - the 'employee' PA is really the front of house person who knows the local patients / customers intimately and all that that implies from a SAFETY point of view - e.g. family background, their ability to comply with rx instructions, visual disabilities, independent living skills, a familiar face reassuring the patient on the need and benefits of the medication.</p> <p>I feel the core polemic, is that while pharmaceutical assistants have complied with the terms and obligations of their registration, the goal posts will now be moved under the proposed rules, and their REASONABLE EXPECTATION of their ability to work in their chosen profession will be compromised unilaterally.</p> <p>Patrick Brady (B.Sc. Pharm.) not registered.</p>	
22.	Michael Wade	
	Your proposal to limit the time a Pharmaceutic Assistant can cover a pharmacist to 12 hours per week, is very short sighted and misguided.	

	It is also a disgraceful manner to treat a very valuable arm of our profession. Pharmaceutical assistants have been a vital contributor to the safe and efficient working of our much maligned profession, and in most cases, have proven to be as knowledgeable, efficient and caring as the pharmacists with whom they have worked alongside for many years.	
23.	Bernie English	
	<p>To whom it concerns,</p> <p>I am a qualified assistant since 1980 and have worked many times in the absence of a pharmacist. I would not have chosen this as a career if temporary absence was defined as per new draft. I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification. It seems incredible that the psi that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for 36 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.</p> <p>I have served my employers, the general public to the greatest of my professional ability for these years and do not enjoy this sort of demeaning dismissive treatment. What did we do as a body of people !!</p>	
24.	Susan O'Keefe	
	<p>To Whom It May Concern</p> <p>I would like to make on submission to the Public Consultation on draft Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rule 2016.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical assistant's qualifications must continue to be recognised, as they have been for upwards of 50 years. Many of the assistants have made and continue to make a worthwhile contribution to healthcare in Ireland. Most have vast experience and are an asset to local pharmacists.</p> <p>I appreciate the PSI's used to ensure safe pharmacy practice and patient safety I believe however, that the applications of the 12 hour 'temporary absence' regulation will be unremarkable and also casts doubt on the capacity and experience of pharmaceutical assistants.</p> <p>I believe also that rule 7 is a rule devised to phase out the use of all Pharmacy Assistants. As such, it should not be included in the new rules for temporary cover.</p>	

	Kind regards Susan	
25.	Kathleen Curley	
	<p>I am a registered pharmaceutical assistant and I qualified in 1975. My registration number is xxxxx. I have worked for 45 years in accordance with the draft code of practice, within which the term 'temporary absence' is as yet undefined.</p> <p>As generally occurs when a legal term is undefined, the meaning of that term naturally evolves through how it has been interpreted over a period of time. My colleagues and I have worked for many years with a similar interpretation of the term which does not restrict the term 'temporary absence' to a specific time period, such as the 12 hours you suggest. The majority of us have been qualified for between 30 and 50 years. The status quo works. Why would the PSI wish to expend useful time, resources and funding on trying to impose such a time period without considering the overall practical effect of putting this time period in place.</p> <p>Defining temporary absence as a period of 12 hours will be punitive to the majority of us who have worked for many years with the term undefined. The imposition of this newly defined term grossly undermines my skills and experience in the pharmaceutical field. I am trusted and valued by my employer and have built up strong customer relations, many of whom have been coming to me for advice for many years, indeed my advice has spanned many generations. How can it be fair to utterly change the meaning of my qualification all these years later?</p> <p>The imposition of this newly defined term assumes that Pharmaceutical Assistants are somehow seeking to conduct or manage their own businesses in place of the pharmacist, which is not the case. It is truly unfair, and does not make sense to change it now and to such a limited period of time.</p> <p>I have worked in accordance with section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 since I was 21 years old. The changes proposed undervalue my pharmaceutical qualification which was undertaken in good faith and formulated and examined by the PSI.</p> <p>I should be grateful if you would please seriously consider my submissions.</p>	
26.	Phil Keating	
	<p>I write as a member of the public and as a person who has worked in community pharmacy for over 30 years. I have worked with a number of Qualified Assistants over my years in pharmacy and never had an issue with their qualification. My understanding of the qualifications is that they are competent to fill in when the pharmacist is not present. I have worked with Qualified Assistants as they covered the Pharmacists days off, lunch times, holidays, illness cover and other unforeseen absences. I also worked with</p>	

	<p>Assistants many times as locum cover.</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use "common sense"" approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising pharmacists are concerned I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining "temporary absence"</p> <p>I do not see how it could be deemed "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their allocated 12 hours run out during cover for a Pharmacist, for example if a pharmacist were delayed returning from lunch or had a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offense?, The Qualified Assistant or The Pharmacist who is absent for 1 minute after the 12 hours expires. Would the Pharmacy have to close or break the law!!?</p> <p>I do not understand how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change the meaning of a qualification 30-50 years post conferral. This qualification has stood for many years, why the need to change it now?</p> <p>Is short I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p>	
27.	Niamh Gallagher	
	<p>I want to express my disgust on how these draft rules the PSI have created will have detrimental effects on pharmaceutical assistants.</p> <p>Since registering as a pharmacist in Ireland (2009) I have received nothing but kindness and advice from my colleagues. It appears that they were ok to stand in the place of a pharmacist when there wasn't so many pharmacy courses available to students, and it was impossible to get an actual pharmacist to stand in when a day off was needed. Now they have to stand aside while space is made to accommodate the extra pharmacists that the PSI are happy to allow join their society and accept their registration fees. I personally know about six pharmaceutical assistants and can vouch for their professionalism, pharmaceutical knowledge and work ethic . They are all about 50+ years of age and have worked in community pharmacy all their lives, and often in the same pharmacies, where they are trusted members of staff, and held in high esteem by their colleagues and customers alike. The rapport that the pharmaceutical assistants have with the customers often go back years, people's parents have gone to them and now their children are. Their vast pharmaceutical knowledge has broadened with their time in practice. I regularly attend IPU training lectures and regularly meet my pharmaceutical colleagues I can say with absolute certainty that in the last role I held of supervising pharmacist I felt absolute faith in taking days off and leaving the pharmaceutical assistant in charge, which I definitely didn't when I had secured a recently qualified locum - who would not know the customers nor their family history and would not have the experience both in dealing with the paperwork side of pharmacy nor dealing with patients.</p> <p>Please reconsider any actions you are considering regarding pharmaceutical assistants,</p>	

28.	Liam Grogan	
	<p>My name is Liam Grogan. My xxxxxx is a qualified pharmaceutical assistant with over 30 years experience in community pharmacy. She has worked in the temporary absence of a pharmacist since she qualified in 1982.</p> <p>It is my understanding that the PSI now intends to define temporary absence, which if carried out as proposed will render my xxxxxx qualification void. As the PSI prefer to use a 'common sense' approach when defining 'whole time charge' where supervising pharmacists are concerned, I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining 'temporary absence'.</p> <p>I do not understand how any rationalisation can be placed on rendering a qualification void, where the qualified person has been for decades and have been qualified to do so. This qualification has been valid for decades, so why is there a need to change it now?</p> <p>If this proposal is implemented it would mean unemployment for my xxxxxx and the unlikelihood of acquiring future employment. She is recently xxxxxxxx and supporting me and my sister in college and this would have dire consequences on the entire family and have far-reaching effects for the future.</p> <p>The pharmacist's assistants are a small group of people with unquantifiable experience in their fields and this matter has been addressed on many occasions in the past. The group deserve a fair outcome and depend on this 'definition' for their livelihoods.</p> <p>Any change would mean substantial hardship for all concerned and this is unfair to a professional group of people who have dedicated their whole lives to their careers.</p> <p>I urge you to consider these actions strongly as they will adversely affect the people involved more than just redefining a 'definition', it will mean the end of numerous careers and livelihoods.</p>	
29.	Nuala Curry	
	<p>My name is Nuala Curry (Reg No. xxxx). I am a Pharmacist working in xxxxx. I have known and worked with XXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXX (Reg No. xxxxx) for seven years.</p> <p>I have always found XXXXXX to exhibit the upmost professionalism in conducting her duties in the Pharmacy. She is extremely competent at her job, and has a wealth of experience to draw on. XXXXXX is well respected and valued in the Pharmacy by colleagues and patients alike. I am 100% confident in her ability to cover professionally for me in my absence for whatever the</p>	

	<p>length of that time period may be.</p> <p>I feel if the proposed changes were implemented it would in effect make her job null and void, thus affecting her ability to earn a living from a qualification she worked hard to obtain and which she has developed during her years of experience . I think it is extremely unfair to change the parameters of this qualification at this stage of her career.</p> <p>In conclusion I strongly object to the implementation of any changes to the regulation of Temporary Absence cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p>	
30.	Margaret McGrath	
	<p>It seems incredible that the governing body of pharmacy which would be deemed to be a caring profession could propose such a limited period of unsupervised professional practice for people with my qualification.Surely qualified assistants have served the profession very well for decades and pharmacists always valued their input.The pharmacists who qualified prior to the introduction of the degree course respected the contribution we made since they knew their pharmacies were in safe hands when they had any family emergency.The graduates also appreciated the experience that we brought to the day to day running of their business and since the number who are now employed because of age is so low it is cruel to suggest that we should effectively disappear.</p> <p>I know there are people whose lives are going to be destroyed if this proposal comes into effect since they have financial commitments and they will have to tell their families that their qualification has become obsolete overnight.How does one explain to anyone that your qualification and experience have suddenly become worthless?,</p> <p>There is nothing more to say.</p>	
31.	Mary Martin	
	<p>Dear sir or Madame</p> <p>I cannot understand your recent proposals to restrict working conditions for PA.</p> <p>I have been dealing with various assistants in my lifetime and have never found fault with their work or professionalism.</p> <p>In my opinion they are reliable and useful to pharmacies.</p> <p>Why change the rules and compromise the working conditions of so many people.</p>	

32.	Ivan Dixon	
	<p>With regard to the 'temporary absence' guidelines.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pharmaceutical assistant can provide 12 hours unsupervised cover in any one week provided they have provided 12 hours 'skilled assistance' the previous month. 'Skilled assistance' should be supervised by a pharmacist to qualify to provide unsupervised assistance in temporary absence. 2. 12 hours of 'skilled assistance' the previous month to qualify to work in temporary absence of pharmacist should be increased to 24 hours 'skilled assistance' the previous month. 3. Pharmaceutical assistant must be an employee of pharmacy in which they provide 'skilled assistance'. 4. Locum cover should be expressly forbidden (currently common practice). 	
33.	Louise Kennedy	
	<p>I would like to comment on the draft 'temp absence' legislation.</p> <p>I work with, and in the past, have also worked with, a pharmaceutical assistant. I can say with confidence that I would have complete confidence knowing that these individuals are covering my absence. I would like to know the rationale for the twelve hours maximum cover by a pharmaceutical assistant. What is the theory or evidence to support this period of cover? Why is it not longer? Also, the stipulation that the assistant has had to cover 12 hours in the previous month; again, I would like to know the rationale behind this requirement.</p> <p>A more serious legislative point, relating to duration of work, that I feel needs to be addressed is the maximum continuous working period completed by any one pharmacist or pharmaceutical assistant. Is it safe for any one pharmacist or assistant to do a twelve hour shift, possibly without any proper break?</p> <p>Another legislative point that I feel needs to be addressed is the absence of the CPD requirement for pharmaceutical assistants. What is the rationale for this absence? Surely pharmaceutical assistants should be governed in the same way, and have the same opportunity for CPD, as pharmacists.</p> <p>I feel that the proposed legislation severely restricts the professional opportunities for pharmaceutical assistants.</p>	

34.	Francine Kivlehan	
	<p>I am writing to you today in response to the proposed Draft Rules recently announced by the PSI in relation to the regulation of the term Temporary Absence Cover – and my concerns as to the ultimate consequences I believe it has for the role of Pharmaceutical Assistant (PA).</p> <p>It seems to me to be a gross undermining by the PSI of the PA role, certainly if you consider the history and years of service that such individuals across the country who hold PA qualifications, many of who have worked in their respective community pharmacies for several years under the faith and trust of their supervisors, colleagues and customers alike.</p> <p>In my opinion it reads as a form of marginalisation towards this group of people – which to my knowledge is mostly made up of women in their mid-50’s. Having taken the time to read through the proposed Draft Rules and background information provided on the PSI website, I believe that if it were to come into effect it would make this group of highly experienced and qualified professionals unemployable for the job that many of them have already been doing very well until now.</p> <p>The service, advice, knowledge and standard of care I have personally received from the Pharmaceutical Assistant in my local pharmacy over the years is excellent. I have trusted them completely with any of my health concerns and ailments, to the extent that it really is the only reason I am a customer of my local pharmacy. And I am certain I am not alone in this opinion, should you ask other customers who are loyal to their own community pharmacies they would most likely offer up the same reason.</p> <p>This rather unique group of qualified professionals – PAs – are a valuable resource to their local pharmacies across the country. They should be rewarded for their years of service and the part they have played in the 126 year history of how Pharmacy has developed in this country. Their level of professionalism at their own jobs I am sure has set the bar for the younger generations of Pharmacists that have followed them, not least in terms of providing support and a readiness to share their experience and knowledge with their younger colleagues. If the PSI are looking to advance on the regulation of Pharmacists in this country, perhaps they should consider upgrading PAs to the same equal footing as Pharmacists? At this stage of their careers with the vast experience they have attained, it would be their right.</p> <p>Defining the term Temporary Absence in the manner proposed, especially after the PSI were happy to allow PAs to join their society and pay their fees – it is an insult. It raises many questions as to the motives and even integrity of such an association why such a proposal would even be considered at such a time when the reality is that the role of PA will be non-existent ~10 years from now. However, in an attempt to try and keep this letter brief I will only ask 1 question. Why is it 126 years after the</p>	

	<p>introduction of the term is the PSI now attempting to define Temporary Absence? Why is it that the PSI might believe that someone can be “competent” to cover the absence of a Pharmacist for 12 hours per week, and 1 minute over that time are “incompetent”? To me at least, it makes no sense.</p> <p>I would ask that the PSI please reconsider any actions they are considering regarding Pharmaceutical Assistants in relation to the definition of the term Temporary Absence. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.</p>	
35.	Mary O'Malley	
	<p>To whom it concerns</p> <p>My name is Mary O Malley and I am a qualified assistant since 1985.Iam not happy with the new proposed regulations in relation to temporary absence.I have been working in pharmacy since 1985 and now you are trying to say that this qualification isn't worth the paper its written on .I have provided all my employers and all my customers the best of my time and knowledge and experience and now the PSI are undermining our qualification. I am still working 3-5 days a week and I have not been working in accordance with the Code of Practice but have been employed based on a different understanding of temporary absence in 2 pharmacies.How come a qualification received in good faith after 4 years of study is now null and void in the eyes of the PSI.WHAT HAPPENED !!!!</p> <p>/</p> <p>Awaiting your response</p>	
36.	Brian McDonald	
	<p>Submission on Temporary Absence cover</p> <p>As a member of the public I wish to make a submission on the above draft rules.</p> <p>As I understand it there are 11 rules most of which are definitions and not really up for discussion.</p> <p>I would have a problem with two rules i.e. Rules 6 and 7.</p>	

I read that the PSI are looking for a “fair and workable “model and are trying to provide the public with the assurance of best pharmacy practice and patient safety.

Rule 6

The impression these rules give me is that the PSI considers that there is a risk that after 12 hours a week the Pharmacy assistant is no longer competent. If this is true I do not understand how they can be competent again the next week for another 12 hours. As a member of the public I am concerned that the PSI are sending mixed messages to the public as to whether these people are properly qualified. I would respectfully suggest that if the qualification is in doubt then the fault lies with the people who educated, examined and qualified this grade of people. Then I would ask who else did they qualify? Should we be looking at any other pharmacy qualifications?

I also hear on the PSI website the definition of the role of the Supervising Pharmacist. It talks of using common sense when defining “whole time charge”. I would determine that when the Supervising Pharmacist is not present in the shop they are temporarily absent. Why can that same common sense not apply here?

Rule 7

I do not understand the need for the Assistant to perform “skilled assistances” for a specified time on an ongoing basis. Once the Supervising Pharmacist is confident that a person is capable and competent that should be enough.

The qualification that Assistants have has stood the test of time for over 100 years. I do not consider it fair to change the meaning of what a qualification is when these people have been working in the profession for a minimum of 30 years. I do not believe the PSI has the right to bring about the demise of an entire register of people they themselves qualified. That is exactly what will happen if these rules become law.

I do not consider these rules to be “fair and workable” and in no way address any public safety issues. Do not think you are implementing these rules on my behalf.

37.	Pauline Kavanagh	
	<p>I am Pharmaceutical Assistant Pauline Kavanagh reg no. xxxxx and here is my comment on the proposed draft rules.</p> <p>I am both disappointed and insulted by the way my colleagues and I have been treated by the Pharmaceutical Society for the last 20 years. I do not see how the draft Rules No 6 and 7 are either fair or workable or give assurances of best practice to the public.</p> <p>My employer hired me almost 19 years ago to cover any period of time that he was absent from the shop. That is what the understanding of my qualification was when I qualified. I could not carry on open shop on my own account but was competent to transact the business (all of the business) of the Pharmacist when they are temporarily absent. The meaning of absence covered days off, lunch breaks, late starts, holidays, illness and any emergencies that might arise. Restricting my hours of cover to 12 hours per week will mean I can no longer fulfil the role I was employed to do. I therefore could be made redundant at any time and this is after 19 years of service.</p> <p>I have talked at length to numerous people of all professions including Pharmacists, Doctors, Solicitors, Barristers, Accountants, Teachers, TD`s and a Senator in Dail Eireann. Not one person I spoke to could understand the sense or reason in what the PSI are doing to Assistants.</p> <p>I find it hard to understand how a council of 21 people could honestly think that these draft rules are fair or workable or give any assurance to the public. They cast doubt on the ability of an assistant to be competent after 12 hours a week, yet they are back in play the next week.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the Supervising Pharmacist to ensure the Assistant and indeed anybody working in the shop is competent to carry out their duties. This is not the remit of the PSI.</p> <p>The PSI are happy to use the "common sense " approach when defining what "whole time charge" is where the Supervising Pharmacist is concerned.. Why can they not use the same common sense to determine that when somebody in whole time charge is absent they are in "temporary absence"</p> <p>If these rules become law who would be guilty of the offence should the pharmacist be delayed and not make it back to the shop within the 12 hours?</p> <p>Would the guilty party be guilty of a crime ?</p>	

	<p>What would the penalty for such a crime be ? Would they then have a criminal record ?</p> <p>What kind of assurance would it give the public if they see a shop closed or unable to dispense prescriptions when someone who dispensed a prescription five minutes earlier is still in the shop? What kind of mixed messages will this send to the public?</p> <p>I do not think these rules are well thought out. They are neither fair or workable or assuring to the public. They are not practicable in the real world.</p> <p>I do hope that the PSI listen to reason and come up with something more fair and workable. I am not looking for anything over or above what I believe I earned and have as a right .</p> <p>I want the PSI to honour the meaning of the qualification they conferred on me more than 35 years ago.</p>	
38.	Laura Bashford	
	<p>I am writing to you regarding the proposed amendment regarding pharmaceutical assistants. I am a pharmacist and I have Imocumed in many shops. I have encountered a few pharmaceutical assistants and every single one was amazing at their job. They helped me when I was just qualified and thought me a lot. If you define temporary absence to the minuscule amount that you are proposing you are effectively ruining the career of many of these assistants. Some which are nearing retirement age anyway. These rules are unfair and are renegeing on promises made to these people when they studied all those years ago. I wholly do not support this proposal.</p>	
39.	Ailbhe Byrne	
	<p>I am writing in relation to the draft publication for Regulation of Temporary Absence by Pharmaceutical Assistants. Having read the draft publication, I am of the opinion that these new regulations are entirely unfair and discriminatory against a minority group of qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants. I do not need to point out to you the small number of these – mainly – women left working, or the small number of years they have left before retirement. Nor do I need to point out to you that Pharmaceutical Assistants have anywhere ranging from 30 to 50 years practical experience in the industry, and that this experience translates into competent, qualified and capable Pharmaceutical Assistants. It is my opinion that Rules 7 & 8 are entirely unfair and unworkable.</p> <p>In relation to Rule 7: Placing such strict limits on the number of hours a Pharmaceutical Assistant is allowed to work translates into a claim of incompetence after that number of hours is fulfilled. Pharmaceutical Assistants have worked alone in the temporary absence of Pharmacists since their qualifications were conferred. After decades of experience, are we now to assume that they are incapable of maintaining the same level of knowledge and professionalism after 12 hours in one week? What would happen if they were to work a Friday and Saturday in one week and a Monday and Tuesday in another? Are they incapable of fulfilling their</p>	

	<p>job requirements for more than 12 hours in ANY seven days, or does the resetting of the clock on Monday morning reinstated their skills, allowing them to restart their allowed 12 hours? I am, perhaps, being ridiculous, but so are these arbitrarily decided 12 hours of competence. This doesn't even take into account the impracticalities of this limit; for example, instances of emergency where a Pharmacist would be forced to bring in an inexperienced and unknown (to the patients) locum to cover him- or herself, should there be the need, instead of getting assistance from a trusted employee and colleague.</p> <p>Furthermore, that Pharmaceutical Assistants would be required to work with a supervising pharmacist for 12 hours in each preceding month is a highly insulting addition into an already unworkable proposal. With decades of experience, these Pharmaceutical Assistants are suddenly required to look over the shoulder of their Supervising Pharmacist for 12 hours per month? To what end? To learn the skill they have been practising for decades? Or to make it so awkward for a Pharmacist to hire a Pharmaceutical Assistant, that the Assistants all lose their employment? That certainly seems to be the only goal with this rule. Again I do not need to point out the fact that there are about 10 years before the last of the PSI Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants retire, meaning the "issue" of their qualification is quite literally a dying one.</p> <p>In relation to Rule 8, I would point out that the very essence of the original qualification, as set out on your own website which states that assistants can "act on his/her [the supervising pharmacist's] behalf, and carry out the functions of the pharmacist" is completely contradicted by the rule stating an assistant "shall not act in the capacity" of a supervising pharmacist. This entirely vacates the meaning of the original qualification and again points to what appears to be an insidious attempt to entirely remove Pharmaceutical Assistants from the workforce.</p> <p>Most patients would not even be aware that there is a very small difference between the qualifications an Assistant and a Pharmacist have. Most would not even be aware of whether or not the nice woman in their local pharmacy has one qualification or the other, because Pharmaceutical Assistants have been doing the same job as Pharmacists for decades. Attempting to redefine Pharmaceutical Assistants' qualifications is simply an attempt by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland to bully a minority group within their organisation, who have worked to the rules set out by the PSI at the time of their conferral. If the PSI wants to remove the title of Pharmaceutical Assistant, the only fair way is to register Pharmaceutical Assistants as Pharmacists, granting them the same rights, and liabilities, as a Pharmacist. Their decades of experience have to count for something.</p>	
40.	Conor Heneghan	
	<p>I am writing to you to strongly object to your proposal to define temporary absence for Qualified Assistants .</p> <p>I have two aunts who have been Qualified Assistants for nearly 40 years each and have worked diligently according to the terms of their Qualifications under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890.</p>	

	<p>It is extremely difficult for Assistants to agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of their qualification they have worked to since their conferral and registration by the Pharmaceutical Society in 1975 and 1978 respectively.</p> <p>At the time of their conferral, temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on them with regard to employability .</p> <p>It is very sad to think that a society they have been a member of for nearly 40 years deem it necessary to demean them now as they head towards retirement.</p> <p>I would respectfully ask you to leave them in peace.</p>	
41.	Jarlath Heneghan	
	<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>I am writing to you to strongly object to your proposal to define temporary absence for Qualified Assistants.</p> <p>I have two sisters who have been Qualified Assistants for nearly 40 years and have worked diligently according to the terms of their Qualifications under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 which is 126 years now.</p> <p>It is extremely difficult for Assistants to agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of their qualification They have worked to since their conferral and registration by the Pharmaceutical Society in 1975 and 1978 respectively.</p> <p>At the time of their conferral, temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on them with regard to employability.</p> <p>It is very sad to think that a Society they have been a member of for nearly 40 years, deem it necessary to demean them now as they head towards retirement.</p> <p>I would respectfully ask you to leave them in peace.</p>	

42.	Darragh Heneghan	
	<p>I am writing to you to strongly object to your proposal to define temporary absence for qualified assistants. I have family members who have been qualified assistants for nearly 40 years each and have worked diligently according to the terms of their qualifications under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 which is 126 years now.</p> <p>It is extremely difficult for assistants to agree a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of their qualification they have worked to since their conferral and registration by the Pharmaceutical Society in 1975 and 1978 respectively.</p> <p>At the time of their conferral, temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on them with regard to employ ability.</p> <p>It is very sad to think that a society they have been a member of for so long, deem it necessary to demean them now as they head toward retirement.</p> <p>I would respectfully ask you to leave them in peace.</p>	
43.	Michael Heneghan	
	<p>I am writing to you to strongly object to your proposal to define temporary absence for Qualified Assistants .</p> <p>I have 2 aunts who have been Qualified Assistants for nearly 40 years each and have worked diligently according to the terms of their Qualifications under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 which is 126 years now !</p> <p>It is extremely difficult for Assistants to agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of their qualification they have worked to since their conferral and registration by the Pharmaceutical Society in 1975 and 1978 respectively .</p> <p>At the time of their conferral , temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on them with regard to employability .</p> <p>It is very sad to think that a Society they have been a member of for nearly 40 years , deem it necessary to demean them now as they head towards retirement .</p> <p>I would respectfully ask you to leave them in peace.</p>	

44.	Louis Heneghan	
	<p>I am writing to you to strongly object to your proposal to define temporary absence for qualified assistants. I have two sisters who have been qualified assistants for nearly 40 years each and have worked diligently according to the terms of their qualifications under section 19 of the pharmacy act 1890 which is in it's 126th year now.</p> <p>It is extremely difficult for assistants to agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of their qualification they have worked to since their conferral and registration by the Pharmaceutical Society in 1975 and 1978 respectively.</p> <p>At the time of their conferral temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on them with regard to employability. It is very sad to think that a society they have been a member of for nearly 40 years deems it necessary to demean them now as they head towards retirement.</p> <p>I would respectfully ask for you to leave them in peace.</p>	
45.	Michele Durcan	
	<p>I am writing to you to strongly object to your proposal to define temporary absence for Qualified Assistants.</p> <p>I have two sisters who have been Qualified Assistants for nearly 40 years each and have worked diligently according to the terms of their Qualifications under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 which is 126 years now! It is extremely difficult for Assistants to agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of their qualification they have worked to since their conferral and registration by the Pharmaceutical Society in 1975 and 1978 respectively.</p> <p>At the time of their conferral, temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on them with regard to employability. It is very sad to think that a Society they have been a member of for nearly 40 years, deem it necessary to demean them now as they head towards retirement.</p> <p>I would respectfully ask you to leave them in peace.</p>	
46.	Michele Parle	
	<p>I am writing as a Pharmaceutical Assistant having qualified in 1977,thus having almost 40 years experience in my chosen career.</p> <p>My understanding is that the Council of the PSI has proposed draft rules,for public consultation, as to what specifically constitutes the “ temporary absence “of a registered pharmacist, the definition of which has never been satisfactorily agreed. In attempting to define this on-going dilemma, Rule 6 of the proposal states that “ a period of absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week”, and furthermore, the PSI wish to reduce the necessary hours provided in the previous month at the same registered retail pharmacy, to entitle the Pharmaceutical Assistant provide this cover.</p> <p>In my own experience,I have never agreed to this draft Code of Practice,simply because it was never a legal document and ,as</p>	

	<p>such ,has no legal status with which we must comply.</p> <p>At present,I am in permanent part-time employment and have been for the past 12 years.This constitutes 16 hours employment over 2 days. On any occasion that I have been called upon to act as locum in another pharmacy , I have undertaken a full 8 hour day,without a break from the premises,to fulfill the terms of my qualification, responsibilities and employment. The issue of prior working hours in any given Pharmacy were never relevant, as the temporary absence situation had never been precisely defined or addressed, so my standing as a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant and ability to practise was never in question.</p> <p>I strongly disagree with and have difficulty reconciling any change implemented that would impinge negatively on the specific definition regarding the terms of my qualification, that would reduce any aspect of over 35 years of my working experience, in the eyes of the public and my work colleagues, and by so doing, would undermine the confidence placed in my ability to perform both legally and professionally,as I believe I have been doing and which I wish to continue.</p>	
47.	Maura Doyle	
	<p>I would like to put forward my thoughts on the draft re "temporary absence."</p> <p>PSI are determined to ruin the jobs for assistants by trying to fix this "old chestnut".this is not fair to us.</p> <p>By defining the term to 12hrs cover our jobs are severely limited if not totally a loss.I think it is reasonable to include -----annual leave of the Pharmacist ---in the proposal and even with that it still would mean loss of earnings for us</p> <p>What about our entitlements to work with minimum 12hrs a week-- sorry monthly would suit ye nicely, keep our hand in!! this is so condescending-- no thanks</p> <p>Leave our jobs alone temporary absence means exactly that</p> <p>Why can't each pharmacy who employs an assistant submit the "temporary absence"for their own pharmacy to you the regulator and you decide if the issue is being abused.</p> <p>Are the supervising pharmacist on to be trusted to do this.?</p> <p>Telling the retail sector again how you want things done and we have to do it,is this fair no!,</p> <p>Please take my humble points on board</p>	

	<p>Maura doyle</p> <p>(assistant pharmacist 1981-all my life and I would say without sounding sad,I really enjoyed my time as ass in many great pharmacist please leave our jobs alone!!)</p>	
48.	Celine Culkin	
	<p>To who it may concern.</p> <p>I do not agree to the draft rules. I know and have worked with different pharmaceutical assistants. Whenever any one of them has worked in 'temporary absence', their standards have been excellent. I do not see them posing a risk to health and safety. On the contrary, it is central to their work ethic. The recognition and value of their experience is essential in an occupation that has seen many changes over the past years.</p> <p>I worked in pharmacy for 20 years and know what our customers want which is mostly contact with the same person who know their needs. Pharmaceutical Assistants know their customers and their customers trust them.</p> <p>The pharmaceutical assistant, I worked with is both knowlegable and trustworthy and the shop is in 'a safe pair of hands' whenever she is there.</p> <p>I see very little difference between pharmacists and pharmaceutical assistants.</p> <p>My understanding is that they were educated and qualified by the PSI and pay an annual registration fee to allow them to work .Temporary absence was never defined and this group of professionals (mostly women in their mid 50s) contribution to pharmacy and their many years of experience, should not be written off or demeaned.</p> <p>It appears illogical to define 'temporary absence' i.e., a pharmaceutical assistant is competent to perform his/her duties for 12 hours and on the 13th hour is not?</p> <p>It is the remit of the PSI to protect this group of people instead of using tactics to undermine and make them unemployable.</p> <p>I am hoping that my submission will be considered favourably.</p>	

49.	Dympna Doyle	
	<p>I wish to add my voice to object to changes that are proposed re Temporary absence. My sister has worked as a Pharmaceutical Assistance for the last 34 years and has performed her duties to the utmost giving advice and care to all in her community. If these changes go ahead it will effectively mean that her qualification will be null and void despite having worked in this environment all her working life. She should be allowed to continue as is until her retirement as she is a single parent doing her best to put her two children through college.</p> <p>I trust you will look again at these changes and consider the impact they will have on all the Pharmaceutical Assistants still working.</p>	
50.	M J Heneghan	
	<p>I strongly object to the proposal to define 'temporary absence' for Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>I have family members that are qualified Assistants for many years who have worked diligently according to the terms of their qualification & registration under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890. They are members of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland for nearly 40 years.</p>	
51.	Linda McDonald	
	<p>I am making comments on the draft proposals re Temporary absence cover by qualified assistants.</p> <p>I do not believe Rule 6 is either fair or workable or addresses any public health and safety issues.</p> <p>I see no logic in having the word temporary defined in a finite number of hours per week.</p> <p>Whatever number is declared has the potential to be exceeded in unforeseen circumstances.</p> <p>Assistants always had the right to cover a pharmacist's holidays and I see no mention of this.</p> <p>As for rule 7</p> <p>I know of no other qualification where once qualified a person has to prove themselves every month</p>	

	<p>Assistants not being subject to fitness to practice reflects very badly on the PSI. not the assistant</p> <p>It would serve the public better if the PSI regulated properly and held all the people they have on their registers to account. Otherwise why bother to keep the register.</p> <p>Everyone involved in health care should be accountable for their actions. Everyone on an official register should be compelled to do CPD and CE. If the PSI had rules to that effect it would serve the health and safety of the public much better.</p> <p>The draft rules as they are only serve to make the vast majority of assistants redundant.</p> <p>I do not consider the draft rules fair or workable and I hope the PSI will reconsider.</p>	
52.	Patria Jordan	
	<p>I am writing to you to strongly object to your proposal to define temporary absence for Qualified Assistants.</p> <p>I have two dear friends who have been Qualified Assistants for nearly 40 years each and have worked diligently according to the terms of their Qualifications under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 which is 126 years now.</p> <p>It is extremely difficult for Assistants to agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of their qualification they have worked to since their conferral and registration by the Pharmaceutical Society in 1975 and 1978 respectively .</p> <p>At the time of their conferral , temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on them with regard to employability.</p> <p>It is very sad to think that a Society they have been a member of for nearly 40 years , deem it necessary to demean them now as they head towards retirement.</p> <p>I would respectfully ask you to leave them in peace.</p>	
53.	Deirdre Lynch	
	<p>SUBMISSION ON DRAFT PROPOSALS re TEMPORARY ABSENCE</p> <p>I am a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant. I qualified in September 1978 , this means it is 42 years since I began this career in pharmacy. I completed the apprenticeship and college time set down by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. My certificate of qualification states I have passed the examination entitling me “to act as an assistant to a pharmaceutical chemist in accordance</p>	

with the provisions of Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act (Ireland) 1875,Amendment Act,1890. This does not entitle the holder to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on his own account.” I have always worked within this remit and have never accepted the draft code of practice.

I have been employed under a different understanding of the term temporary absence ie when the supervising pharmacist is not present in the business they are temporarily absent. Therefore I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence since it reduces the terms of my qualification .

I have always worked legally covering the pharmacist on their days off,holidays,sick leave and unscheduled absences which occur frequently in a retail business. It seems to me to be

beyond belief that the very body that conferred this legal right on me is now defining the terms of qualification which would suggest I have been working illegally for 40 years .

I have worked with pharmacists for many years and they have had great respect for my qualification and work.At this time I work between two shops owned by the same pharmacist. In one shop I cover twelve hours per week plus any time the supervising pharmacist needs me to cover. In the other pharmacy I work 17 hours per week plus any time needed by the pharmacist outside this. The draft rules stating temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours per week will alter the terms of my employment , cost me my job and render me unemployable. As the main earner in my family this will have enormous consequences .

Defining temporary absence as a set amount of hours per week is unworkable. Taking the twelve hours proposed by the PSI it will be an offence if I cover twelve hours plus one minute . If the pharmacist is delayed or becomes ill suddenly-as recently occurred-which of us breaks the law? My supervising pharmacist knows the relationship I have with the customers and my knowledge of the business and how it is run .

Temporary absence has an established meaning in terms of our qualification. It has always been understood as “not permanent”, changing this has the effect of interfering with the established right to practice on the part of the PA which attracts constitutional protection as both a personal and property right (Articles 40.3 and /or 40)

This draft proposal is unworkable in the real world of retail pharmacy where unscheduled absences by the pharmacist can happen at any time for a number of reasons eg a sudden family illness. Pharmaceutical Assistants are qualified to take over in these situations and act legally doing so. To

define this qualification as a certain number of hours belittles the qualification conferred by the PSI on P As . It is unjust ,unfair to a professional group and should not become law.

54.	Gary Stack	
	<p>I wish to make a submission to the public consultation on the on draft Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016.</p> <p>I believe that the proposed stipulation on what constitutes a temporary absence is far too restrictive and represents too significant change from the rules that have operated successfully to date. I believe that the rules that are currently in force should be maintained. I have some experience of working with registered pharmaceutical assistants and have found their performance to be beyond reproach. I do not see the merit in restricting their ability to practice in such a manner, given that they have successfully practiced in the absence of pharmacists across the country for many years.</p> <p>As a member of xxxxxxx, I believe that it would be preferable, to all parties, to bring pharmaceutical assistants under the umbrella of the CPD requirements expected of pharmacists. This would allow pharmaceutical assistants to continue to operate as they have up to this point and would also assure the public of the professional competence of these individuals.</p>	
55.	Sean Doyle	
	<p>As a practicing community pharmacist, I have found the role of the Pharmaceutical Assistant to be extremely beneficial in the community pharmacy setting. Hence I have numerous concerns regarding the Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants</p> <p>Firstly, I believe that Pharmaceutical Assistants should be allowed to cover a registered pharmacist annual leave providing the period does not last for longer than 1 month. As the Pharmaceutical Assistants course has ceased in the 1980's, all of the Pharmaceutical Assistant bring vast experience to the role and, if practicing, should be well up to date (as all practicing pharmacist should) on all pharmacy related matters.</p> <p>Secondly, I also believe that they should be allowed to cover 2 full working days or 18 hours (9am - 6pm) in any given week on the temporary absence of the registered pharmacist. This is especially important in pharmacies that work late hours and on Sundays.</p> <p>Finally, I feel that it is very unfair for Pharmaceutical Assistants to have worked 12 hours in the previous month to cover temporary leave for the regular pharmacist. They are trained, skilled assistants, with adequate clinical knowledge, who are more than capable of going into a pharmacy setting without having previously worked 12 hours in that said pharmacy over the course of the previous month. This will also have severe implications to Pharmaceutical Assistants who practice as locums. If a</p>	

	<p>locum is required at any given pharmacy and a locum pharmacist is not available but a Pharmaceutical Assistant is available, should the pharmacy have to close its doors and cease business because he/she has not worked the required 12 hours over the previous month? This is utterly preposterous. This is very relevant in rural areas where not as many locum pharmacists are available as in urban areas.</p> <p>I hope my feedback was helpful and look forward with interest to your findings</p>	
56.	Pauline Murphy	
	<p>My name is Pauline Murphy and I am a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant. I qualified in 1978 and having completed a four year course, which was run by The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, I was presented with my Certificate which came under Section 19 of the 1875 Act (that I as a Qualified Assistant was competent to "transact the business of a licentiate of the Pharmaceutical Society in his/her temporary absence but shall not be entitled to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on their own account"). These are the terms of the course for which I signed up for and for which I paid my fees to the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, and I have adhered to my part of the agreement for the past 38 years.</p> <p>Since the cessation of the Pharmaceutical Assistants Course many attempts have been made to try and downgrade our qualification. Most recently bullying tactics have been manifestly employed by the Pharmaceutical society of Ireland and its representatives to try and enforce a Draft Code of Practice. This is evidenced in pressurising pharmacists themselves to limit the amount of hours per week that we could cover in their temporary absence. <u>This Code of Practice was "never" a legal document and I was "never" employed by any pharmacists under these terms.</u> I have worked for two pharmacists for the past twenty years and am held in high regard by both. Throughout various inspections carried out on us over many years, there was never any mention ever of THE AMOUNT OF HOURS THAT I COULD COVER (NB).</p> <p>In the case of one pharmacist I work for: I have covered her day off every week for the past twenty years and I have never let her down in this period. Furthermore many times over these last twenty years, if for example I was on holidays, this same pharmacist found it impossible to get locum cover. Even as recently as last year while I was away, and at the same time the pharmacist became sick, she had to close the pharmacy on a bank holiday Saturday as she could not get any locum cover. I do not think the PSI in any way realise that it is very difficult to get locum cover all over the country. Furthermore, I know all the customers personally and I go over and above any call of duty to provide a personal and professional service to all the customers in her temporary absence.</p> <p>It is safe to assert that pharmacy has changed in the last number of years, especially with tighter margins for pharmacy owners. I predict with surety that if this new regulation cover for Pharmaceutical Assistants comes into force, one of my current employers will be forced to reduce my hours and possibly make me redundant. Therefore why should my emploter have to pay the extra cost of "the skilled assistance" hours when I HAVE BEEN COVERING THE PHARMACISTS DAY OFF WITH" NO SKILLED ASSISTANCE" FOR THE PAST 20 YEARS. Why after 20 years do I need to do skilled assistance ???? (NB).</p>	

	<p>I work for a family of pharmacists who own a number of pharmacies and who I have worked for twenty years +. They have great respect for all Pharmaceutical Assistants and do not want the “temporary absence” changed. I have a letter from this entity saying that if the temporary absence changes, with regard to the number of hours we can work in one store per week, then they will have no alternative but to make their Pharmaceutical Assistants redundant!!!!!!!!!!!! (NB)</p> <p>One must ask: Why not upgrade us like other professional bodies? Could the reason be that we are 400 Women? I certainly do not think this attempt to downgrade us would be happening to a professional group of males. There would be political upheaval and I cannot promise there will not be the same in this case. I have <u>six</u> years left to retirement and if this draft proposal goes ahead I will lose hours and it will also downgrade my qualification. Furthermore I will lose money and I have a daughter still in college, how am I going to fund her?? I also have a son who just finished college and who is trying to get a job but will need funding till that happens. Can you answer these questions?</p> <p>I conclude by stating that I want to continue working in the pharmacies I have been working in for the past twenty years till I retire in six years’ time. I undertook this course in good faith, which was set up, examined and privately run by the PSI itself. Now you want to change the terms of that qualification and by doing so change my working conditions? All this now after 38 years as a Pharmaceutical Assistant: how can it then be that am I not competent to cover a pharmacist’s day off without “skilled assistance”? Logically how did I manage to be competent for the last 38 years to cover the pharmacist’s day off without this so called "skilled assistance "!</p> <p>Finally I want to state that I have never agreed to any code of practice and I have not been working in accordance with same. My understanding of my employment terms in relation to temporary absence does not conform to this code of practice or any newer changes/proposals on temporary absence.</p>	
57.	Aishling Melvin	
	<p>I am writing to you to strongly object to your proposal to define temporary absence for Qualified Assistants.</p> <p>My mother and my Aunt have both been Qualified Assistants for over 40 years. I am sure some of you weren't even born when they started working. It seems outrageous to me that you would like to now come and reduce the terms of their qualifications, with only just a few years left before they retire. There are such few Qualified Assistants in Ireland and I would ask that you leave them in peace and find something more useful to do with your time.</p>	

58.	Marc MacSherry	
	<p>I wish to support the views of many Supervising Pharmacists, Pharmaceutical Assistants and members of the public in the xxxxx area who do not see the need to change the interpretation of “temporary absence” cover as it applies to Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>If a specific timeframe (12 hours) to cover “temporary absence” were to be set in legislation, it would not allow for unforeseen events/emergencies that could delay the Pharmacist e.g. traffic delays, illness, family emergencies etc. In addition , it could not be considered “fair and workable” for a Pharmaceutical Assistant to be at risk of breaking the law should the 12 hours run out if the pharmacist got delayed. Should such a situation arise and the pharmacy had to be close after the 12 hours had elapsed for insurance reasons, then this would impact greatly on members of the public especially in rural areas.</p> <p>Taking all of the above into consideration, it would appear to me that there is no clear rationale as to why “temporary absence” needs to be qualified in legislation.</p>	

59.	John O'Donovan	
	<p>In an attempt to define temporary absence I believe the PSI claim to be looking for a fair and workable model that will give assurances to the public regarding health and safety.</p> <p>I have read the draft rules and I cannot understand how reasonable or fair minded people could think the proposed rules are fair or workable in the day to day running of a retail pharmacy business. I do not feel it is assuring to the public to put doubt in the mind of sick people that a person could be allowed to dispense prescriptions on their own only for a defined numbers of hours per week. That implies there is a risk in going beyond this number. It casts doubt as to how qualified these people are. How can someone be competent for only a set number of hours per week then run out of time until the next week and then be competent again. If the Pharmacist is late and the 12 hours expires half way through the assistant dispensing a prescription would they only be able to give two items if there were four items on the prescription.</p> <p>As it would constitute an offence to cover more than 12 hours per week who would be in trouble at one minute after the 12 hours. will the pharmacist or the assistant be guilty of the offence. Will this amount to someone breaking the law of the land? would they then have a criminal record?</p> <p>I have always believed that the only difference between a pharmacist and a qualified assistant was that the latter could not keep open shop on their own account but they could transact the business in the temporary absence of the pharmacist.</p> <p>Is it legal to change the meaning of a qualification many years after granting it? I would think this is a breach of a persons human rights it is certainly a breach of contract. I could see a court action been taken should the PSI insist on implementing these rules as they are</p> <p>I do hope the PSI will reconsider and redraft a more fair set of rules maybe try using the same common sense used when defining what "whole time charge" means.</p>	

60.	Helen Devaney
	<p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant since 21st May 1966. For fifty years I have worked in a number of xxxxx pharmacies. I have always worked with great care, honesty, integrity, kindness, professionalism, and pride in a job well done. I have maintained my educational standards over time by attending 'Continuing Professional Development Lectures in Pharmacy' amounting to one hundred and ten hours in total.</p> <p>My understanding of 'temporary absence' comes from an agreement between the PSI and our Association, the Pharmaceutical Assistant's Association which was reached in 1994. Under section 6 of that agreement the PA 'shall be employed in the pharmacy concerned on a permanent basis for not less than 15 hours per week'. The PA could also cover 'annual leave' and 'the maximum number of days shall not exceed 14 calendar days in any single absence'.</p> <p>Consequently, I have always had a 'reasonable expectation' of my ability to work in the profession for which I had completed the academic and apprenticeship requirements, and for which I had passed the proscribed examinations of the PSI, and for which I had registered with the PSI (to whom I have paid a registration fee for the past fifty years).</p> <p>The proposed changes in the 'Rules 2016' will alter the work parameters under which I have always been employed, the consequence of which will reduce my 'reasonable expectation' of continuing with my career.</p> <p>The proposed changes are impractical, are unreasonable, are discriminatory, are without precedent, are grossly unfair, and are against European labour laws. This is a grave injustice against a vulnerable, but unique group of people, mainly women.</p> <p>One cannot help but wonder what agenda is driving these proposed changes.</p> <p>For a person who always regarded the PSI as protective body, these proposed changes come as a great shock, are very disappointing, and fill me with disillusion. I feel utterly marginalised and bullied, and I feel my whole career has been undermined. I plan on taking legal advice with regard to bringing these proposals before the Labour Relations Commission.</p>

61.	Edel McDonald
	<p>As a member of the public I wish to make a submission on the draft rules. Of the 11 rules most are definitions and are straight forward.</p> <p>The PSI are looking for a “fair and workable “model and are trying to provide the public with the assurance of best pharmacy practice and patient safety.</p> <p>Rule 6; The impression these rules give me is that the PSI considers that there is a risk that after 12 hours a week the Pharmacy assistant is no longer competent. If this is true I do not understand how they can be competent again the next week for another 12 hours. As a member of the public I am concerned that the PSI are sending mixed messages to the public as to whether these people are properly qualified. If the qualification is in doubt then the fault lies with the people who educated, examined and qualified these people. Who else did they qualify? Should we be looking at any other pharmacy qualifications?</p> <p>I listened to the video on the PSI website on the definition of the role of the Supervising Pharmacist. It talks of using common sense when defining “whole time charge”. Why can that same common sense not apply to define temporary absence?</p> <p>Rule 7; I do not understand the need for the Assistant to perform “skilled assistances” for a specified time on an ongoing basis. Once the Supervising Pharmacist is confident that a person is capable and competent that should be enough.</p> <p>I do not see anywhere in the rules if an assistant can work in a hospital or a clinic. Is this another change to their existing rights? Retail Pharmacy business is the only work place mentioned. Is this an oversight?</p> <p>I do not believe the PSI has the right to bring about the demise of an entire register of people they themselves qualified. That is what will happen if these rules become law.</p> <p>I do not consider these rules to be “fair and workable” and in no way do they address any public health and safety issues. These rules do make any sense to anybody who has practical knowledge of the day to day running of a retail pharmacy business. I hope the PSI will redraft rules that are fair and serve a purpose other than making a group of people redundant.</p>

62.	Michael John Hayes, MPSI xxxx
	<p>I would like to lodge an objection to the proposed amendment to the "Temporary Absence Clause" which was introduced in the Pharmacy Act, (Ireland) Amendment Act 1890.</p> <p>The clause has been in successful operation in the Pharmacy industry for over 120 years and any proposed change to the clause is an attack on the Pharmaceutical Assistants ability to act in the labor market in accordance with the qualifications they were granted by the Pharmaceutical society upon successful graduation.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Pharmacy Act of 2007 failed to define temporary absence" beyond the original 1890 definition.</p> <p>It is completely unacceptable that the Society now wish to change the definition of "temporary absence" when it had ample opportunity to have a new definition included in the 2007 Pharmacy Act and it failed to do so.</p> <p>Any further change to the Pharmacy Act would need to be in consultation with all stakeholders involved (including the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association) and to introduce changes without around the table talks with these stakeholders in indefensible in a democratic society. To simply invite correspondence with the Society through contact via email or through the PSI website does not count as adequate consultation and sit down talks need to be organised in order for all stakeholders issues to be dealt with.</p> <p>The agreement reached between the Pharmaceutical Society and the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association in Dec 1994 allowed for an assistant, who has fulfilled minimum satisfactory requirements, to cover in the temporary absence of a pharmacist's annual leave entitlements of up to and including two weeks per annum and not greater than 14 days in succession.</p> <p>By changing the definition of "temporary absence" to being not more than 12 hours per week, it not only affects the assistants ability to work in accordance with their qualifications but also affects the pharmacists entitlements to annual leave; since in the interest of public safety the most appropriate form of professional cover is from a registered assistant who is intimately familiar with the pharmacy and patients they work with on a daily basis and not a Locum pharmacist who would have no familiarity with the day to day running of the pharmacy.</p> <p>I would like to see the reinstatement of the December 1994 agreement between the Pharmaceutical Society and the</p>

	Pharmaceutical Assistants Association as the most reasonable course for the continuation of public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety.	
63.	Alan O'Gorman	
	<p>I am a regular customer in my local pharmacy as I need medication on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>I have just read the draft rules that the Pharmaceutical Society are proposing on temporary absence. I am struggling to understand how anybody that is familiar with the Assistants qualification and how pharmacy works in the real world could think the proposed rules could be seen as "fair and workable" Assistants have covered the absence of the Pharmacist for any time the Pharmacist is not present in the shop.</p> <p>This includes days off, late starts, early finishes, holidays. illness and any unplanned absence that becomes necessary. To go from this to just 12 hours per week is plain ridiculous.</p> <p>I cannot imagine any other group of professionally registered people that would be treated in this grossly unfair manner by the very people that educated ,examined and qualified them and licence them every year.</p> <p>The Pharmaceutical Society are supposed to assure the public of best pharmacy practice. I can tell you that you are doing quite the opposite here. I do not understand how a person is qualified to cover the absence of a pharmacist for 12 hours a week and be guilty of an offence if they do the same work for one minute extra. There is a major lack of common sense here.</p> <p>Will this set a precedent to change any other qualification the Pharmaceutical Society has conferred. This is very worrying. It seems to me that the society are doubting their own qualification.</p> <p>It is beyond belief that an organisation can change completely the meaning of a qualification after more than 100 years of that qualification standing the test of time. All persons on the assistants register have at a minimum 35 years experience. What have they done to deserve being treated like this?</p> <p>I do not see that these rules are fair or workable or give any assurance to the public of good pharmacy practise. How could it be fair to make all these people redundant for no good reason.</p> <p>I do hope the Pharmaceutical Society reconsiders and redrafts these rules and maybe use the same common sense approach you use when defining a Supervising Pharmacists "whole time charge"</p>	

64.	Paul O’Gorman	
	Get a grip.	
65.	Ann Tynan	
	<p>Temporary absence consultation</p> <p>As a member of the public and a person who has worked in a pharmacy with a qualified assistant for the past 15 years I am making a submission on your draft proposals re temporary absence.</p> <p>I see rule 6 as neither fair or workable and it would make the assistant I work with redundant. That in my opinion is grossly unfair and unheard of in any other profession.</p> <p>I have worked with her when she covered any absence of the pharmacy owner including his day off holidays and any time he needed to leave the shop for emergencies. That is the understanding I have of what a qualified assistant is. I do not understand how anybody could consider it fair to change the meaning of a qualification more than 30 years after granting that qualification.</p> <p>Rule 7 is a bit ambiguous. I don't understand the need to prove oneself every month. The supervising pharmacist should have to satisfy himself that the assistant is fit and competent only once.</p> <p>As a member of the public I feel that rules such as these cast a doubt on best pharmacy practice. If a person is fit and competent to do a particular job I don't understand how after 12 hours a week they would be breaking the law doing the same job they did legally during the said 12 hours.</p> <p>I do not consider your draft rules either fair or workable and don't see how they serve to give any assurance to the public about health and safety.</p>	
66.	Geraldine Lynch	
	<p>The new proposal to have assistants working 12hours is unjust, unfair and immoral. How do you think a person , who has worked at this position for a good number of years, feels now, ?. Experienced assistants are and should be regarded as an asset, respected and given your support not reduced to 12 hours a week work.</p> <p>How many pharmacy rely on the assistant, to keep the shop open. ?</p> <p>Your society has set the training, exams and follow up education, now you want to push these assistants out of a job, their livelihood and put them on the dole.!!. So much for a better future, government wants for all .</p> <p>Please consider THE PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISANTS></p>	

67.	Siobhan Byrne-Savoie
	<p>I learned with some alarm today that the PSI is attempting to down-grade the role of Pharmacy Assistants.</p> <p>Having worked with many Assistants over the years I cannot understand how their qualification which was once deemed acceptable, is now deemed unacceptable.</p> <p>As the course is longer available, the 400 or so, mainly female workers, are quite literally a dying breed.</p> <p>The honourable thing for the PSI to do therefore, is to allow them to work as they have done for years, until their not-to-distant retirement.</p> <p>What the PSI proposes to do is to put these people out of work completely. Are their stages in life, how could they possibly retrain and find other employment?</p> <p>It really is a very bad form by the PSI!</p>
68.	Annuneiata O'Dwyer
	<p>I write in response to your proposal to define "Temporary Absence" as it relates to the qualification and ability of a "qualified Assistant Pharmacist" to perform the duties for which we were qualified.</p> <p>My registration which I received from the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland in 1975 states that I am qualified to "carry on the business of pharmacy in the temporary absence of the pharmacist". It also states that I am not entitled to carry on the business of pharmacy on my own account.</p> <p>There was no mention of a limit to the duration of "temporary" and during the past 40 years I have been entitled to cover temporary absence which included, annual leave, sick leave, unavoidable absence of the pharmacist for any and every reason.</p> <p>I am not aware of any change in the meaning of temporary and I therefore believe I am within my legal rights to continue to work in this manner.</p> <p>I am also not aware of any other profession of qualified individuals whose governing body attempts to downgrade their</p>

	<p>qualification without giving them the opportunity to upgrade their qualification. This has never been an option for us and I do believe if our qualification is downgraded we should be entitled to compensation for the work-life remaining to us.</p> <p>In your public consultation you state that an agreement was made with the P.A.A. on the terms of Temporary Absence. I have requested a signed copy of this document but you have not been able to send me a copy of same. I believe this is because these negotiations were not finalised and signed by the relevant parties.</p> <p>You also note in your public consultation document that P.A.A.'s are not subject to "fitness to practice" provisions. This is not a decision of the Pharmaceutical Assistant. I have attended as many lectures as were available to me. I have on most occasions had to travel for an hour to attend such lectures after a days work but I have felt it necessary to do this to keep my knowledge base up to date as much as possible. – Since such lectures have been taken over by the I.P.U. academy the availability and venue of such lectures has become much more accessible. – so being subject to "Fitness to Practice" should not be a big problem unless the term as I understand it changes.</p> <p>I believe "Temporary" cannot be defined in terms of hours and minutes and therefore believe I can continue to practice in "temporary absence" as I have since 1975 without any break in my registration.</p>	
69.	Pauline Cormack	
	<p>I write to you as a family member of a Qualified Registered Pharmaceutical Assistant for the last 38years. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill the role of a pharmacist in his/her temporary absence. Since the Pharmacy Act 1890 they have been permitted to cover the pharmacist's days off, lunch times, tea breaks, holiday's illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. At other times has done locum work in other pharmacies when requested to do so.</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use a "common sense" approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising Pharmacists are concerned, I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining "temporary absence".</p> <p>I do not see how it could be considered "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed, for example returning from lunch or having a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist who is absent 1minute after the 12 hours expires. Would the shop have to close or break the law?</p> <p>I do not understand how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 38 years post conferral. This qualification has stood since the Pharmacy Act 1890. Why is there a need to change It now? My family member</p>	

	<p>has served the pharmacy service well over the last 38 years with only 7 years until she will retire. Why is there a need to change it now?</p> <p>In short I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p>	
70.	Mary O’Riordan	
	<p>The following is my submission regarding the subject of temporary absence: I am a Qualified Assistant. I qualified in 1979 therefore have many years of experience and practise in community pharmacy. I am in my current position for 18 years. As is the case in a lot of Pharmacies today we have gone through many changes from company to company so I believe my role as long term staff in the shop has been invaluable as the customers like to deal with familiarity and have trust in me which is so important in our profession.</p> <p>The PSI formulated, validated and examined the QA course which took 4 years and I qualified in good faith that I could cover the pharmacy in the temporary absence of the Pharmacist. I cannot accept diminution or conditionality of this qualification. It is unbelievable that the body that conferred upon a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 35 years is now defining the terms of the qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.</p> <p>I feel that the PSI are continuously bullying QAs into a downgrading of our qualification! It would of more benefit all round for Health and Safety concerns if QAs were given a mandatory requirement for CPD and Fitness to Practice. Employing locums with little experience and knowledge of the customers is more of a Health and Safety issue.</p> <p>Equality and Non-Discrimination –Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights prohibits discrimination. Given that QAs are predominantly female and part- time workers within the profession, any attempt to impose minimum hours of service as part of the qualification of the conditions of exercise of the profession will have a far greater impact of women, violating the equality rights guaranteed in the Constitution and under ECHR. Everyone is entitled to equal rights of employment in the ECHR.</p>	

71.	Julie Jacob	
	<p>I am writing with regard to the defining of the definition of “temporary absence”. I am a Registered Pharmaceutical Assistant, xxxxx, and have been working as such for over 30 years. I have not been working in accordance with the Draft Code of Practice, which I did not agree to, but have been employed based on a different understanding of “temporary Absence”.</p> <p>I work a total of 22.5 hours per week, approximately 9.5 hours are worked weekly in “temporary absence”. I have worked in community pharmacies for at least 30 years. The pharmacies I work in recognise the years of experience that I bring to my workplace. If I am qualified to act in “temporary absence” for 12 hours but am not qualified to provide cover on the 13th hour this will severely impact on my employment.</p> <p>I feel that it is unfair to expect me to agree to a definition of “temporary absence” that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferral. At the time of my conferral “temporary absence” was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to my employability. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a Pharmacist in their “temporary absence” for their entitlement to days off, holiday cover and for sick leave etc.,</p> <p>On a more personal note, I would like to say that because there are more Pharmacists available now to provide cover for absent Pharmacists I am being called on less and less to provide cover. What little cover I do I would like to hold on to. If I cannot provide this cover I feel my status is being reduced. I am a Registered Pharmaceutical Assistant and would like to continue to work and provide cover in this capacity until I reach retirement.</p> <p>It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 30 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years!</p>	

72.	Maria Mooney	
	<p>As regards the Public Consultation on "Temporary Absence" I wish to put forward some issues.</p> <p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant who has been working since my qualification was conferred on me in May 1977. My certificate states , that as I had passed the examination, I am entitled to act as an assistant to a Pharmaceutical Chemist in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act (Ireland).1875, Amendement Act, 1890. The only stipulation was, not to conduct or manage a business or to keep open shop on his my own account.</p> <p>For all of the years since 1977, I have been working Full Time, Part Time and occasional days in the Pharmacists absence in many different Pharmacies. I also covered absences such as sick days, funeral time, holiday times and any other emergency absences.</p> <p>I never agreed to the Code of Practice of 1994 and was never given the chance to discuss the draft with the PSI and have not been working in accordance with the Code. Through all these years I have been working with one principal Pharmacy and then covering other Pharmacies for odd days when they needed coverage.</p> <p>Since the PSI started to implement the Code Of Practice (which was never a legal document), I was made redundant from my last job, because I could not cover the pharmacist on the days and times that were required. This has happened to many of my fellow assistants.</p> <p>The interpretation of "Temporary Absence" that has stood for many years is, where the Pharmacist is away from the Pharmacy on a temporary basis. If "Temporary Absence" is defined in concrete terms, exact hours etc a PA who works outside these hours will be committing an offence. How is it possible to be a qualified person up to a certain time but 1 minute after this time that person is not qualified. It does not make sense.This is what is going to happen if this draft is implemented.</p> <p>I cannot accept any new proposal that will take away or diminish my qualification, post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith. I do not understand how anyone could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 30--50 years post conferral. This was a course that was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI.</p> <p>How is it possible, that a body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over a number years, is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those</p>	

	<p>years.</p> <p>This new definition of Temporary Absence will make all PA,s unemployable because it states we are only qualified for 12 hours in any one week but outside that time we are not. I have over 40 years experience in Pharmacy and I think patients and customers value that experience.I feel that it is unethical and immoral to be doing this to us as Pharmaceutical Assistants. It will be denying me my right to a working livelihood.</p>	
73.	Augustine Browne	
	<p>My name is Augustine (Gus) Browne and I am a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant Reg No. XXXXX.</p> <p>I have been employed as a QA since my qualification in 1977 (39yrs) and I am currently working circa 36 hours per week , under the qualification bestowed on me in accordance with the provisions of section 19 of the Pharmacy Act (Ireland) 1875, Amendment Act,1890.</p> <p>On my first week of employment as a QA in 1977, our pharmacy was visited by XXXX MPSI, the then PSI inspector, who congratulated me on qualifying and made the comment to my late father (XXXXX), that it was great that Gus has qualified, as he, my father, could now take days off – weekends, holidays, illness etc. – without the worry of trying to get a locum pharmacist to cover. In those days there were not many locum pharmacists available. XXXX was unequivocal in his interpretation of “temporary absence”.</p> <p>The proposed alterations to my qualification will have a serious detrimental effect on my employment prospects and hence my earnings.</p> <p>I would also like to query the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the pharmacists who employ QAs been consulted, as to their opinions on this matter ? • Statistically, how many complaints have the PSI received from the public on the performance of QAs • Over the past 5 years the QAs have contributed €400,000 approx to the PSI – how has this money been spent – with particular reference to the advancement of QAs? 	

	<p>I would also like to make comment as to the legality of what is proposed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is questionable whether an alteration to the Regime can be introduced with <u>retrospective</u> effect. 2. If a person achieves a qualification which entitles a person to work without restriction as to hours per week, the question arises whether that entitlement can be reduced by regulation. 3. It could be argued that having achieved a qualification under a particular regime, and have earned their livelihood , under that regime, they have a <u>Legitimate expectation</u> that the regime will not be altered in a way that unreasonably and adversely affects them – particularly without compensation. <p>In view of the above, and the possible costly processes which could ensue, and given the age profile of the majority of the QAs, the problem is going to resolve itself by virtue of “Anno Domini”.</p> <p>I think under these circumstances it would be prudent of the PSI to maintain the status quo.</p>	
74.	Catherine Jennings	
	<p>I am writing to you about my concern to the proposal of defining Qualified Assistants temporary absence. I have 2 close colleagues to whom this very much affects and I feel years on in their profession that their terms in workplace can be changed unjustifiably. This change no doubt will affect patients care as the pharmacist will not be able to attend courses or carry out staff training diligently as seen previously outside of the pharmacy. I am certain this change will not be positive to pharmacy staff and Qualified Assistants themselves. I would like you to reconsider such actions carefully.</p>	

75.	Maura Coyle	
	<p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant of almost 50 years. On presentation of my Certificate in May 1966 I, am my fellow graduates, were not only told to enjoy our Summer doing locums but to look at the notice board in the hall and see a list of 'Chemist' shops that were looking for holiday cover. Whatever happened since to 'Temporary Absence'. Then it was understood that as long as the Pharmacist had not got a permanent job outside of the Pharmacy we were entitled to cover lunch hours, half days, days off, holidays, sick leave and any emergencies. I can tell you there was many a Pharmacist that was very glad to have a Qualified Assistant to call on as otherwise he/she would get no break as Pharmacists were few and far between.</p> <p>It is unbelievable that the same PSI would now try to redefine the qualification they conferred on us for many years. I would like to tell you that many Pharmacists and customers recognise the value of the many years of experience held by Qualified Assistants. In my experience many customers express a wish to talk to the Qualified Assistant rather than some newly qualified Pharmacist or as is often the case now some Pharmacist that has very little English and very little understanding of the patients needs. I cannot see how any employment rights body or judge could justify in declaring that a person was fully entitled to cover for a Pharmacist one day and not the next. Surely that does not make sense. How can you you be qualified one day and not the next.</p> <p>In my view you are now attempting to overturn the terms which are in existence since 1890. Needless to say it is also in breach of custom and practice which, I am informed, has a standing in law. In these circumstances I object in the strongest possible terms to an diminution or conditionality of my qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated, validated and examined by the PSI. It is unbelievable that the body which conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me and to work in a specific manner for almost 50 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally for all of those years.</p>	
76.	Caitriona Donohoe	
	<p>I am writing regarding the draft publication for Regulation of Temporary Absence by Pharmaceutical Assistants. Having read the draft publication, I believe that these new regulations are entirely unfair to the qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants. These Pharmaceutical Assistants have anywhere ranging from 30 to 50 years practical experience in the industry and this experience translates into competent, qualified and capable Pharmaceutical Assistants. It is my opinion that Rules 7 & 8 are entirely unfair and unworkable.</p> <p>In relation to Rule 7: Placing such strict limits on the number of hours a Pharmaceutical Assistant is allowed to work translates into</p>	

	<p>a claim of incompetence after that number of hours is fulfilled. Pharmaceutical Assistants have worked alone in the temporary absence of Pharmacists since their qualifications were conferred.</p> <p>In relation to Rule 8, I would point out that the very essence of the original qualification, as set out on your own website which states that assistants can “act on his/her [the supervising pharmacist’s] behalf, and carry out the functions of the pharmacist” is completely contradicted by the rule stating an assistant “shall not act in the capacity” of a supervising pharmacist. This entirely vacates the meaning of the original qualification and again points to what appears to be an insidious attempt to entirely remove Pharmaceutical Assistants from the workforce.</p> <p>Most patients would not even be aware that there is a very small difference between the qualifications an Assistant and a Pharmacist have. Attempting to redefine Pharmaceutical Assistants’ qualifications is simply an attempt by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland to bully a minority group within their organisation, who have worked to the rules set out by the PSI at the time of their conferral. If the PSI wants to remove the title of Pharmaceutical Assistant, the only fair way is to register Pharmaceutical Assistants as Pharmacists, granting them the same rights, and liabilities, as a Pharmacist. Their decades of experience should indeed count for something.</p>	
77.	Marion Melvin	
	<p>I am a Pharmaceutical assistant for the past 41 years and have worked diligently according to the terms of my qualification..It is very sad to think that the Pharmaceutical Society has nothing better to do than try to demean us at this stage of our lives.who do you think you are -picking on a minority group of mostly woman in their golden years who will be either be retired or dead in the next 10 years .I would at a guess .say that most of you in the psi weren't even born when i qualified.At this stage of my live ,i cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of my qualification.Who are you to define temporary absence.t=Twelve hours a week,.which one of you came up with that definition.It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me 41 years ago a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner is now trying to defining the terms of my qualification in a manner that would suggest that i was working illegally all those years.The next thing that will happen is more than likely our bosses will make us redundant due. to the lack of hours we can cover..I strongly object to your proposal which reduces my qualification and would respectfully ask you to leave us in peace .We are a dying breed just like the nuns.Less than 400 hundred of us left..Why bother.Pick on something else to occupy your time.</p>	

78.	Orla Buckley	
	<p>I am a newly qualified Registered Pharmacist (RP) who works directly alongside a Pharmaceutical Assistant(PA) on a daily basis. This person has over 35 years of experience as a Pharmaceutical Assistant and in that time has gained invaluable clinical knowledge and skill of which I frequently consult. I would have no issue with this person acting on my behalf in my absence for any length of time.</p> <p>My understanding of temporary absence is that it amounts to 15 hours in any one week and extends for a two week period where the RP might be on holiday. This is the information I obtained from the PSI at the EU information day September 2014.</p> <p>With regard to the document “regulation of temporary absence cover by the pharmaceutical assistants- rules 2016”:</p> <p>I find the substance of this document to be negative and over complex. Rather than provide guidance and positive direction for the use of Pharmaceutical assistants in providing absence cover, it simply lists regulatory barriers to the use of a group of highly skilled, proven competent and professional individuals <u>for a role they have been selected and appointed for many decades by the PSI</u>. I believe the PSI have a responsibility to allow these people to finish their careers with ongoing support and positive direction.</p> <p>I would like some clarification on the term skilled assistance, does this mean the PA can do a clinical check as well as an accuracy check for prescriptions while there is a registered pharmacist in the building and who is then the responsible party for that prescription. And if the RP is temporarily absent at the time who is responsible?</p> <p>It is my feeling that the Society are trying to downgrade the role of the PA to that of an accuracy checking technician which is a disgrace and a waste of highly skilled professionals with extensive clinical knowledge and decades of experience.</p>	
79.	Clodagh Melvin	
	<p>I am writing to you to strongly object to your proposal to define temporary absence for Qualified Assistants. My Mum and my aunt have been Qualified Assistants for nearly 40 years each now and have worked diligently according to the terms of their qualifications under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 which is 126 years now !</p> <p>It is extremely difficult for Assistants to agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of their qualification they have worked to since their conferral and registration by the Pharmaceutical Society in 1975 and 1978 respectively .</p> <p>At the time of their conferral , temporary absence was not defined.It is very sad to think that a Society they have been members of</p>	

	<p>for nearly 40 years , deem it necessary to demean them now as they head towards retirement .</p> <p>I would respectfully ask you to leave them in peace.</p>	
80.	Anne Gaughan	
	<p>I would like to voice my opinion on the draft guidelines recently issued by your office in relation to temporary absence cover .</p> <p>Having worked as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in community pharmacy for the past 35 years I find the proposed guidelines of a 12 hour temporary absence cover cap both unreasonable and unfair to Pharmaceutical Assistants in general and will most certainly result in termination of employment for many of us including myself.</p> <p>I cannot understand how this 12 hour cap was selected, it does not take into account our position and status within the pharmacy community, many of us are working with the same pharmacy for a number of years, recognised and respected by both our employers and customers as trusted supports when the pharmacist is unavailable or on leave, we would not be still in employment otherwise. Participating in CPD courses whenever they are offered many of us have acquired some the highest points in the ICCPE workshops and modules.</p> <p>Randomly selecting a figure of temporary absence for all is not favourable for any pharmacy,realistically that decision should be left to the discretion of the pharmacist to decide if they want their regular staff to cover their absences. A defined 12 hour period of cover each week would not allow for this.</p> <p>The demographics of a rural pharmacy where locums are scarce and unknown to customers needs and their individual requirements is also not accounted for, some pharmacies find it impossible to find cover for their annual holidays.</p> <p>Devised and provided to us by the College of Pharmacy in the 1970s consisting of 3 years apprenticeship and a an extremely condensed academic year we only followed the course that was offered to us finishing with a qualification which permitted us to work together with a pharmacist and provide cover in his/her temporary absence.</p> <p>Experienced and trusted by our employers we are providing safe pharmacy practice and assuring patient safety.</p>	

	I hope our concerns are listened to as many of us are still dependent on our jobs and need to stay employed for some years yet.	
81.	Niamh Winters	
	<p>I am writing to you concerning the PSI's recent decision to open a draft publication to public consultation that seeks to redefine the qualification conferred upon Pharmaceutical Assistants under a qualification previously offered by the PSI.</p> <p>I find it difficult to understand the purpose in ordering such changes to be made to the job requirements of the PAs involved, considering the last examinations for this particular qualification were sat in 1985. Thus, the youngest of these PAs, who are mainly women, are in their mid fifties with over 30 years experience in the field. By enforcing these changes and imposing such unrealistic rules and regulations such a working week of a maximum 12 hours, the PAs affected will undoubtedly be forced out of work.</p> <p>In the days coming up to the election, we are told and constantly 'reassured' by government officials that the economy is improving and unemployment rates are low, I urge you to reconsider this decision. These workers have worked the majority of their lives in this position and to remove them from their work so close to the retirement age is just nonsensical and inhumane. Many thanks for taking the time to read my email and I welcome any response.</p>	
82.	Kate O'Brien	
	<p>I read with great interest your proposed changes to the rules governing 'temporary absence' in relation to Pharmaceutical Assistants (PA). There has not been any definition of 'temporary absence' to date.</p> <p>Having read both the information note and the draft for public consultation for Pharmaceutical Assistants a number of times, I am left with one question and that is 'why this change is necessary?'</p> <p>The proposed new definition states: -</p> <p>6. A pharmacy owner or superintendent pharmacist shall not operate a retail pharmacy business in the temporary absence of a registered pharmacist unless:</p>	

a. the period of temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week

b. the conditions in Rule 7 and Rule 8 are met.

7. Without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 6, a pharmacy owner or superintendent pharmacist of a registered retail pharmacy business where a registered pharmaceutical assistant acts in the temporary absence of a registered pharmacist, shall not permit the pharmaceutical assistant to act during any period of temporary absence unless the pharmaceutical assistant has provided 12 hours of skilled assistance in the previous month at the same registered retail pharmacy business.

8. A pharmaceutical assistant acting in the temporary absence of a registered pharmacist shall not act in the capacity of the superintendent pharmacist or supervising pharmacist in respect of the registered retail pharmacy business concerned.

I note that the PSI's 'mission statement' is 'to work in the public interest to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the public by regulating the practice of pharmacy and the operation of pharmacies' and I commend your organisation for this. I have been a health care professional for over 35 years and I believe it is the responsibility of every governing body to monitor its members carefully so as to ensure public health and safety. At present, the PA members of your organisation are not subject to 'fitness to practice' and I am curious as to why this is not an issue. I would have thought that your responsibility as a governing body to both your members and public health and safety would be to monitor their practice instead of limiting their hours?

The present, and I presume, last group of PA's here in Ireland all served their apprenticeships in pharmacies and then put themselves through university in order to become a PA and did so in the 70's and early 80's when there was no such thing as 'free third level education'. They have worked as PA's now for a minimum of 30 years and I am sure have mortgages, children in college and a standard of living they have become accustomed to as befits their qualification so the proposed reduction in their weekly hours of work to 12 will greatly affect their ability to earn a decent living particularly in the present economic climate.

The pharmacies/pharmacists they have worked for rely on them to provide continuity of care and service and this has been accomplished with what would appear to be no ill effect to any client/customer. Pharmacists need time off for any number of reasons such as holidays, PTA meetings and sometimes in the event of an emergency, they have to leave their businesses immediately. The PA in their employ gives them that freedom to leave knowing that their business is in a safe and mature pair of hands. With 30 years of experience under their belts, the PA's in Ireland are an enormous addition to any pharmacy and should be

	<p>treated as such.</p> <p>The proposed new rules state that a PA cannot work more than 12 hours a week. Does this mean that while working the new revised 12 hours per week, the PA is guaranteed not to commit an offence against section 26 of the Pharmacy Act but that if she/he is asked to do 12 hours and one minute because there is no pharmacist available for whatever reason, he/she is then left open to a criminal charge?</p> <p>I have tried to understand your reasoning behind this proposed change to the definition of 'temporary absence' but I am still confused as to why it is necessary? As previously stated, I have been a health care professional for over 35 years so I have worked with many different professionals, some excellent in their work while others not so. Perhaps I have not fully understood the documents provided by the PSI or perhaps all the 'facts' are not being made available. The fact that you are trying to limit the hours worked by all the PA members of your organisation while at the same time not creating an environment of 'fitness to practice' is both curious and unfair. If you have a concern about some members of this group then your duty as a governing body is to ensure that all members engage with 'fitness to practice' and then you can limit or remove the members that cause you concern and so ensure the safety of the public. The old adage of 'don't throw the baby out with the bath water' comes to mind!</p> <p>I hope for the sake of every PA left in Ireland and the pharmacists and most important of all, the clients/customers that have come to depend on them for assistance that your proposal is defeated and that as a governing body you undertake to protect this group.</p> <p>Of course, if there is any further information available that will explain your reasoning for this proposed change, then I will be delighted to read it.</p>	
83.	Riona Baldwin	
	<p>Thank you for accepting submissions on this proposed move by your Society. I am writing to express my absolute disagreement to your proposal. I have no doubt that you will have many submissions detailing many important reasons why the proposal should be made redundant (rather than the Pharmaceutical Assistants as 12 hours may as well be redundancy for many of them as employers find it easier to hire non-experienced graduates to run their shops in the PA's absence), including the many years of experience these people - mostly women- hold, the absolute professionalism and safety with which they uphold these positions, and the vigorous training they underwent to gain their qualifications. As a practicing, registered psychologist I am acutely aware how crucial applied experienced is to continued expertise in roles that require practical application, such as Pharmaceutical Assistant work.</p>	

	<p>My greatest objection to your proposal is that by implementing this, the PSI essentially purports that you can wipe a 4 year qualification and, at the very least 25 years applied practice (often 40+), deeming the person who has completed the above as (essentially) incompetent of carrying out a role your organisation has supported them to do for the past 25-40+ years. Your organisation may argue the above is untrue due to the remaining 12 hours unsupervised work available, however in practical/business terms it is clear that 12 hours is unworkable for both employers and PAs. Employers needs are best met by hiring someone who can cover extended periods if needed (unexpected sick leave/annual leave/family leave) and hiring + paying taxes/organising accounts for one person who can do 1.5 days per week towards this as well as a person who can do the rest will make no financial or practical sense to an employer. Therefore if you proceed with your proposal, the PSI will be responsible for another example where large organisational decisions in Ireland with little ground-roots applied relevance, force unemployment on a large group of professional, qualified, safe practicing and hard working individuals, resulting in a knock-on financial effect in local communities around the country. As a professional organisation who no doubt has a Code of Ethics to uphold, do not proceed with this proposal. Do not further marginalise an already marginalised group of your members for whom your responsibility is to advocate for. Do not target a group with a small voice only on the basis that as they diminish in numbers in the coming years they may not be able to speak as loudly as others within the PSI. Indeed, your role should be to protect those with smaller voices to prevent marginalisation and uphold the PSI's integrity. Especially when the marginalised in this case have worked hard, and safely for nearly 50 years to contribute to that very integrity.</p>	
84.	Gertie Kavanagh	
	<p>I cannot believe what I am reading. I cannot believe any organisation would treat people in such a disgraceful fashion.</p> <p>No fair minded person that is well informed could think these rules are anything near fair or workable. I am writing as a member of the public and a regular visitor to a pharmacy. I am very familiar with the Qualified Assistant qualification as a family member is working as a qualified assistant for the past 37 years.</p> <p>It is hard to believe that an entire group of people could be thrown on the scrap heap by the very organisation that qualified them. This was considered a very good course and a person had to pay a lot of money to the Pharmaceutical Society to do it. The people left on the register will have to be compensated if these rules are passed as it will mean the Pharmaceutical society will be in breach of the contract they entered into with the apprentice. The qualification will be worthless if these rules are put into law.</p> <p>It is also a disgraceful admission on the part of the Society that they are unable to regulate properly. It is the function of the society to regulate . Assistants cannot be blamed if they are not subject to fitness to practice. That is the job of the regulator. It is</p>	

the regulator who should protect the public and hold people on their register to account.

A person is either competent to do a job or they are not. The Society are going to confuse the public by putting a time limit on how long an assistant can cover the temporary absence of a pharmacist. It makes no sense to say a person is legally entitled to do a job they have been doing for over 30 years for only 12 hours a week. That implies they are not competent once the 12 hours is up. Assistants can cover the Pharmacists holidays at the moment. Why is this not mentioned? Why does this have to be so complicated

The Supervising Pharmacist is supposed to be in whole time charge so when they are not there they are temporarily absent, This would make things much simpler. That is what was understood by temporary absence when assistants did the course. The Supervising Pharmacist should make sure that a qualified person is present in the business when they are not there. The Society should be only be concerned if the business is operating with no qualified person present.

The council of the Pharmaceutical Society should hang their heads in shame. No other organisation would treat people like this. I can only think that they are not fully aware of what they are doing. I see they are all people with one degree or another. I wonder would they be happy to be told that their qualification is not what they believed it to be and could only be used for a certain number of hours each week. There is no logic in this.

The draft rules are not fair and not workable and do nothing to assure the public on health and safety issues. I hope the council see their way to come up with something better than this. Treat people as you would like to be treated. Regulate properly. Make rules that protect the public and not confuse them. Make rules that make sense and serve a purpose rather than rules that only serve to betray a group of people who only want to finish their careers with a bit of dignity, Make rules that are logical and rational.

85.	Charles Byrne	
	<p>I am writing in regards to the Draft Proposals re Temporary Absence. Having read through them I believe them to be discriminatory, unjust and unworkable. A qualification given by your Society, with the understanding accepted by pharmacists, that temporary absence means scheduled days off, unscheduled absences, holidays and sick leave shows this to mean a not permanent absence something which cannot be defined. I understand this will affect less than four hundred Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants. How can someone be qualified for twelve hours per week to do a specific job then a moment later be unqualified?</p> <p>Considering these people have been qualified to do a specific job for thirty plus years why is the PSI deciding to change this?</p>	
86.	Una O Halloran	
	<p>I am a registered qualified pharmaceutical assistant XXXX since 1980.</p> <p>I work 40 hours per week in the same Registered Pharmaceutical Business. I have always worked under what I understood to be the conditions of my qualification. " A pharmaceutical Assistant is someone who is competent under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act (Ireland) Amendment Act 1890 to transact the business of a pharmacist in his or her temporary absence. " I have understood that this temporary absence allows me to cover lunch times, days off, annual leave and other unforeseen temporary absences of the registered pharmacist.</p> <p>This period of temporary absence has never been fully defined.</p> <p>Currently the PSI are attempting to implement a code of practice which was drafted in 1994. This is NOT a signed code of practice</p> <p>I cover an average of 15 hours per week for lunch time and days off. I also cover 23 days annual leave and other incidental absences such as sick leave, funerals etc. If the current proposal of a temporary absence of twelve hours per week is implemented my position in my current employment is compromised. My employer may consider reducing my hours and replacing me with a junior pharmacist with no experience.</p>	

	<p>Most Pharmaceutical Assistants are women and are now over 50 years of age and will be due to retire in 10 years. Why are the PSI trying to change the conditions of work for these women as they finish their long and distinguished careers in Pharmacy.</p> <p>The PSI as a regulatory body claim to act to protect and promote the health, safety and well- being of patients and the public. In my time working as a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant I have worked consistently and professionally for the benefit of my patients. I have continued to develop myself professionally and would consider it far more appropriate for the PSI to include us in the fitness to practice provisions of the Act rather than disregard our qualification and bully us into working fewer hours . How does this benefit the public ? They would have to endure more changes of pharmaceutical staff which does not inspire confidence in the registered pharmaceutical business. Nothing will substitute for the trust and confidence a patient has for a long serving member of a pharmacy business including the Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant.</p> <p>Why is the PSI targeting the Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant?</p> <p>I have worked continually in Pharmacy since 1981 having been conferred by the PSI with a qualification that allowed me to practice in a particular manner.</p> <p>I have also paid a registration fee to PSI during those years. The PSI continues to charge me but offers no protection in return. It seems unbelievable that a body that would confer a qualification on me will now change the conditions of that qualification and suggest that I will now be working illegally in my current position.</p>	
87.	Joan Baker	
	<p>I am a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant. This qualification was conferred upon me in 1981 on successful completion of the course which was set by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI).</p> <p>I have held only two positions since I qualified 35 years ago . I worked for 19 years in a shop with one pharmacist and covered all temporary absences including planned and unplanned leave. My present employment is a similar situation. I work full time in a small pharmacy with one pharmacist . I have been there for 16 years and am very familiar with the needs of our customers and their families. I am an integral member of the team as I cover all temporary absences.</p> <p>The proposed 12 hour rule would be detrimental to a small pharmacy like this. Our customer base is elderly and very loyal to the pharmacy. The distance travelled by many is acknowledgement of the personal service they receive and the trust they have</p>	

	<p>in our pharmacy. This type of business is unfortunately under threat and I believe Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants are instrumental in preserving it.</p> <p>I do not understand how PSI, to whom I have paid registration fees each year, can change the terms of my qualification which was granted by the PSI to me 35 years ago. This would render my current position not viable for my employer .</p>	
88.	Emily Holmes	
	<p>Please do not employ the proposed changed which will almost certainly put most or all of the pharmaceutical assistants out of work. Many of whom are close to retirement age. Please allow natural wastage of this much respected profession. Many of these trained professionals have decades of clinical practice under their belts and are well thought of by their customers and colleagues. I am one of those customers and I would be devastated to learn of my regular pharmacy assistant being put out of work. I have been to the same local pharmacy for years and dealt with the same person in that time. To think that they would be put out of work close to retirement is heartbreaking.</p> <p>Please think twice about these proposed changes. Listen to the people you serve.</p>	
89.	Sadie Harrington	
	<p>My name is Sarah Ann (Sadie) Harrington. I am a registered qualified pharmaceutical assistant Reg Number.XXXX.</p> <p>I completed my three year apprenticeship, my year at college in Shrewsbury Road and passed my exams as set out by the pharmaceutical society in May 1976 and received the highest marks for that year.</p> <p>I have worked according to the terms of our qualification under section 19 of the pharmacy act 1890 for nearly 40 years.</p> <p>I am employed in the same shop for 28 years.The terms of my employment is and always has been to cover in the temporary absence of the pharmacist.I work an average of three to four days per week</p> <p>of which i am required to cover one day off and two three hour late shifts in the evening (or occasionally in the mornings)due to longer trading hours. I cover some of the days when the pharmacist is on holidays and lunch hours etc</p> <p>I may occasionally be needed to cover when the pharmacist is summoned to meetings by our employer, or perhaps she may need to attend a medical appointment,a funeral etc.,on average i cover about 15 to 20 hours per week.</p>	

	<p><u>If the proposed draft is passed and signed into law there is a very serious risk I will lose my job.</u></p> <p><u>A number of years ago a judge ruled “temporary absence cannot be defined”</u> I cannot agree to any definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification, and I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the P S I.</p> <p>It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for nearly 40 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years ! !</p> <p>It is totally illogical that a Pharmaceutical Assistant can act in the “ temporary absence” for 12 hours and not on the 13th hour</p> <p>In the event of this draft becoming law not only will I lose my job but I will not be able to get another job due to these restrictions. I need my job as we have a mortgage</p> <p>i am the only wage earner in my family.</p> <p>I request that this unworkable, degrading draft be scrapped immediately</p>	
90.	Ciara Mulane	
	<p>I am emailing you to lobby for the ""Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants". Is it right to render these hard working people with decades of experience unemployed? My aunt is a qualified pharmaceutical assistant with over 35 years experience and if this legislation comes to pass, she will end up without a job.</p> <p>Is that fair? If you were told that your hours were going to be cut so much that you would end up unemployed, by the organisation that validated your course and that accepted your registration fees each year, I assume that you would not be too happy about it.</p> <p>I ask you to reconsider this amendment and to keep the pharmaceutical assistants in employment. Please email me at this address as confirmation of my submission in support of the pharmaceutical assistants.</p>	

91.	Ferdia Byrne	
	<p>As a concerned member of the public I submit the following for consideration with regard to the draft PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND (REGULATION OF TEMPORARY ABSENCE COVER BY PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANTS) RULES 2016</p> <p>Rules 1 - 5: Understood as read</p> <p>Rule 6: 6 (a) the period of temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week</p> <p>This arbitrary number of 12 hours is profoundly unfair on pharmaceutical assistants (PA) who have been working, fully qualified and competent, in the role for decades. The choice of such a low number of hours can only be aimed at ensuring that the position of the PA is economically unviable for both the PA and pharmacists who employ them. The imposition of a limit at so few hours is to all intents and purposes a mass dismissal of the 393 PAs currently working in the country.</p> <p>Furthermore, I fail to see how a person, qualified for at least 30 years in a position, can lose the ability to carry out their duties once an arbitrary time limit has elapsed each week. This is a nonsense.</p> <p>The practical application of the rules will inevitably lead to any number of absurd situations whereby a PA would be in breach of the rules and unable to perform their duties - for example: a PA may be in the process of carrying out their duties of dispensing prescribed medication to a customer and the clock ticks over the 12 hours per week limit - the PA would not be able to complete the dispensing and the customer would be turned away and asked to return on another day despite the almost completed transaction. A ludicrous situation and a situation that absolutely undermines the PA and the public's confidence in their qualification and ability to carry out the dispensing of prescribed medicines.</p> <p>Rule 7: Before the imposition of these rules it is essential that Rule 7 is clarified. I have interpreted this rule to have several different practical implications and its opacity leaves me in no doubt that there is potential for differing interpretations of this rule being challenged in a court of law. Please clarify the practical application of this rule either through re-writing or issuing guidance. An extension to the current period of public consultation will be required for adequate consideration of Rule 7. Please also clarify the practical interaction of Rule 7 with Rule 9.</p>	

Rule 8: Understood as read.

Rule 9: Please clarify the practical interaction of Rule 9 with Rule 7. Is it the objective of these rules to bring into effect a defined period of 'observation' for PAs? Is it the intention that PAs are observed and assessed each and every month? Is the intention that the reading of Rule 7 and Rule 9 together brings about a situation whereby PAs are 'observed' by a pharmacist/superintendent for 12 hours each and every month? If so, what research and justification is there for such an onerous period of observation? Is there such distrust in the abilities of PAs that such strict periods of observation must be imposed? This also raises the question of the validity/quality of the PSI and its conferral of qualifications that have operated for decades with the holders of these qualifications now deemed to pose such a threat to public health that constant surveillance is required.

I would suggest that it is within the capacity of the PSI to propose a more practical approach to ensure that pharmacists are satisfied that the PAs in their employ retain the skills to carry out the role the PSI has itself deemed them qualified for.

Rule 10 & 11: Understood as read.

Consideration of the rule changes:

The real world outcomes of these changes will be the deemed redundancy of the original qualification and the literal redundancy of hundreds of PAs who, through no act of negligence, will be virtually unemployable. The changes appear to be a vindictive attack on people who have given, at the very least, 30 years of their lives to the profession. Hundreds of people will now be facing uncertainty in the twilight of their professional careers and likewise their retirement. Many are so close to retirement that retraining is not an option as the time and cost would leave them unable to recoup these costs in the short years remaining before retirement. Moreover, the changes will leave the PAs hugely handicapped in a jobs market that will inevitably look to the employment of younger professionals not expected to retire in the immediate future.

The raison d'être of the PSI is to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the public by regulating the practice of pharmacy and the operation of pharmacies. I cannot see how betraying the very graduates upon whom the PSI has conferred their qualification can in anyway lead to achieving the PSI's stated aims.

There are two very real and very predictable outcomes the proposed changes will bring about with regard to the PSI. First; the PSI

will wantonly discard a vast pool of knowledge and experience. A pool of at least 12,000 years' experience! (assuming 393 PAs having a minimum of 30 years' experience) This loss will be compounded by the natural attrition of retiring qualified pharmacists and those leaving the profession for other reasons. I cannot fathom why the PSI would wish to deprive itself of such valuable experience. It smacks of chronic myopia. Furthermore, I expect the U-turn by the PSI on its view of its own conferred qualifications will lead to a wider uncertainty in the profession and very real concern of potential future changes that would similarly degrade or dismiss other PSI qualifications.

Likewise, the proposed changes will (at the very least) pose a threat to smaller pharmacies, especially those serving rural communities. The additional cost in terms of increased workload and increased expense in maintaining operating hours will inevitably have a detrimental effect on the service provided. There will undoubtedly be situations where a pharmacist, through unforeseen personal or medical emergencies, will have to leave the pharmacy. Given the restrictions on PAs this will result in stark choices for the pharmacist - close and deprive those in need of medicines or break the law by allowing an, up until now completely qualified and legal, PA to dispense in their absence.

It is my opinion that in its current form the draft rules are an attempt by the PSI to mitigate a situation that has been in effect for 126 years and that will itself be non-existent in a very short number of years - perhaps a shorter number of years than would be required for a resolution to a legal challenge to the proposed changes/rules should it be deemed necessary. I would imagine the cost and reputational damage the PSI and those heading the regulatory body would accrue over the lifespan of any legal challenge would ensure that any victory, should its position be deemed lawful, would itself be pyrrhic.

The proposed changes are simply a dismissal of pharmaceutical assistants and will result in a service provided to the public that is shorn of their vast experience - in short, a lesser service, and a result completely at odds with the goals of the PSI.

92.	John Holly	
	<p>At this time there are less than 400 qualified assistants on the register of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. I know that not all of these are still practicing but, like their pharmacist colleagues, just maintain their registration. As almost 40% of those registered are on the register for at least 40 years this year, most are in their final 10 years of work.</p> <p>In 2006 there were closer to 600 on the register but natural wastage, which will accelerate in the coming years, means that in less than 10 years there will probably be less than 100 practicing qualified assistants.</p> <p>The proposed rules seek to limit the period of cover for temporary absence to a maximum of 12 hours in any one week where other conditions are fulfilled. However these same rules would allow a qualified assistant continue to work for four different pharmacies each week and provide 12 hours of cover to each. Surely this is a lot less satisfactory than having the qualified assistant remain employed by one pharmacy where they have not only a greater knowledge of the practice of that pharmacy but also a closer relationship with it's customers.</p> <p>I would suggest that the current practice continue and that the normal process of natural wastage continue whereby these qualified assistants will reach their normal retirement age and stop practicing. Many of these qualified assistants have, since qualifying, continued to improve their skills with continued education. Surely their continued registration could be treated in the same way as their pharmacist colleagues requiring them to undertake continuing education modules and peer review.</p> <p>If there is a problem with particular pharmacies abusing the temporary absence rule, I am sure that inspection could be used to overcome that abuse.</p> <p>Finally, I do not practice in community pharmacy any longer and have no vested interest.</p>	
93.	Flora O Callaghan	
	It has come to my notice that the P.S.I. has invited submissions from interested parties re the definition of Temporary Absence in regards to Pharmaceutical Assistants.	

	<p>My interest is that my sister is a Qualified Assistant and has worked in pharmacy since she qualified in 1982. She –like many more of her colleagues works on days off for the pharmacist who is happy to leave her in charge and also does his holiday cover. He has no problem with that situation and is happy to leave his customers in her capable hands.</p> <p>How can it be that somebody can obtain a qualification over thirty years ago and now all of a sudden it can be taken away. Along with the financial implications there is the “sense of worth” being taken away.</p> <p>I myself being a teacher of the same vintage wonder what my reaction would be to younger teachers being more qualified than myself? taking away my job and I left on the scrap heap with all my years of experience.</p> <p>I don't think this is a very fair draft proposal in regards to a group of mainly women of a certain vintage - 50+ who have only at most 10 years left to work.</p> <p>In conclusion- I don't think this Draft Proposal should be made law</p>	
94.	Denise Hughes	
	<p>to whom it concerns. my name is Denise Hughes and I am a pharmaceutical assistant. I have worked as such for the last 40 years and hope to continue in this position for the foreseeable future. Because I am employed by a group pharmacy my hours can vary on average I work for 26 hours a week, eight hours with a registered pharmacist and 18 hours in his temporary absence. Therefore I do not work in accordance with the draft code but have been employed based on a different understanding. When the pharmacist is on holidays I can work up to 26 hours in his absence. Because my husband is not working I am the sole earner for our household so our life depends on my income. Having worked all the years I presumed my qualification entitled me to do so. I have no intention of conducting or managing a business on my own account. I think that not being able to agree to terms of temporary absence reduces my qualification that I have worked with since 1974. At the time of conferral temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to my employment. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence. yours hopefully</p>	
95.	Anne McLaughlin	
	I am a woman in my early sixties living in a rural part of Ireland. I have read the Public Consultation document regarding pharmacy	

	<p>assistants with dismay and a great deal of upset.</p> <p>I have had many dealings with qualified pharmacy assistants over the years and have never felt that I was dealing with less than a highly qualified, knowledgeable person who knew my medicines and was professional in dispensing them and advising me on the proper way to take and use them.</p> <p>By limiting hours to 12 per month, it make their positions untenable and also unemployed. As there is a finite time to their being none of them around due to age and lack of that particular qualification, it makes it churlish and mean spirited to implement this law. I would really like to know what contingency plans would be put in place, when due to unforeseen circumstances, a pharmacy assistant would have to work for a few minutes after the 12 hours and therefore would be accountable to the law? As we all know, life happens and when an emergency situation occurs, do we expect law abiding citizens to have to examine their consciences and perhaps have to break the law? I do not think that is fair for anyone to have to consider.</p>	
96.	Eileen Mulconroy	
	<p>I am corresponding with you in response to the email which I received from you in relation to the Public Consultation on draft Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016.</p> <p>I ask you to consider the following points</p> <p>I am a fully qualified pharmaceutical assistant since May 1966. I never agreed to the draft Code of Practice. I have not been working in accordance with the draft code of practice, but I have been employed on a different understanding of ‘temporary absence’. If the draft code of practice is implemented it will represent a huge negative impact in my position of employment. I believe it is very unfair to implement such changes without any consultation or agreement from the qualified pharmaceutical assistants. It seems to me that no consideration is being taken of our future employment status or employment opportunities.</p> <p>I currently work 3 and half days per week, approximately a 28 hour week. One day per week I work in a position of ‘temporary absence’. If my current status were to change, my services would not be required on this day. I view the proposal as a serious erosion of my status. My wages would also be cut substantially due to no fault of my own. I believe this is totally unfair and without any legitimate reason in my opinion.</p>	

	<p>Take for example if my employer had to be away from the Pharmacy for 2 days for any unforeseen reason if the current proposals are sanctioned I would not be able to offer appropriate and necessary cover. I would only be able to work 12 hours per week in temporary capacity. In practical terms this would mean that I could only work 6 hours on each day. I would be in a position to open the Pharmacy at 9 am and close it at 3 pm on both days. This would not be a satisfactory service in an area where there is no other pharmacy for at least a 12 mile radius. In a rural area there is a huge duty of care to be provided to customers who cannot easily access another pharmacy. The proposal for change would have serious impact in this scenario. It is important to consider the difficulties in a rural area. It is extremely difficult to get a pharmacist at short notice.</p> <p>I am working for 30 years in my current position. I cannot understand after this number of loyal hardworking years of service why my position would be reduced and my status diminished. It is extremely frustrating after years of working in the profession and constant upskilling that my position is being challenged in this way. I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have work to since my conferral and registration in 1966. When I qualified temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to my employability. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover and for sick leave etc.</p> <p>I simply cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of my qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was validated, examined and privately run by the PSI. It is unbelievable and extremely disappointing that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for almost 50 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years. I think it is utterly ridiculous to implement such changes.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the points which I have raised.</p>	
97.	Michelle Farrell	
	<p>I refer to the draft rules for public consultation, as provided for under Section 30 of the Act, as to what constitutes the temporary absence of a pharmacist.</p> <p>I find this apparent “need” for redefining the meaning of temporary absence of the pharmacist extremely offensive for all involved. Qualified pharmaceutical assistants are highly qualified and knowledgeable professionals with a wealth of knowledge spanning 4 decades or more. At what point over the last 40 years has there ever been a need to question their qualification or the</p>	

service they have offered in the community? When has there ever been cases of negligence or health and safety worries surrounding assistants? They worked seamlessly alongside pharmacists for many years, working in the role in which they were qualified and entitled to, covering temporary absences. This working relationship among pharmacists and assistants has been a fantastic arrangement over the years and never caused any problems. All of a sudden now it seems important to redefine their role, bearing in mind that many of the remaining assistants are coming towards the end of their working careers. The vast majority are females in their 60s and this bullying tactic being considered by the PSI is simply unnecessary, upsetting and demeaning.

As pharmacists, our primary concern is always to provide the absolute best service to our patients, keeping their safety at the centre of all of our actions. To suggest that we would even consider endangering patients by hiring people who are not capable of doing the job is a massive insult. I have worked with various pharmaceutical assistants over the years and I drew the same conclusion every time. Their wealth of knowledge and experience was a HUGE asset to the pharmacy and they are a very valuable member of any pharmacy team. You cannot compete with 30-40 years' experience. Members of the community has complete and utter trust and respect for them as professionals. I have lost count of the number of times over the years that patients have returned to thank the assistant for their help in recognising/diagnosing something and either providing them with an effective remedy or referring them as needed. I have seen them deal with more serious situations like asthma attacks, anaphylaxis, stings etc. All in a completely calm and timely manner. The list is endless, as is my respect for these professionals. As a superintendent pharmacist of a community pharmacy I can honestly say that I can leave my assistant in my temporary absence and the pharmacy will be in very safe hands. She knows all of our patients and has a wonderful relationship with them. I work alongside her for 8 hours every week and she is an enormous help and support to me. I often find myself asking for a second opinion from her when it comes to rashes as her experience means her knowledge is far superior to mine. Why would I hire a locum to cover my holidays and day off when I have a wonderful assistant who knows the systems, and day to day running of the pharmacy. A locum without the same experience would not instil the same trust in my patients. Hiring an unknown locum would result in undue and unnecessary stress to the entire pharmacy team. A pharmacist who is not familiar with the running of our shop would require additional support and it would result in my technician staying in the shop over lunch rather than taking their entitled hour off. None of us would feel confident leaving a locum pharmacist by themselves when they would struggle with queries by themselves. Not to detract from locums but realistically they cannot be relied upon to do the same job as my pharmaceutical assistant who needs no direction or support.

Point number 6 in particular irks me greatly. "The period of temporary absence shall not exceed 12 hours in any one week." This is completely ludicrous. Putting a fixed number of hours on temporary absence is not, I feel, a decision for the PSI to make. There

	<p>was never a need to put such a stringent confine on this and there is STILL NO NEED for this. We as superintendent pharmacists are more than capable of leaving procedures in place and trusting that we are hiring professionals who can carry out the responsibilities that they are trained to do. Who came up with this magic number 12? So it appears that assistants can safely cover the temporary absence for 12 hours per week but no more? Even writing this I shake my head at this “logic”. Somehow these brilliantly trained individuals are no longer deemed safe on the 13th hour that week. But on the following week they may carry on again and cover 12 hours. The pharmaceutical assistants as entitled to cover temporary absences when the pharmacist is not there and this should include the pharmacist’s days off during the week, holidays, maternity leaves and anything that constitutes temporary absences. The PSI is not making allowances for temporary absences such as sickness, personal issues, funerals etc. If I was sick for more than 12 hours in one week my assistant could not continue to work for me? In my ill health I would need to find a locum at the last minute or close the shop? Whoever is imposing these restrictions needs to step into the real world. Each superintendent pharmacist is more than qualified to determine if a pharmaceutical assistant is fit to cover temporary absences.</p> <p>These proposed restrictions on working hours will pose a massive threat to self-worth, self-esteem and mental health to all pharmaceutical assistants. It shows a great lack of respect and empathy and is undermining and ageist. I ask for the PSI to deal with this matter in a fair manner and think of the implications for all. Temporary absence is exactly that. It requires no further definition.</p>	
98.	Michael McDermot	
	<p>The Council of the PSI has proposed draft rules for public consultation as to what constitutes the temporary absence of a pharmacist, as provided for under Section 30 of the Act. I am currently a supervising pharmacist working alongside a pharmacy assistant. They cover my days off, lunch times, holiday’s, illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. I do not see anything fair or workable in these draft proposals which restricts the number of hours the pharmacy assistant can work to 12 hours per week.</p> <p>I do not understand how anybody could think it is fair to change completely the meaning of a qualification more than 30 years after the qualification is awarded. I graduated from Trinity in 2009 and was in the first class to graduate with a masters in pharmacy from RCSI in 2010 and was added to the pharmacy register in December 2010. I think it is greatly distressing that the PSI can adjudicate that a certain qualification is not eligible for registration over 30 years after the issuing of the qualification. At the moment there are pharmacists currently on the register with two separate levels of qualifications. Any pharmacist registered in</p>	

2009 or before would have received a level 8 Bachelor degree and would have completed their pre registration training under the supervision of a pharmacist for 12 months before completing a licensing exam examined by the PSI. Any pharmacist registered the same year as myself in 2010 or after would have completed a level 8 bachelors degree followed by a level 9 masters from RCSI. In 2015 the new 5 year integrated pharmacy course has started with the first students due to graduate in 2020. From 2020 onwards there will be pharmacists on the register with 3 separate qualifications but all will be qualified to practice as pharmacists. Considering that I am currently XX years old and will have to work until my XXth birthday in XXX there will be a 35 year period where I will not have the most up to date pharmacy qualification (ie the 5 year integrated masters). The idea of my qualification being changed several years after it was issued thus preventing my continuing employment is greatly disturbing. There is also a large numbers of the pharmacists currently on the register who do not have a level 9 masters qualification and it would be extremely unfair is these pharmacist would all be unable to practice if the PSI deemed their qualification unsuitable for registration and practice. I feel the changing of the rules with regards to pharmacy assistants is greatly unfair and is very disturbing precedent.

From the PSI website:

The main role of the PSI includes:

- registration of pharmacists and pharmacies;
- improving the profession of pharmacy including ensuring that all pharmacists are undertaking appropriate continuing professional development (CPD);
- setting of standards for pharmacy education and training;
- accreditation of educational programmes for the pharmacy profession at different levels;
- quality assurance of standards, and the development of pharmacy practice;
- inspection and enforcement, including the taking of prosecutions;
- handling complaints and disciplinary matters, including the imposition of sanctions;
- provision of advice to the Government on pharmacy care, treatment and service in Ireland

From the PSI website(listed above) one of the main roles of the PSI is to set standards for pharmacy education and training and quality assurance of these standards. It is only right that pharmacists are held to a high standard and the introduction of compulsory CPD is welcomed. But in pharmacy in my opinion there is no grey area with regards to standards, it is black and white. A pharmacist is competent and allowed to practice or not competent and should not be allowed to practice. There is no partial

	<p>competency or anything near to that. That is why under the Pharmacy Act there must be a qualified person in the pharmacy at all times. Under the new guidance pharmacy assistants will be allowed work for 12 hours only per week on their own without the supervision of a pharmacist. I in truth find this a little bit ridiculous. Under the pharmacy act a qualified person must be there at all times. How can a person be competent and qualified for a certain period of time only? What extra does qualification does the pharmacy assistant need to practice on their own in the first hour, the tenth hour or the thirteenth hour? The person is qualified and competent or they are not and as I have stated before there is no grey area. I believe that under the pharmacy act the idea of temporary absence is covered under section 18 of the pharmacy act. All pharmacies must have a nominated supervising pharmacist who is in whole time charge of the pharmacy and work the majority of hours the pharmacy is open. At present I work Monday to Friday and the pharmacy assistant works Saturday. They also work alongside me on Mondays and Wednesdays allowing me to get a lunch on these days. They also cover my 4 weeks of holidays per year which I am entitled to under employment legislation. Under the new rules the pharmacy assistant will be unable to cover my holidays as this would be above the 12 hours per week. This is difficult to comprehend on a number of levels? As I mentioned previously people are competent or they are not. If they are competent for 12 hours why not be able to cover 4 out of 52 weeks when I am on holidays? Or have I been misinterpreting the pharmacy act in that I should be nominating a new supervising pharmacist to cover my holidays because I am not working in the pharmacy for those weeks? Or is a supervising pharmacist not allowed to take holidays? These are the questions I am asking myself with the introduction of these rules.</p> <p>The introduction of a time limit for the practice is completely unworkable. Am I supposed to have a stop watch with me to ensure the pharmacy assistant doesn't break the 12 hour threshold? What happens if the pharmacy assistant has worked 11 hours and is covering my lunch but I get delayed in traffic on my way back to the pharmacy? Is the pharmacy supposed to close for 10 or 15 minutes until I return? It seems ridiculous that the can cover my lunch but due to traffic they cant cover an extra 10 or 15 minutes?</p> <p>The idea of time limit on competency is ridiculous and I believe these rules as outlined by the PSI are wholly unfair and unworkable.</p>	
99.	Mary Healy	
	I qualified as a Pharmaceutica I Assistant (PA) in 1980. Since then I have worked both in a full time and part time capacity in retail pharmacies in Tipperary, Cork and Limerick. I worked in a retail pharmacy in Harare, Zimbabwe for one year. While my	

qualification was not recognised there, my experience was and I worked alongside a pharmacist. I also worked for a period of time in the UK, again as a PA but my qualification not recognised there. I attended UCC as a full time student from 1986 to 1989 and graduated with an honours arts degree. While I was a full time student I worked part time as a PA in pharmacies during term time and full time during summers holidays.

Temporary absence has always been a controversial point in my career as an assistant. In my early years I worked with a pharmacist and built up substantial experience in community pharmacy settings. Then as pharmacies became busier, especially with the GMS, the demand for flexible hours increased and I was asked to cover in the temporary absence of the pharmacist for longer periods - days, late nights, Sunday openings and so on. There was a shortage of pharmacists available at that time and PAs were increasingly asked to fill in for variable periods. I was respected for my experience and I was in considerable demand. This demand subsequently decreased when more qualified pharmacists began to enter into the system from around 2010 onwards.

I now find myself with about 5 years to work before retirement. My ability to work has been slowly eroded by guidelines /regulations of the PSI, but it is unclear what the legal standing of these guidelines may be. When the '15 hour rule' was introduced (c. 2006) I adhered to that. This was the first step in my capacity to earn a livelihood from my PA qualification being affected. I could no longer work casual days for other local pharmacies who knew and trusted me to work for them. I covered two full days per week for my present employer. Then, after a recent (2013) PSI inspection, my employer was instructed that that I could only cover one full day or two half days per week. This situation has affected me significantly as I now have reduced financial benefits from my work. My employer now has only one day off per week, as he is required by the guidelines to work beside me for the second day each week. How does it make sense that I can cover one full day weekly, and two full weeks holidays, as well as any unexpected absences of the pharmacist, but I cannot provide full cover for two days per week? This is a cynical and insidious way of controlling my work. While I might accept that I can no longer work as a locum, surely I can work for two days per week in one pharmacy without repercussions arising from the new PSI guidelines? I have been employed by my present employer since 1998. I started working for him when he first opened the business and have been with him since, covering days off and covering his annual holiday. Together we have developed a relationship of trust and support for each other and for the local customers. It is a community pharmacy in a small town of which we are both local residents. The proposed new regulations give total disregard to this history.

Over the years I have attended CPD lectures given by the ICCPE and recently by the IPU Academy. I recognise the importance of continuing education and enjoy attending the lectures. I am willing to take part in any CPD that may be required of me while I

	<p>continue to work as a PA.</p> <p>My livelihood has been seriously affected by these guidelines / regulations. My future career may be in jeopardy if there are further restrictions imposed on my work practises. In discussions with my colleagues it has become clear to me that my case is typical of many other PAs still working in the community pharmacy sector. It is essential that our organisation makes the strongest possible case to the PSI and Government that our terms and conditions of work and employment cannot be diminished, and that a legal basis for any intended changes to be introduced for PAs has a standing under Irish and European labour law, and should not erode the provisions for PAs already provided for under the 2007 Pharmacy Act.</p>	
100.	Mary Ring	
	<p>To qualify as a pharmaceutical assistant I served my apprenticeship, studied, sat & passed the examinations as set and approved by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. Now after practising my qualification full time for 39 years, I am aghast to learn that the PSI is attempting to restrict my ability to work at what has been and continues to be my lifetime career as well as my sole means of income.</p> <p>This is all the more serious and indeed upsetting considering that I have been recently widowed and am a lone breadwinner_ The PSI has not got the right either legally or morally to force a situation in which I could be made redundant which is effectively what you appear to be trying to achieve.</p> <p>Indeed the record shows that the Society's attitude to the pharmaceutical assistants over a long number of years has been antagonistic and hostile. We have regularly been subjected to disparagement and stress during Inspections when the Inspectors have constantly tried to impose limits on the extent of our cover, despite we being legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence, on their days off, during holidays and during sick leave.</p> <p>Indeed there is no evidence to suggest that pharmaceutical assistants have been other than competent and capable in carrying out their duties at all times, which makes it difficult to understand why the council would continue to plot behind closed doors to remove our livelihood and effectively negate our qualifications and our right to continue to work at our chosen profession.</p> <p>There is clearly a contract between us in regard to which you are seeking to avoid honouring your obligations in respect of. As</p>	

	<p>our professional regulatory body you have a clear and undeniable obligation to respect and protect the entitlements and rights which you awarded us on completing your own recognised training and qualifying process.</p> <p>For me personally, any attempt to further restrict my rights to work as a pharmaceutical assistant and thereby deny me the right and ability to earn a living is totally unacceptable and constitutes a breach of the contract between us, and for which I will hold the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland wholly accountable.</p> <p>I also fail to understand why the Council are unwilling to engage openly on this matter With the PAA in a fair and transparent manner, affecting as it does the livelihood and futures of each individual member.</p>	
101.	Phil O Byrne	
	<p>I am writing to express my sincere dissatisfaction towards the potential upcoming changes to Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant from The College of Pharmacy Shrewsbury Road Dublin in June 1973. I have worked according to the terms and conditions of that qualification under Section 19 of the pharmacy Act 1980.</p> <p>It is outrageous that this organisation can change the terms and condition of our qualification that has legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 40 years. Throughout my entire career I have been legally covering a pharmacist for temporary absence and cannot accept any modification to this.</p> <p>I believe this is discriminatory and will be breach Article 14 of European Convention on Human Rights.</p>	
102.	Diarmuid O’Riordan	
	<p>When considering the definition for temporary absence I would ask that it be taken into account that qualified assistants are not put in such a position that they will no longer be employable. I have worked with many over the years and have found that in many cases they are more careful and much more experienced than young newly qualified pharmacists. It would be a huge loss to the profession if their many years of experience were suddenly cast aside as we no longer need them with our register of pharmacists now growing. They were good enough to do the job when we did not have enough pharmacists so please do not dispose of them now that they are no longer required. The many years of experience gained by the now small number of assistants should not be cast aside at the stroke of a pen.</p>	

103.	Anne Flattery	
	<p>As a XXXXXXXX XXXXX, I find it difficult to understand how a time limit can be put on temporary absence of a Pharmacist. Pharmaceutical Assistants are highly qualified professionals, who have provided cover for Pharmacists for many years. They have a wealth of experience in the pharmacy sector. Their dedication to pharmacy is priceless and in my experience they take their role in the absence of a Pharmacist very seriously.</p> <p>On a personal note, I cannot express in words the respect and gratitude I have for my Pharmaceutical Assistant. My Pharmaceutical Assistant has worked in the pharmacy for the past 20 years. Her wealth of experience and her knowledge never ceases to amaze me. While I understand that the personal integrity of the Pharmaceutical Assistant is not in question, I do feel that if these proposals go ahead, it will have a devastating effect on the Pharmaceutical Assistant’s personal health, self-esteem and on the pharmacy sector.</p> <p>My Superintendent Pharmacist and Pharmaceutical Assistant have an excellent and respectful working relationship. The welfare of our customers is of the utmost importance and because my Pharmaceutical Assistant works with my Superintendent Pharmacist there is continuity and familiarity with all issues in the pharmacy. My customers have developed a very special relationship with my Pharmaceutical Assistant and have returned to the pharmacy on countless occasions to seek her opinion and express their gratitude for her advice. I am fully confident as is my Superintendent Pharmacist that I can leave my pharmacy knowing that it is in the safe and professional care of my highly experienced Pharmaceutical Assistant.</p> <p>Referring to point 6 of the draft, “the period of temporary absence shall not exceed 12 hours in any one week”. It appears that the pharmaceutical assistant can safely cover 12 hours and no more yet can return the following week and resume duty. I do not understand the logic behind this scenario. I believe that in unforeseen circumstances i.e. illness or death, a time limit on temporary absence cannot be defined.</p> <p>I would ask the PSI to consider the implications that these proposals will have on the Pharmacy Sector but more importantly on the Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p>	
104.	Angela Smyth	
	I wish to lodge a submission against the draft regulations concerning the above.	

	<p>History</p> <p>I am a qualified assistant and I have worked since 1978.</p> <p>I have worked in my current employment for the past 30 years.</p> <p>I never agreed to the draft Code of Practice.</p> <p>During this time I have NOT been working in accordance with the draft Code of Practice and have been employed on a different understanding of "temporary absence". Therefore I feel this new draft regulation will impact negatively on my employment prospects.</p> <p>I have always worked under the terms of my qualification as described under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890- "do not seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my own account" but may provide professional cover in the "temporary absence" of the pharmacist.</p> <p>Impact of implementation.</p> <p>The implementation of this draft would downgrade my qualification and I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith, which was formulated, validated, examined and run by the PSI .</p> <p>In fact this course was endorsed and promoted by my master tutor at the time.</p> <p>Having been conferred with my qualification and was registered with the PSI I had an expectation of where my career path should go and I feel it is unacceptable of the PSI to "change the goalposts" now.</p> <p>Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights explicitly prohibits discrimination. The PSI by enforcing these draft regulations is discriminating against a group of workers who are predominantly female and part time workers by imposing minimum hours of service as part of a pre obtained qualification which was obtained under different rules at the time of</p>	
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qualification.

The logic behind these draft regulations makes no sense. How can I be qualified to cover for 12 hours and not for 13 hours?

It will actually be an offence to work for 13 hours a week.

It will become impossible for an employer to employ someone who by no fault of their own may commit an offense by working for 12 hours and 5 mins.

Every pharmacy has a supervising pharmacist who works fulltime and I feel rather than defining "temporary absence" by hours it would make much better sense to say the Qualified Assistant may cover when the supervising pharmacist is absent.

Current employment

In my current position I have worked in the "temporary" absence of a pharmacist " for the last 30 years..

I have used my professional judgment on a daily basis and I have never posed a health and safety risk. I have always kept up to date with CPD and in fact I have proved an immense source of information for all the newly qualified pharmacists (and not so newly qualified) that have passed through in those 30 years.

I understand patient safety and safe pharmacy practice forms the basis of these draft rules ,however we as Pharmaceutical Assistants would welcome compulsory CPD and Fitness to Practice. We are a professional body and therefore should be treated so.

Over the years I have built up a brilliant customer relationship and many customers have benefited hugely from my vast experience and knowledge. This is crucial to patient safety.

I have acted in the "temporary absence" of the pharmacist at some stage every working day. Whilst the pharmacist had a tea break ,lunch break, went to a wedding ,funeral or holiday,or it may have been that the pharmacist was in the consultation room

	<p>and was unavailable to oversee the sale of certain items.</p> <p>On the basis of my current working arrangements the proposed draft regulations would be unworkable.</p> <p>I hope you will give my submission a lot of consideration and realise the impact your proposals will have on my future and that of my Qualified Assistant colleagues .</p> <p>The timing of the draft has not allowed any consultation with my local TD due to election business . I would like to maintain the right to further negotiations after the submission deadline if required.</p>	
105.	Mary Baker	
	<p>It has come to my attention that the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland has decided to change the working conditions of Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants . All of these qualified Q P A have 30 years of experience. The P S I has now decided to reduce the cover time to 12 hours per week. This is so unfair as most of the Q P As may become unemployed. Hope to be hearing from you in the near future.</p>	
106.	David Bradford	
	<p>I am writing to object to the draft Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants Rules 2016. I am aware of several pharmaceutical assistants currently working part time hours but over 12 hours per week in pharmacies providing temporary cover to the supervising pharmacist.</p> <p>Whilst I understand the requirement for fixed guidelines on the practice of pharmacists I believe it is unfair to penalise these pharmaceutical assistants who have a great number of years experience and have consistently displayed an excellent level of practice and service to their communities. Under the proposed guidelines these pharmaceutical assistants will be allowed to provide only 12 hours per week cover which i believe, through no fault of their own, penalises them unnecessarily for qualifying at the time of their study to the required level and is principally unfair. I am unsure how being allowed to work 12 hours per week</p>	

	<p>covering the supervising pharmacist differs from working 13 hours for example.</p> <p>I would suggest and hope that this be redrafted with these hard working and highly experienced pharmacy staff in mind and that they are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve in this highly required and professional occupation.</p>	
107.	Caroline Smyth	
	<p>I wish to express disagreement with the proposed plan to limit the hours of cover a pharmaceutical assistant can provide to 12 hours. I have read the associated documents and can see no benefit in implementing this course of action. Pharmaceutical assistants have provided me with support and advice to the highest standard any time I have sought their help. They have a professional qualification that should be respected and valued. Most pharmaceutical assistants have many years of experience and knowledge to draw upon in their decision making. They have the interests of the public and their patients to the forefront at all times and exercise high levels of judgement in their practice.</p> <p>I feel this proposal is hugely disrespectful to pharmaceutical assistants. If their knowledge and practice is suffice to provide cover for 12 hours it should be suffice for any amount of cover required. The stipulation of 12 hours does not make any sense to me.</p> <p>I hope you will consider my views before deciding on what course of action to take.</p>	
108.	Brenda Morris	
	<p>I am writing to you in relation to the proposed draft rules for public consultation as to what constitutes the temporary absence of a pharmacist, as provided for under Section 30 of the Act.</p> <p>“Rule 6 states that a pharmacy owner or superintendent pharmacist shall not operate a retail pharmacy business in the temporary absence of a registered pharmacist unless:</p> <p>a period of temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week”</p> <p>As a fully qualified pharmaceutical assistant of 32 years, I would like to state that I have not and cannot agree to the Draft Code of Practice (as above). In addition, I have not been working in accordance with the draft Code of Practice but have been employed based on a different understanding of ‘temporary absence’. The terms of this ‘draft code’ would in fact make a largely negative impact on my employment and the employment of the majority of other pharmaceutical assistance for the reasons below:</p>	

Currently under contract I work 32 hours a week in one pharmacy and on average 15 of these hours are worked under 'temporary absence' of the pharmacist. However, the hours can vary weekly due to the pharmacists' holidays and unforeseen circumstances such as sickness, funerals, meetings etc but always within legal limits.

If this proposed change of 'temporary absence' goes ahead, it will have a huge impact on my employment and also on my employer. For example, my days and therefore my wages will be cut as my employer will need to employ a locum.

In addition to the above points which clearly show the impact on employment hours and potential wage cuts if the proposed rules were put in place, the following arguments must be dually noted in conjunction with these proposed draft rules:

* This reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferral and registration in YEAR 1984. At the time of conferral temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to my employability. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover and for sick leave etc.

* I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI. It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 32 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.

* I have worked in 'temporary absence' of the pharmacist for 32 years and in my professional judgement PA does not pose a health and safety risk in the 126 year old accepted definition of temporary absence.

* In my 32 years of experience and qualification as a pharmaceutical assistance I have strived to create effective professional relationships with my customers, who have placed their trust and reliance in me. However, the proposed draft rules may mean that I will have to stand down from this role at specific times, allowing a possibly inexperienced, unfamiliar pharmacists to take over my role on certain days, posing a possible Health and Safety concern. Similarly, I can only presume that the customers will have some concern with the lack of consistency in staffing were my responsibility and duties in temporary absence cut.

* I am equally expressing utter disbelief that the meaning and trust in this role could potentially be so belittled after so many years of service as a dedicated pharmaceutical assistant of 32 years

	<p>* It is of illogical thinking to propose a rule of being able to act in ‘temporary absence’ for 12 hours and on the 13th hour not being able to cover. The rule appears far too rigid and unrealistic to real life situations in employment, for example to cover sickness, traffic delays, funerals e.g.</p> <p>* As the training in this specific qualification had discontinued 32 years ago, it is likely that the qualification itself will expire once the last member retires at age 65 minimum. Why degrade the position now?</p> <p>In consideration of the above argument, it is apparent that the original purpose in providing a ‘fair and workable model’ for the definition of “temporary absence” evidently failed to meet their aim. Due to:</p> <p>* the lack of consideration into the impact of the pharmaceutical assistance employment and wages</p> <p>* lack of insight into the potentially added strain on employer to hire stand ins during unforeseen circumstances</p> <p>* the impact on deliverance in public assurance of ‘safe pharmacy practice and patient safety’ due to the unrealistic propositions made by the PSI resulting in inconsistencies in pharmaceutical services.</p> <p>Thank you in advance for your consideration of the points in this submission.</p>	
109.	Stephen Smyth	
	<p>I wish to lodge a submission against the draft regulations concerning the above.</p> <p>The implementation of this draft would downgrade an existing qualification which was formulated, validated, examined and run by the PSI. Those conferred with this qualification are few in number, however, they have worked in the industry for decades during which time they have formed careers and relationships with pharmacists and customers alike. I feel it is unacceptable of the PSI to "change the goalposts" now and jeopardise the career of pharmaceutical assistants.</p> <p>Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights explicitly prohibits discrimination. The PSI by enforcing these draft regulations is discriminating against a group of workers who are predominantly female and part time workers by imposing minimum hours of service as part of a pre obtained qualification which was obtained under different rules at the time of</p>	

	<p>qualification.</p> <p>The logic behind these draft regulations makes no sense. How can a person be qualified to cover for 12 hours and not for 13 hours?</p> <p>It will actually be an offence to work for 13 hours a week. Every pharmacy has a supervising pharmacist who works full-time and I feel rather than defining "temporary absence" by hours it would make much better sense to say the Qualified Assistant may cover when the supervising pharmacist is absent. To place a rigid definition of temporary absence in this way would render numerous existing jobs unsustainable and result in people losing their jobs.</p> <p>Given that the last graduate to qualify as a pharmaceutical assistant graduated in 1985 there is a wealth of experience being provided to pharmacies around the country by qualified and skilled professionals. It would be a detrimental step to alter the regulations as is proposed as it would render many of these professionals unemployed in their current capacity.</p> <p>Please give this submission due consideration and reject the proposals as they stand to remove the definition of temporary absence in terms of a set number of hours per week.</p>	
110.	Frances Ryan	
	<p>It has come to my attention that a downgrading is being proposed for 400 people who hold the older qualification to work as assistants in pharmacies.</p> <p>These staff, most of whom are female have given wonderful service to this sector. In many ways being the backbone of the industry.</p> <p>This proposal is highly discriminatory as it is both sexist and ageist.</p> <p>All these workers will have retired within the next 10 years.</p> <p>It seems petty and small minded to undermine their livelihoods at this time.</p>	

	<p>The tacit knowledge and corporate memory of these workers is very precious and should be respected and treasured rather than frowned upon.</p> <p>I trust that this absurd proposal will be cancelled.</p> <p>Everyone deserves to work their last years without extra stress and worry</p>	
111.	Shirley Baker	
	<p>I have recently become aware of the proposal of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) to limit the number of hours to a maximum of 12 hours in a week. I am lodging my objection to this for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My pharmacy consists of a pharmacist and pharmaceutical assistant and both run a seamless operation. Reducing the number of hours to 12 eliminates the role of the pharmaceutical assistant. A role that in my opinion enhances the pharmacy and allows small pharmacies to run with one pharmacist. • As a medical professional I have been assisted numerous times efficiently and more than competently by pharmaceutical assistants. • Why is there a need to make this change and therefore make the role of pharmaceutical assistant redundant? • The reason the role of pharmaceutical assistant works so well is because they can cover temporary absence both planned and unplanned. What happens if the pharmacist gets sick or has a family bereavement? • How can a regulatory body, who created the role, ratified the course and has been maintaining the register of pharmaceutical assistants now make a suggestion like this which would effectively end the role? • How are you spending the registration fees for this group? - it most definitely does not appear to be their best interest. • Why suggest this change now when the last pharmaceutical assistant qualified in 1985, 35 years ago? You should be proud of these members who have represented PSI in the community so well but instead you are trying to undermine them. I don't 	

	<p>understand this - please explain it to me.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where did the figure of 12 hours come from? - I would like to see the research behind this figure. It seems a ludicrous number as covering lunch breaks alone in the week will use half of this time. • Why is there no flexibility? If a pharmacist is delayed in returning to over the twelve hours what are pharmaceutical assistants to do? Do you suggest they down tools? What you are suggesting seems to imply that a job becomes illegal only by the passing of time - how can this be, that a few minutes means that your job, the exact same job is now suddenly illegal. • You must be aware that a change like this will result in redundancies as the role of the pharmaceutical assistant will no longer be a viable option to small pharmacies. <p>I also find it objectionable that a named person was not given to address correspondence to. To object we have to address it to sir/madam or to whom it may concern - a person should be named and that person responsible to replying to all correspondence. I expect that you have a team allocated to dealing with submissions but that team surely has a lead person - why is their name not given?</p> <p>I expect to receive a reply with answers to the questions outlined above.</p>	
112.	Deirdre Phelan	
	<p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant and was conferred with this qualification in 1982. Since that time, I have worked in retail pharmacy and have enjoyed a varied and interesting career. These new guidelines have been enforced without any consultation with our representative body, the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association. This has resulted in and contributed to a diminution of my qualification and status within community pharmacy and has led to a loss of employment and employment opportunities</p> <p>I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of my qualification post conferral. I undertook this course in good faith, which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI. It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 34 years is now defining the terms of its qualification without consultation or negotiation.</p> <p>It is unacceptable that the PSI would redefine this qualification whereby the right to work have been impinged upon for all</p>	

	Pharmaceutical Assistants. These guidelines should be retracted to allow Pharmaceutical Assistants to work under the original Pharmacy Act.	
113.	Deccla O'Leary	
	<p>I refer to the public consultation on the above draft Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland rule 2016.</p> <p>I am a qualified pharmaceutical assistant employed in my current community pharmacy position for 40 years. When I qualified in 1971, temporary absence was not defined and therefore conferred rights on me to be legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence.</p> <p>I never agreed to the draft code of practice and I have not been working in accordance with it, but on a different understanding of temporary absence.</p> <p>Over the years I have constantly upskilled, attended lectures and read product information to keep pace with modern day pharmacy.</p> <p>Defining temporary absence to 12 hours per week seems unreasonable and will impact on all qualified assistants livelihoods employability and salaries.</p> <p>Why define temporary absence now when we have worked according to the terms of our qualification under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 – a course that was devised and implemented by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland and streamlined over the years to accommodate pharmacy as it progressed and changed.</p> <p>It seems unbelievably to me that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a manner over 45 years is now defining the terms of the qualification in a manner that would suggest I was working illegally all those years.</p> <p>The last examination for pharmaceutical assistants was held in 1985. Retirement for everyone is not in the too distant future, then the register for pharmaceutical assistants will be closed.</p> <p>However, while 12 hours per week is possibly adequate in an urban setting, I feel this period is too short for many rural</p>	

	<p>pharmacies where locum cover cannot be arranged quickly. Therefore I ask that a longer period be considered as more appropriate in these circumstances</p>	
<p>114.</p>	<p>Eileen Boyle</p>	
	<p>As a member of the public I wish to make a submission on the draft rules.</p> <p>The service, advice, knowledge and standard of care I have personally received from the Pharmaceutical Assistant in my local pharmacy over the years is excellent. I have trusted them completely with any of my health concerns and ailments, to the extent that it really is the only reason I am a customer of my local pharmacy. And I am certain I am not alone in this opinion, should you ask other customers who are loyal to their own community pharmacies they would most likely offer up the same reason.</p> <p>I have read the draft rules and I cannot understand how reasonable or fair minded people could think the proposed rules are fair or workable in the day to day running of a retail pharmacy business. I do not feel it is assuring to the public to put doubt in the mind of sick people that a person could be allowed to dispense prescriptions on their own only for a defined numbers of hours per week. That implies there is a risk in going beyond this number. It casts doubt as to how qualified these people are. How can someone be competent for only a set number of hours per week then run out of time until the next week and then be competent again. If the Pharmacist is late and the 12 hours expires half way through the assistant dispensing a prescription would they only be able to give two items if there were four items on the prescription.</p> <p>I have always believed that the only difference between a pharmacist and a qualified assistant was that the latter could not keep open shop on their own account but they could transact the business in the temporary absence of the pharmacist.</p> <p>Rule 6; The impression these rules give me is that the PSI considers that there is a risk that after 12 hours a week the Pharmacy assistant is no longer competent. If this is true I do not understand how they can be competent again the next week for another 12 hours. As a member of the public I am concerned that the PSI are sending mixed messages to the public as to whether these people are properly qualified. If the qualification is in doubt then the fault lies with the people who educated, examined and qualified these people.</p> <p>I do not believe the PSI has the right to bring about the demise of an entire register of people they themselves qualified. That is what will happen if these rules become law.</p>	

115.	Margaret Jacinta O Sullivan	
	<p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant of almost 32 years. On presentation of my Certificate in May 1974, I understood that as long as the Pharmacist had not got a permanent job outside of the Pharmacy, we were entitled to cover lunch hours, half days, days off, holidays, sick leave and any emergencies. I can tell you there was many a Pharmacist that was very glad to have a Qualified Assistant to call on as otherwise he/she would get no break as Pharmacists were few and far between.</p> <p>It is unbelievable that the PSI would now try to redefine the qualification they conferred on. I would like to tell you that many Pharmacists and customers recognise the value of the many years of experience held by Qualified Assistants. I cannot see how any employment rights body or judge could justify in declaring that a person was fully entitled to cover for a Pharmacist one day and not the next. Surely that does not make sense. How can you be qualified one day and not the next?</p> <p>In my view you are now attempting to overturn the terms which are in existence since 1890. Needless to say it is also in breach of custom and practice which, I am informed, has a standing in law. In these circumstances I object in the strongest possible terms to a diminution or conditionality of my qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated, validated and examined by the PSI. It is unbelievable that the body which conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me and to work in a specific manner for almost 32 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally for all of those years.</p>	
116.	Elaine Roche	
	<p>I wish to make a submission on the above. I have worked in pharmacy for over 20 years. Most of those years I have been working alongside a Qualified Assistant. She has covered the pharmacy owner`s days off, his holidays, any time he was out sick and any time he needed to do an errand. Many times he needed to go to the bank or deliver a prescription locally and when he had to deliver the GMS paperwork to the HSE. He has no hesitation leaving the pharmacy any time he needs to if the assistant is there.</p> <p>That is what I have come to understand what a qualified assistant is qualified and entitled to do.</p> <p>I have read the draft proposed rules and I do not consider them to be fair and workable. I know that if these rules were to become law the assistant I have worked with for over 18 years would lose her job. She would not be able to continue doing what she was</p>	

	<p>employed to do. I do not believe any reasonable person could think that to change the meaning of a qualification a person has had for over 30 years could be fair. It is not workable in the day to day running of a pharmacy to have to watch the clock to know if someone still has the legal right to do their work. It would be hard to explain to a customer if the supervising pharmacist was delayed coming back from lunch that the assistant could not hand out the prescription. The customers know this person is qualified. She has her licence certificate hanging on the wall in the shop. It would be very confusing to many people including myself as to why there is a time limit beyond which they would be breaking the law by doing the same work they did a few minutes earlier.</p> <p>There is no logic or rationale that I can see in this proposal. A person is either qualified to do a certain task or they are not. It makes no sense to say it's safe for 12 hours per week and anything over 12 hours would be illegal.</p> <p>The PSI take a common sense approach to define the hours a supervising pharmacist has to be present in the shop. Where is the same common sense when defining temporary absence? If the supervising pharmacist is in whole time charge any time they are absent is temporary.</p> <p>I hope the council of the PSI reconsiders the draft rules proposed and comes up with a fair and workable model. I do not understand how making all the assistants on the PSI register redundant could be fair. Putting a number of hours set in stone implies that after that time there is a risk to patient safety. That implies the PSI are willing to accept that risk for 12 hours a week. I would not think this is very reassuring to the public on their health and safety.</p> <p>If there is a good reason the PSI have to justify treating people in this dreadful way then that should be made public. Otherwise the council members should try putting themselves in the shoes of a qualified assistant for a moment and come up with something more fair and realistic. I do not think these rules have been very well thought out. There is no way they are either fair or workable.</p>	
117.	Teresa Sweeney	
	<p>To whom it may concern, Your draft proposal regarding temporary absence cover is in my opinion not well thought out. The new proposal would render many assistants unemployable due to the complexity and rigidity of proposals.</p> <p>In addition if you wish to improve the health and safety of patients then including assistants in continuous professional</p>	

	<p>development and perhaps update training, would be more beneficial to patients than bringing in measures which hinder these experienced healthcare professionals.</p> <p>Finally you state that the pharmacist should satisfy themselves that the assistant is competent prior to their temporary absence. If the regulatory body is happy to delegate this huge responsibility to the pharmacist, then surely the day to day organisation of temporary absence should also be left to the pharmacist and their assistants who in some instances have a working relationship for decades.</p>	
118.	Conan Burke	
	<p>I am a qualified pharmacist and pharmacy owner and have had the benefit of working with a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant colleague for many years.</p> <p>In my view the current draft PSI (Regulation of temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016 requires some alterations.</p> <p>I have already complied with the PSI guidelines on temporary absence which has effectively meant the ending of employment for my assistant colleague in one pharmacy.</p> <p>Further amendments to the definition of the role will mean that her continued employment in her current role is doubtful.</p> <p>I do not think that the outcome of this change in rules should be to endanger the employment opportunities of Pharmaceutical Assistants who have served their profession very well.</p> <p>It is stated in the draft guidelines that the temporary absence should not exceed more than 12 hours in any one week. It was the intention of the original guidelines that Pharmaceutical Assistants should be able to cover lunchtimes and days off for Pharmacists. 12 hours is hardly sufficient to cover this and I believe that the original 15 hours stated in the guidelines should be the number of hours allowed.</p> <p>There is no accounting for holiday cover in the draft guidelines and this was explicitly stated in the original guidelines. I believe this guideline should be retained. Pharmaceutical assistants should be allowed to cover a 14 day temporary absence for leave.</p> <p>Cover for Pharmacist sick leave is also implied in the original guidelines and this should be allowed for up to 14 days.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical Assistants have been excluded from CPD legislation to date and I believe that this should be made mandatory for</p>	

	<p>Assistants as it is for Pharmacists.</p> <p>There are sound reasons for allowing temporary absence as per the original guidelines. As an employer, I feel that the health and welfare of my patients are much better served by by an experienced Pharmaceutical Assistant who is already familiar with the SOPs of the pharmacy, knows the patients and the computer systems and is knowledgeable about more complex patient transactions such as those with local residential care units than a locum Pharmacist who has no familiarity with the business,patients and possibly a poor working knowledge of the computer system and is only becoming familiar with the pharmacy SOPs on the job.</p> <p>I fully understand the need to define the role of the Pharmaceutical Assistant in terms of temporary absence more clearly but I do not think that the act of defining this role should be used as an opportunity to reduce the number of hours that constitutes a temporary absence as intended originally and this is clearly what is being done in these draft guidelines.</p> <p>I have absolutely no doubt that employers will have to conduct a review of their employed Pharmaceutical Assistant's contracts in light of these proposed rules and in some cases this may result in termination of employment. This is hardly a just approach to a professional group, many of whom have worked for more than 30 years in the industry and served it well. In my view it overturns the value of their qualifications in retrospect and this does not seem a reasonable or fair action.</p>	
119.	Ciara McCabe	
	<p>Pharmacy assistants have always been very professional to work with. Indeed as they have worked in one pharmacy for so long, they have developed an excellent relationship with their patients and are highly regarded by their patients who often seek them out specifically for advice.</p> <p>I think to reduce the hours they work unsupervised by pharmacist further would not be of benefit to these patients. It should be acknowledged that pharmacy assistants have many years of valuable experience working in pharmacy. Many have worked for over 30 years and this wealth of experience should not be ignored. It would be a loss to patients and pharmacy if this experience was lost and I am unsure what would be gained.</p> <p>Pharmacy assistants are of an age close to retirement. Many of them are relying on their income as an assistant over the next few years to last them into retirement. To restrict the hours they work unsupervised further will have an adverse financial effect on</p>	

	<p>many people who have contributed positively to pharmacy over the years.</p> <p>Instead of reducing the hours they can work unsupervised, I would be in favour of ensuring pharmacy assistants complete continuous education in the same manner pharmacist are required to do so. I also think it would be helpful if they were answerable to a governing body in the same way a pharmacist is. I believe this would be a better outcome for patient safety.</p>	
120.	Dei Doyle	
	<p>I am currently working alongside a Pharmacy Assistant who had taught me most of what I know as a pharmacy technician. I have worked alongside her for the past four years and have found her to be the most efficient, thorough and self motivated person I have worked with. I would happily rank her above all Pharmacists I have worked with over the past 5 years due to her work ethic.</p> <p>I hope you do not go ahead with limiting all pharmacy assistants to only twelve hours per week unsupervised. Most assistants are close to retiring age and I honestly believe your focus and efforts could be put to much better use in other areas of Pharmacy.</p>	
121.	Mark Sajda on behalf of Sam McCauley Chemists	
	<p>I, Mark Sajda MPSI, Director and Group Superintendent Pharmacist of Sam McCauley Chemists, wish to make a submission on behalf of Sam McCauley Chemists, to the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland {PSI} on the draft PSI (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants Rules 2016.</p> <p>The draft PSI (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants)Rules 2016 propose the following key changes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The period of temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week. • The pharmaceutical assistant must have provided 12 hours of skilled assistance in the previous month at the same registered retail pharmacy business • A pharmaceutical assistant, in the temporary absence of a pharmacist, can carry out activities related to the sale and supply of medicinal products but not those functions that would be specifically associated with the roles of superintendent 	

	<p>pharmacist (i.e. responsible for overall professional and clinical management of the pharmacy) and/or the supervising pharmacist (i.e. responsible for all the ongoing operations of the pharmacy).</p> <p>On the face of it, these new rules do seem to allow more flexibility in that the pharmaceutical assistant is only required to work for 12 hours in the previous month to allow them to provide 12 hours per week temporary absence cover.</p> <p>However the rules do not appear to provide for the pharmaceutical assistant covering for 14 days of a pharmacist's holiday or unscheduled short absences such as illness or funerals. It makes no sense that a pharmaceutical assistant, who is trusted to work one day a week for 52 weeks in the temporary absence of a pharmacist, can't cover a 2 week holiday or an unscheduled absence. Sam McCauley Chemists propose that this provision be reinstated in the rules.</p> <p>Currently, pharmaceutical assistants registered with the PSI are not subject to CPD. The new Temporary Absence Rules require that the superintendent pharmacist shall ensure that the pharmaceutical assistant has the requisite knowledge and skills. It would make more sense for the PSI, to ensure that pharmaceutical assistants have such skills through mandating CPD. This would ensure that pharmaceutical assistants supplement their extensive experience with up to date clinical knowledge which would result in a higher standard of overall patient care.</p> <p>Finally, I would like to state that I have worked alongside several pharmaceutical assistants during my 20 years as a pharmacist and have always found their experience and overall knowledge to be excellent</p>	
122.	Eleanor Meaney	
	<p>I am writing to you in relation to the proposed draft rules for public consultation as to what constitutes the temporary absence of a pharmacist, as provided for under Section 30 of the Act.</p> <p>Rule 6 states that "a pharmacy owner or superintendent pharmacist shall not operate a retail pharmacy business in the temporary absence of a registered pharmacist unless: a period of temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week".</p> <p>The terms of this 'draft code' would in fact make a largely negative impact on the employment of the majority of pharmaceutical assistants for the reasons below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the event that the pharmacist is on temporary leave, my local pharmacy assistant, XXXXXX, would not be able to stand in for as 	

long as required if the draft rules were defined, meaning that a locum pharmacist would have to fulfill this role. This may affect the community feel and familiarity for customers of small pharmaceutical businesses, as I would definitely feel more comfortable dealing with XXXXXX, as I have done for years.

-As a customer I would prefer to see the pharmacist and pharmaceutical assistants that I know and trust rather than a stranger dealing with my prescription, and would feel far more uncomfortable gaining pharmaceutical advice from a locum pharmacist.

-In XXXXXX 32 years of experience and qualifications as a pharmaceutical assistant, she has striven to create effective professional relationships with customers, and is continuously improving practice and her professional education, gaining invaluable experience, far superior to that of a newly qualified pharmacist. However the proposed draft rules now appear to state that a pharmacist would be better desired to fill over the 13th hour of temporary absence, regardless of their competency and years of experience and qualification.

-I believe that the draft rule expresses an utter disregard to years of service and dedication to the role as a pharmaceutical assistant. I find it very upsetting that the terms of her employment could be so belittled and meaningless, expressing a lack of trust in this role.

-The proposal of this draft rule could also affect her desirability as a candidate in employment, this could mean wage cuts, or cuts in employment hours. It is unfair to propose this large impact on her employment considering her expenses such as mortgage and loans, XXXXXX is by no means near retirement.

-It is of illogical thinking to propose a rule of being able to act in 'temporary absence' for 12 hours and on the 13th hour not being able to cover. The rule appears far too rigid and unrealistic to real life situations in employment, for example to cover sickness, traffic delays, funerals e.g. of the pharmacist.

In consideration of the above argument, it is apparent that the original purpose in providing a 'fair and workable model' for the definition of "temporary absence" evidently failed to meet its aim. It is clear to see that it is unfair to dictate the future of someone's employment by changing the fine print in their terms of employment. Additionally, it is unimaginable to think that years of experience and dedication are overridden by the desire to have an inexperienced pharmacist in the place of a pharmaceutical assistance post 12 hours a week. In my opinion this does not serve as patient and public safety, under direction of

	<p>the PSI.</p> <p>Finally, I would like to propose that if the definition of temporary absence has to be changed, the realistic amount of hours done under temporary absence must be taken into great consideration, and must be well over 12 hours a week in order to provide safe practice.</p> <p>Thank you in advance for your consideration of the points in this submission.</p>	
123.	Helen Stapleton	
	<p>I wish to express my strong opposition to the proposed changes in the working conditions for Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>The PSI created a course (3-year apprenticeship + 1-year course + exam) for Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants, validated it and accepted registration fees for decades. Now it wishes to make holders of this qualification who have many years of valuable experience virtually unemployable.</p> <p>It is unacceptable to introduce a course and 30 years later decide that its qualification is not legal anymore. It is totally unjust to impose a condition suddenly preventing qualified assistants who have been working for so many years from covering a pharmacy. Furthermore, I do not believe that temporary absence can be defined in such a narrow and restrictive way.</p> <p>I urge you to reconsider the proposed changes in order to save the jobs of pharmaceutical assistants.</p>	
124.	Valerie McGrath	
	<p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant qualified in 1979 and have been in employment in Pharmacy in that capacity for past 37 years. I have not been working in accordance with the Draft Code of Practice but have been employed based on a different understanding of 'Temporary Absence' in that time. I am presently employed in one pharmacy two days per week as a Pharmaceutical Assistant for the past eight years providing sick leave holiday cover and many other reasons for absence.</p> <p>It is unbelievable that a professional body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for the past 37 years is now only defining the terms of that qualification suggesting that for that period of time I was working illegally. To suggest that if a Pharmaceutical Assistant works one minute outside the hours defined that it is an offence is</p>	

	<p>nonsense. The concept of 'Temporary Absence' has since 1890 had an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice. It is 'Not Permanent'.</p> <p>I am now at a loss to understand why the Pharmaceutical Society is once again raising this issue. Why I objected then to your proposal is still as valid today for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undermines my qualification • Calls into question my professional work ethic and standards over the past 37 years • Restricts my work scope • Infringes on my ability to make a living • Impinges on my flexibility in work locations <p>I find it regrettable that the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland who is my registered body is now engaged in such a proposal that casts doubts on my qualification, experience and ability under the guise of high standards and public safety. Accordingly I totally reject your proposal with regard to the Temporary Absence Regulations that you propose "will be a fair and workable model".</p>	
125.	Sheila Aideen Kelliher	
	<p>I am a pharmaceutical assistant who studied under the rules and conditions laid down by the PSI, sat and passed the examinations prescribed by the PSI in 1970 - some 46 years ago and have been working full time in a pharmacy since then.</p> <p>It is utterly unconscionable that after all this time the PSI should seek to devalue my experience and denigrate my qualification without any just and reasonable cause. Indeed the average pharmaceutical assistants must possess more experience than the average pharmacist considering that none has probably less than thirty years experience in a dispensary and above all in dealing with and assisting the public.</p> <p>Yet as a state empowered body you seek to suddenly and arbitrarily restrict my ability to carry out the work which I have been doing probably longer than most members of your Council, depriving me of or restricting my ability and my constitutional right to earn a living in the profession I studied for and entered in good faith at your invitation and fully in accordance with the</p>	

	<p>rules and regulations as stipulated and approved by the PSI.</p> <p>There exists a clear contract between us both legally and morally which you now seek to resile from without justification. This proposed action is not only unconstitutional but a clear repudiation of your legal and contractual obligations to me as a professional regulatory body under who s invitation and regulations I trusted in by entering the profession and obtaining my qualification.</p> <p>It is all the more remarkable that the PSI should attempt this course of action at a time when there is only a limited number of years left for pharmaceutical assistants in the profession as all will have left or retired in a short number of years. Indeed it is totally contrary to the experience and practice in other professions like accountancy, where new rules and restrictions as to qualifications exempted existing practitioners who did not possess the new qualification levels.</p> <p>I also understand that the Council deliberately excluded the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association from its meeting on the spurious grounds that a solicitor acting for the PAA had sent a letter from a solicitor requesting a copy of the draft code of practice. This is very deliberate oppression and a denial of our basic human rights. Even the lowliest criminal is afforded the right to hear the case being made against them, to have the opportunity to understand the reasoning for it and to fully rebut and argue their case.</p>	
126.	Pat the Cope Gallagher	
	<p>I am writing to you today in response to the proposed Draft Rules recently announced by the PSI in relation to the regulation of the term Temporary Absence Cover – and my concerns as to the ultimate consequences I believe it has for the role of Pharmaceutical Assistant (PA).</p> <p>It seems to me to be a gross undermining by the PSI of the PA role, certainly if you consider the history and years of service that such individuals across the country who hold PA qualifications, many of who have worked in their respective community pharmacies for several years under the faith and trust of their supervisors, colleagues and customers alike.</p> <p>In my opinion it reads as a form of marginalisation towards this group of people – which to my knowledge is mostly made up of women in their mid-50’s. Having taken the time to read through the proposed Draft Rules and background information provided on the PSI website, I believe that if it were to come into effect it would make this group of highly experienced and qualified</p>	

	<p>professionals unemployable for the job that many of them have already been doing very well until now.</p> <p>The service, advice, knowledge and standard of care I have personally received from the Pharmaceutical Assistant in my local pharmacy over the years is excellent. I have trusted them completely with any of my health concerns and ailments, to the extent that it really is the only reason I am a customer of my local pharmacy. And I am certain I am not alone in this opinion, should you ask other customers who are loyal to their own community pharmacies they would most likely offer up the same reason.</p> <p>This rather unique group of qualified professionals – PAs – are a valuable resource to their local pharmacies across the country. They should be rewarded for their years of service and the part they have played in the 126 year history of how Pharmacy has developed in this country. Their level of professionalism at their own jobs I am sure has set the bar for the younger generations of Pharmacists that have followed them, not least in terms of providing support and a readiness to share their experience and knowledge with their younger colleagues. If the PSI are looking to advance on the regulation of Pharmacists in this country, perhaps they should consider upgrading PAs to the same equal footing as Pharmacists? At this stage of their careers with the vast experience they have attained, it would be their right.</p> <p>Defining the term Temporary Absence in the manner proposed, especially after the PSI were happy to allow PAs to join their society and pay their fees – it is an insult. It raises many questions as to the motives and even integrity of such an association why such a proposal would even be considered at such a time when the reality is that the role of PA will be non-existent ~10 years from now. However, in an attempt to try and keep this letter brief I will only ask 1 question. Why is it 126 years after the introduction of the term is the PSI now attempting to define Temporary Absence? Why is it that the PSI might believe that someone can be “competent” to cover the absence of a Pharmacist for 12 hours per week, and 1 minute over that time are “incompetent”? To me at least, it makes no sense.</p> <p>I would ask that the PSI please reconsider any actions they are considering regarding Pharmaceutical Assistants in relation to the definition of the term Temporary Absence.</p>	
127.	Doreen O’Rourke	
128.	Helen Bashford	

	<p>I am a qualified pharmaceutical assistant currently working approximately 27 hours per week. I usually work one day on my own which enables the pharmacist to have his day off but have on occasions worked in the temporary absence of the pharmacist for periods ranging from two or three days to two or three weeks. I have worked in this same pharmacy for more than thirty years.</p> <p>I cannot understand why the PSI now propose to limit the time which a qualified assistant can provide cover to twelve hours in any one week. This will mean that a pharmacist can not even take a two day weekend break without employing a locum pharmacist also. Due to all the cutbacks which</p> <p>all pharmacies have experienced during the last few years it will not make financial sense for both a locum pharmacist and an assistant to be employed. I fear that the qualified assistants will suffer.</p> <p>When I applied to train as a pharmaceutical assistant the concept of temporary absence had an established meaning. We could not conduct business on our own account but would be qualified to work without a pharmacist being present. The proposal that this qualification which was conferred</p> <p>on me back in 1983 is being changed to something totally different is preposterous. I don't know of any other instance where a qualification that has been conferred on a person is changed more than 30 years later thus reducing the value of the qualification.</p> <p>In the course of my work in the pharmacy for more than 30 years I have built up a relationship with my customers and they trust me dispense their medication and tend to their medical and pharmaceutical needs. Indeed I feel that a qualified assistant such as myself with all my years of experience, continuing education, local knowledge and genuine concern for my customers provides more public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety than a locum with minimum experience and no knowledge of customers. For many elderly customers it is reassuring for them to be served by a person who had tended to their needs for many years.</p> <p>If the PSI proceed with this proposal it will adversely affect my work conditions and pay. With ten years or less to go until I retire it will have grave implications for my family and I feel that it would be fundamentally wrong to treat a vulnerable group of people with such disregard.</p>	
129.	Jimmy Flynn	

	<p>I refer to the proposed draft rules on temporary absence.</p> <p>We all want and strive to achieve the highest standards for the public and profession but exactly what problems are the draft rules intending to solve and are the proposed solutions the best way of going about it?</p> <p>First, as the Irish Pharmacy Union has correctly pointed out ,on the face of it, there seems to be more flexibility in that pharmaceutical assistants are only required to provide 12 hours of skilled assistance in the previous month to allow them to provide 12 hours per week cover for temporary absence. Will you clarify whether this 12 hours per week requirement includes or excludes lunchtime cover provided by the assistant on days they are working under supervision?</p> <p>Second, the proposed new rules do not appear to provide for the pharmaceutical assistant covering for 14 days of a pharmacist's holiday or unscheduled short absences such as illness, funerals, or even CPD. It makes no sense that a pharmaceutical assistant could be trusted to work 12 hours a week for 52 weeks in the temporary absence of a pharmacist ,but could not be trusted to cover a 2-week holiday or an unscheduled absence .I would like to see this provision reinstated.</p> <p>Third, while CPD is now mandatory for pharmacists, it is not required by pharmaceutical assistants. Would it not make sense, notwithstanding that the cohort is relatively small, to make CPD mandatory, rather than obliging the superintendent pharmacist to ensure assistants have the requisite knowledge and skills? How are they meant to achieve this in a retail pharmacy setting?</p> <p>How are they meant to measure it when they don't have the education and training infrastructure of the colleges, or any standard by which they might be accredited by the PSI?</p> <p>I urge the PSI to look critically at exactly what problems, if any, need to be solved here and if the approach being proposed is best.</p>	
130.	Jim Williamson	
	<p>Just a short note to say that I have my son doing medicine in Galway and would like to continue working part-time, as I am on the State pension (€xxx weekly), for another few years.</p> <p>My record has been good, as you should know, and all my employers (pharmacists) have been happy with my work.</p> <p>Our jobs in pharmacy are in jeopardy as you have issued directives ?? to pharmacists concerning our work status, which you are</p>	

	<p>attempting to diminish ??.</p> <p>I'm told many Assistants have lost their jobs already. My work-days are greatly diminished also.</p> <p>There are not too many of us left and it seems wrong to do this to a loyal and very able group and well qualified people.</p> <p>Reducing our work status is wrong and nobody wants to go the legal route to resolve this issue.</p> <p>However we cannot allow an injustice to be carried through. Even to give postal courses or courses through the internet to update Q.As ?? in the more recent developments in pharmacy is a much better idea.</p> <p>Anyway to diminish ???? our legal limits and still take our fees is a further slight ????? on us also. Nobody wants the courts.</p> <p>Yours</p> <p>Jim Williamson</p> <p>Please excuse writing</p> <p>We could be included in the Continue Education (Pharmacy) Programme as long as they were pitched at a low fee.</p>	
131.	Anne Balfe	
	<p>I am an XX year old lady who has not lost her powers of reasonable thinking unlike the members of the PSI apparently. I have had the great fortune and privilege of being looked after by PA XXXXXX XXXXXXXX for over 30 years. She knows as much about my pharmaceutical and medical needs as my own GP. To say that she is highly competent, efficient, professional, wise and caring would be an understatement. She is the best and I know I speak for all of her customers though many may not be in a position to put pen to paper. I am appalled to hear that on an administrative whim, all of XXXXX's experience, wisdom and professionalism are going to count for nothing. You plan I believe to "move the goal posts" so to speak, thereby disqualifying her and her PS colleagues from doing what they have been doing since they started their careers. You intend it would seem to replace XXXXX and her likes with rookie locums with little or no experience to cover for temporary absences of pharmacists. From what I can gather</p>	

	<p>there are only 400 people in question here – all with probably less than 10 years to go to natural retirement.</p> <p>Surely it would be wiser to let nature take its course and forget this utterly nonsensical notion.</p>	
132.	Angela Finn	
	<p>I have read your public consultation document re the definition of temporary absence in the case of pharmacists and their qualified assistants.</p> <p>While I understand that temporary absence cannot safely be a prolonged period of time the provision of this facility to the pharmacist at all indicates that those regulating the Society consider that it is safe so to do.</p> <p>I am surprised now at reading that you consider twelve hours a week a definition of 'temporary absence'. Surely this is far too short a time in any week given that the pharmacist will have to take breaks and a lunch period each day. This would surely take most of the twelve hours and in effect would mean the pharmacist was not actually absent at all. And what about a day off for the pharmacist in a shop that opens six days each week? And what about holidays? Surely there should be some extended provision for the Assistant to cover for longer times in these instances provided the pharmacist is not off for a protracted holiday.</p> <p>Surely if a pharmacist must cover for every minute outside 12 hours it would lead to its not being worthwhile having a qualified assistant at all and would be forced to employ a pharmacist which would eat into already dwindling profit margins and lead to the closure of shops especially in small towns or shops outside big shopping centres. Would this not also lead to the loss of employment for Assistants who have done this job efficiently and very well over the years?</p> <p>It is my considered opinion that the time of temporary absence should be lengthened considerably and that the provision that was there relating to holidays should be re-instated. I appreciate your concern for safety in the sector but I think the small number of Assistants left in the service are very well trained and at this stage must have lots of experience. I am sure they would exercise all their skills at the top end of their ability especially when the pharmacist is absent. Twelve hours is too limiting.</p>	
133.	John Crimmins	

	<p>With reference to the proposed changes to the working conditions of pharmaceutical assistants, it must be the first time that a person who has worked in a job for 35 years is degraded or demoted. Basically saying it was fine for the last 35 years but from now on its not "safe" for the public for you to be in this responsible position now. This is effectively what these new guidelines are saying.</p> <p>I am qualified almost 9 years now and have worked with pharmacy assistants whilst locuming and where I am permanently based now. They have all been as professional and responsible as any other pharmacist or health care professional I know.</p> <p>To say that is ok or "safe" for them to work 9 to 1 on a Friday on their own, but not "safe" for them to work from 1 to 6 on the same day on their own because they have exceeded their allocated 12 hours beggars belief and is an insult. How can you differentiate been "safe" for those hours in the morning from the hours in the afternoon.</p> <p>Further more they have not been given the oppportunity to forfill the requirements that the psi deem them to be lacking in in order to practice on their own.</p> <p>It is of my opinion and the opinion of many of my other colleagues that if in my abense from the premises of the pharmacy during working hours I am fully satisfied to have a pharmaceutical assistant present in my place on their own.</p> <p>I would be grateful if you can accept my submission on this matter.</p>	
134.	Vincent McElwee	
	<p>My memory of previous attempts to define" temporary absence " proved unsuccessful and I think that this time it will prove so again.I am a pharmacist but do not have a pharmaceutical assistant employed,so I have no direct involvement.I understand that the last assistant to qualify under the regulations was in 1985.The class of 85 have probably 10/12 years to retirement.The PSI have approximately the same number of years to resolve the issue.I think the society should let the natural progression to retirement resolve the issue.The Pharmaceutical Assistants currently employed within the pharmaceutical industry have a wealth of experience and deserve better than having to renegotiate the definition of "temporary absence".I do not think there is an issue with public safety as the majority have in excess of 30 years experience,how valuable is that to any community?.Should there be an issue is not the matter covered under present PSI regulations.?</p>	
135.	John Ruttledge	

	<p>I wish to make a submission on the Public Consultation on draft Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland [regulation of Temporary absence cover by Pharmaceutical assistants] rule 2016.</p> <p>It is grossly unfair to Pharmaceutical assistants who have had their qualification recognised for the last 60 years and who in the main have given great service and to the profession to be downgraded further at this stage of their careers, many in their fifties and sixties at this juncture.</p> <p>Through my work over the last forty years as a representative and later as manager and Director of XXXXXX I know many of these people and have found them to be a very professional cohort of caring. people to their Patients. They have also been very loyal to their profession.</p> <p>In my view the experience these people possess enhances patient safety and will be lost through the application of the 12 hour TEMPORARY ABSENCE REGULATION.</p> <p>It is also questionable as to whether it is workable.</p>	
136.	Crona O'Reilly	
	<p>I am a registered Pharmaceutical Assistant Reg. No. XXXXX and Qualified in 1978 .I obtained the highest marks and was a awarded the I.P.L. prize which was presented to me by The Registrar of The Pharmaceutical Society Of Ireland , Mr. Michael J Cahill.</p> <p>I was presented with a certificate from the P.S.I. which stated .This is to Certify that Miss Crona Anne Bonar has passed the examination entitling her to act as an assistant to a pharmaceutical chemist in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 of the pharmacy Act (Ireland), 1875, Amendment Act, 1890.</p> <p>(note This does not entitle the holder to conduct or manage or keep open shop on his own account).</p> <p>I never agreed to the draft code of Practice and have not worked in accordance to it but I have been employed on a different understanding of 'Temporary Absence' . I have worked on a regular basis in 'temporary absence ' which can include holiday leave , sick days , unscheduled days off of pharmacist in two pharmacies belonging to the same company. I covered a month for a pharmacist in a different shop who could not get cover and would have had to close his shop. My employer facilitated this and I</p>	

obliged as there was no other option at the time.

I have worked full time since I qualified 38 years ago. I have been employed in the same pharmacy for the last 33 years. I think this speaks for itself. I am a tried and trusted employee. I am valued and trusted by my employer and shop clientele who have to endure many qualified staff changes over the years. The standard of my work is constant , dependable and above reproach.

I have built up a rapport with customers and find that customers would seek me out rather than deal with a locum who knows nothing about them. I feel that pharmacists and qualified assistants are being bullied by the P.S.I. inspectors over these rules and must ask the question as to why the P.S.I. are now defining 'Temporary Absence 'after all these years '126 years later.'

I do not agree with these draft rules nor to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the term of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferral and registration 1st June 1978. At the time of conferral temporary absence was not defined. I have always been LEGALLY ENTITLED TO COVER A PHARMACIST IN THEIR TEMPORARY ABSENCE for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover and sick leave etc. I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the P.S.I.

It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 38 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I have been working illegally all those years.

Furthermore I was encouraged by two Pharmacists in my home town of XXXXXX, one who is 92 years of age now and whose son is a member of the current council of the P.S.I and the other who is deceased a past Council Member to do the 'Assistant's course' as it was known then. I was told by them a great course to do as you could work part time , full time and do locum work. I was told I would never be out of a job. Sadly the P.S. I. is trying to diminish our qualification. There is no other profession who would try to do this.

The most time I have left working in pharmacy is another 6 to 7 years. It's a sad day at the end of a long career in pharmacy. I have served pharmacy well over the years and I have been a great asset to my employer.

Your proposal in defining 'Temporary Absence ' is both impractical and discriminatory to Pharmaceutical Assistants.

137.	Ms. Siobhán Mary Vickers	
	<p>I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in 1978 and have been employed in that capacity by the profession for almost 38 years. The interpretation of “Temporary Absence” has an established meaning in terms of practice since 1890. It is not a permanent situation and is related to context and depends on the facts of a particular situation. Defining “Temporary Absence” in concrete terms lacks logic as it does not allow for normal life challenges i.e. sickness, family deaths and other emergencies which occur in everyone’s life. This draft does not allow for annual holiday leave for the Pharmacist.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical Assistants have served the profession very well over many decades and as the majority are now over 50 years of age, their vast experience should be recognized and valued. Given that the Pharmaceutical Assistants are predominantly female the impact on older women’s economic, social and cultural rights may be affected, as their right to work may be restricted disproportionately. Attempts to impose minimum hours of service as part of the qualification conditions of exercise will have a far greater impact on women, violating the equality rights guarantee in the constitution and under the ECHR.</p> <p>It would be difficult for me to agree to a definition of “Temporary Absence” as outlined in this draft that reduces the terms of my qualification since my conferral and registration in 1978. I should not have to accept any diminution or conditionality of my qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith and which was validated and examined by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland.</p>	
138.	Rosemary Conway Smyth	
	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>My family pharmacy has being in existence for 60 years, and for 30 of those years we have had 2 Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants employed.</p> <p>XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXX was an employee of ours for 16 years, and left when she made the move to XXXXXX.</p> <p>XXXXXXXXXX was a valued member of staff, very professional in her capacity as a Pharmaceutical Assistant, and competent to act in the absence of a supervising pharmacist.</p>	

	<p>XXXXXX is a valued member of our staff since 1986, and has worked in a professional manner alongside our qualified pharmacists.</p> <p>XXXXXX is also fully competent to act in the absence of a supervising pharmacist.</p> <p>It makes absolutely no sense to me that the PSI are proposing any draft rules with regard to the term "temporary absence".</p> <p>I fully support the role of Pharmaceutical Assistants, and will continue to do so.</p>	
139.	Neville Thom	
	<p>I am very disappointed to discover that the PSI draft rules, if implemented, will make a group of Pharmacy Professionals, ie the Assistants, effectively unemployable in Retail Pharmacy. As the owner of a small Pharmacy I depend on the support of QA to keep going, the current guidelines work very well and I see no reason to change anything at all. My main problem is your lack of allowance for holiday cover, this will mean that a QA is no longer of any use to me. This seems to be a very unfair way to treat a group of very experienced pharmacy personnel and I ask you to reconsider your stance.</p> <p>In addition I would ask you to include QAs in the new CPD regime, in my experience they are just as enthusiastic about updating as the rest of pharmacy professionals.</p>	
140.	Thomas Stack	
	<p>In response to the proposed draft rules by the PSI in relation to the above:</p> <p>These proposed rules defining Temporary Absence Cover will deprive Pharmaceutical Assistants with over 30 years working experience of the right to earn a living. Limiting Temporary Absence Cover to 12 hours in any one week will cause financial hardship on these colleagues, It does not seem fair.</p> <p>Codifying temporary absence in the number of hours worked in a week will do little to advance Safe Pharmacy Practice. Would <u>not</u> introducing fitness to practice for Pharmaceutical Assistants or mandatory continuing education for them do more?</p> <p>This "problem" of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants will go away in the next twenty years if nothing is done. This is a very short sighted and sledge-hammer approach to a self limiting condition.</p>	

	I think watchful waiting would be my recommendation in this instance.	
141.	Mona O Rafferty	
	<p>It has been brought to my attention that the Council of the PSI has proposed draft rules for public consultation as to what constitutes temporary absence of a pharmacist under Section 30 of the Pharmacy Act 2007. I note that any changes will have an impact on my qualification as a Qualified Assistant.</p> <p>It would appear that there will be considerable restriction and change to the way that Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants will be expected to work if these changes occur. This restriction has no logic on the grounds of public health and safety. Rather, this restriction is just that, a restriction of an anti-competitive nature. It is unlikely that it would obtain an licence from the Competition Authority.</p> <p>It is also doubtful in my opinion that under the Constitution of this country that a qualification, defined in an Act, can be downgraded and ultimately eroded in this manner.</p> <p>I agree with Senior Council opinion which I have obtained that temporary absence is an absence that is not permanent.</p>	
142.	Austin and Kathleen Ledden	
	<p>We write to you as members of the public and customers of a Pharmacy that employs a Pharmaceutical Assistant (PA) and wish to express in the strongest possible manner our objection to the proposed definition of "Temporary Absence"</p> <p>Some points we wish to make in support of our objection are:</p> <p>(i) Typical Temporary Absence Reasons are Annual Leave, Illness, Lunch Breaks etc. Restricting the definition to 12 hours per week effectively reduces the cover to Lunch Breaks Only.</p> <p>(ii) Impact on Employment: Many Pharmacies, in particular family/sole trader practices employ PA's because in addition to their professionalism they can provide temporary cover for reasonable absences. This change would immediately change their employment prospects.</p> <p>(iii) Impact on Earning & Pensions: The proposed change is likely to impact pay scales and will have an immediate impact on</p>	

	<p>Pension Contributions (due to probable unemployment/salary reduction). As the last Graduates were in the mid 1980's most PA's will be entering the final 10 to 15 years of their working career and this will have a very significant impact on current pay and retirement income.</p> <p>(iv) Impact on Small and Rural Practices: While many pharmacies have changed into large retail stores and chains there are still a lot of "pure pharmacies" that this change is likely to force out of business and leave rural areas without a pharmacy.</p> <p>(v) Change to Employment T&C's after 30yrs: How can the PSI stand over a decision to change the term & conditions of employment of a Professional Member more than 30 years after qualification and after accepting membership fees over the time.</p> <p>(vi) Public Perception of PA's Professionalism: This proposal suggests to the public that the PA's are in some way unqualified to dispense, our experience is that nothing could be further from truth, indeed we have moved pharmacy in the past when the PA had changed employers. The PA's have built up a very strong relationship with their customers over the past 30+ years.</p> <p>If after 30+ years the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland now deem the PA's to be unsuitable/unqualified to cover annual leave etc it reflects very badly on you as a Professional Society.</p> <p>In conclusion your invitation to a Public Consultation refers to:</p> <p>"The purpose of these rules is to provide for a fair and workable model for the definition of "temporary absence", which also provides public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety"</p> <p>As we have outlined above the proposals are far from Fair & Workable and the proposed changes are more likely to raise questions over patient safety in the past than provide assurance into the future.</p> <p>We trust you will take our submission on board and withdraw the present proposal.</p>	
143.	Nuala Finn	
	<p>I am a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant. I have been since Sept 20th 1977</p> <p>I worked continuously since then with the exception of one & a half years.</p>	

	<p>I have always worked alongside my Pharmacist employer covering their weekly day off, holidays & other short unavoidable absences, eg. a funeral, a meeting, etc. as my qualification from The Pharmaceutical Society allows. From the time I qualified until 1994 I worked full time, i.e. five days a week. Since then I worked three to four days a week. I have been in my present employment since 2008 and I work three days a week. My employer takes an hour out for his lunch on these days. Approximately once a month I work an additional day, this is a day which my employer takes off. I also cover part of his holidays.</p> <p>I cannot see why the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society can now propose to define the term 'temporary absence' as twelve hours per week, which would mean that I cannot work as I have always worked, when I have been qualified to do this for nearly forty years!</p> <p>I have to stress that this is a very serious situation as it undermines my current & potentially future employment status. If this is brought into law, I would be left in a position where I wouldn't have any income. As you can appreciate, this would be a disastrous situation for someone who has worked all her life & expects to be able to do the same until I retire of my own volition in just another few years. In the meantime I need to be able to work in the professional capacity which I have been accustomed to for thirty nine years, as I need to cover my financial outgoings.</p>	
144.	Ruth Doyle	
	<p>I, as a Pharmaceutical Assistant, would like to raise a number of points with regard to the above proposed regulation:</p> <p>I do not believe I agreed to, nor was consulted on, the need for drawing up the above proposals. I do not believe I agreed to, nor was consulted on, the proposed content. I have not agreed to the draft Code of Practice and I do not see the need for one.</p> <p>Since 1890 the term 'temporary absence' has acquired a specific meaning in pharmacy practice: it relates to non-permanency and involves length of absence, reason for it, and intention to return after it. This provides a very different interpretation of the meaning of the phrase 'temporary absence' to that proposed by your draft.</p> <p>In addition, your proposed Rule 7 would appear to prevent a Pharmaceutical Assistant from providing any absence cover for a Pharmacist if they had not worked for 12 hours for the same employer in the previous month. This strictly limits the value of any Pharmaceutical Assistant moving to a new position, as they cannot provide any cover for the first month of their employment,</p>	

thus restricting their ability to successfully apply for a new position.

I have been working as a Pharmaceutical Assistant for 32 years according to the terms of my qualification under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890, and for the past 22 years according to the agreement between the PSI and Pharmaceutical Assistants Association in 1994 in the Pharmacy (Amendment) Act.

During this period I have supported my employers and customers by providing temporary absence cover for approximately 14 hours per week and some 2 weeks per year. I have performed these services while working for four different pharmacies between 1984 and 2016.

This temporary absence cover includes holiday cover for the supervising and superintendant pharmacists as well as routine weekend and rota cover. It also includes other temporary absences such as funerals, family crises, and sicknesses. I do not believe my work during that period to have constituted a threat to the health, safety or wellbeing of any of my, or my employers', customers.

According to Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890, and the 1994 Pharmacy (Amendment) Act, I have always been legally empowered to cover for a pharmacist for their absence entitlements to (eg) holidays, sick leave, without restriction. It is this very versatility in addition to my pharmacy skills and experience that makes me a valuable employee – to diminish this by restricting my ability to cover for an employer reduces my versatility, my employability, and my worth.

If enacted the (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016 would change my value to my current employer, my ability to change employment, my employability and, indeed, my earning potential.

I do not understand why the very body that formulated, validated, and examined my course and qualification, and which has provided me, alongside other pharmacists, with continuous professional development for the past 30 years, should now elect to enact a rule declaring that past service to have been inadequate, invalid, illegal, or dangerous.

I further query how, if the course formulation, examination, and qualification by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland in which I qualified is suddenly discovered to be so seriously flawed after more than 30 years that it is not a 'fair and workable model', the Pharmaceutical Assistants' is the only course and qualification so affected – this surely throws into doubt all qualifications awarded and working terms and conditions enacted by the PSI in that period.

145.	Kevin O Shaughnessey	
	<p>It has come to my attention that there is an intention to change the conditions under which Pharmaceutical Assistants can work. I believe they will only be allowed cover the absence of a pharmacist for a total of 12 hours per week. This will have a detrimental consequence for the jobs of all assistants and will make them unemployable. A number of people I know are in this position and are now in fear of their jobs.</p> <p>Please explain to me how a person who did a three year apprenticeship along with a one year full time course under the instruction/guidance of PSI and may have in excess of 30 years experience is now being deemed not competent to cover long term absence. I fail to understand that if a person is deemed competent to cover 12 hours or one hour for that matter, then why not cover a week or two weeks or the duration of the pharmacist holidays.</p> <p>Is there substantive evidence to indicate that this change in work practice is warranted. If so it needs to be stated and investigated.</p> <p>Please log my complaint and send me a receipt confirmation of this mail</p>	
146.	Mairead (o'Driscoll) Dennehy	
	<p>My name is Mairead (o'Driscoll) Dennehy. I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in 1975 and have paid my registration fee for every one for those 41 years. My registration number is XXXXX.</p> <p>I have worked in 5 different pharmacies throughout this time and have been in my current place of employment, in a part time capacity, for the past 21 years.</p> <p>I cover in the temporary absence of the pharmacist, temporary 'lasting only for a limited period', as per my qualification.</p> <p>I have always worked within the parameters of my qualification.</p> <p>In my considered opinion, The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland's treatment of pharmaceutical assistants, as a group, has been an utter disgrace. The relationship between the Society and qualified assistants could quite easily be labelled as an example of institutional and systemic bullying. As a result of this, recently qualified pharmacists are being intimidated and pressured into</p>	

	<p>ignoring our qualifications altogether.</p> <p>I have, throughout my career, always attended CPD lectures and, in my view, until we can have recognition for our ongoing professional development and thus be 'fit to practice', and be responsible for our own work in the temporary absence of the Pharmacist, I cannot see any purpose in this public consultation.</p> <p>I question the sincerity of the Pharmaceutical Society in this regard.</p>	
147.	John Lambe	
	<p>Regarding the above proposed regulation, I would like to raise a number of points:</p> <p>I have known my local Pharmaceutical Assistant for 30 years, and she has covered for her employers' absences consistently, diligently and legally supporting their customers by providing temporary absence cover for many weeks in every year.</p> <p>This temporary absence cover includes holiday cover for the supervising and superintendant pharmacists as well as routine weekend and rota cover. It also includes other temporary absences such as funerals, family crises, and sicknesses.</p> <p>I doubt that her work during that period constituted a threat to the health, safety or wellbeing of any of her customers.</p> <p>Why should the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland choose to limit the roles of Pharmaceutical Assistants after more than 30 years' work, when the qualification is (I believe) no longer available and the people the proposed ruling affects a small and decreasing number of (mainly) women?</p>	
148.	Francis Bonner	
	<p>I have read the draft rules on temporary absence. I'm not convinced that they're very practical in real life pharmacy practice. I am inclined to think that it would be most wise to allow time to remedy this situation, particularly in light of the relatively small numbers of those pharmaceutical assistants still working and their age profile.</p>	
149.	James Cassidy	
	<p>I wish to make the following observations on the proposed draft guidance for Temporary Absence cover by Qualified Assistants :</p> <p>1) I have known a few of these Qualified assistants over the years and each one of them has been competent , professional and</p>	

	<p>fully capable of covering a temporary absence of a pharmacist.</p> <p>2) In previous years these Qualified Assistants may have been employed as acting pharmacists and worked alone for significant hours in a few particular pharmacies - This situation no longer pertains given the resolution of the manpower(Pharmacist) shortage in Ireland.</p> <p>3) Most of the remaining Qualified assistants are mature and there are no replacements qualifying. Their position is becoming redundant due to natural wastage, and the issue will have diaspeared in the near future without requiring any significant change in current regulations.</p> <p>4) In circumstances where they are still needed , the proposed restrictions of 12 hours per week and requirement of 12 hours service in the individual pharmacy, are overly restrictive :</p> <p>a) In a rural location or over a particularly busy period , if two days cover were needed at short notice (e.g. illness / bereavement) it would preclude a Qualified assistant covering the absence - A better provision would be a maximum of 8 days per month in an individual pharmacy.</p> <p>b) The nature of emergency cover requirement means that a pharmacist may need urgent cover at short notice . It seems unreasonable that a qualified person could not render such assistance simply because they had not worked in that particular pharmacy in the past month. A more reasonable solution would be to require them to have worked a minimum of 12 hours skilled assistance in the previous month in a registered retail pharmacy.</p>	
150.	Ursula Corcoran	
	<p>I qualified as PA in June 1978 after</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Successful application to PSI to partake in course post Leaving Cert, 2.Completion of 3 year apprenticeship with pharmacist under educational guidelines set down by PSI, 3.Completion of academic year at PSI college in Shrewsbury Rd, 	

	<p>4. Passing exams set by PSI.</p> <p>My certificate states I am qualified to act as assistant to a pharmaceutical chemist in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act (Ireland)1875,Amendment Act,1890....thus may not conduct or manage business on own account.....may cover temporary absence of pharmacist.</p> <p>I have worked almost continuously since qualification..working in present part time employment in same business premises for last 20 years. Over the course of my working life I have worked in two other pharmacies and have covered planned absences by pharmacist to cover annual leave,days off etc and also emergency cover for illness,family crisis etc. I am flexible with my employer..willing to do extra days/hours as required at short notice.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical Assistants have provided a professional workforce in Irish pharmacies since 1890. The PSI needs to recognise this....PA's are required to pay annual fee to remain on PSI register.As the PA course was discontinued circa 1982 this means the age profile of remaining PAs is mid fifties to retirement age...a loyal,mature, valuable workforce with a wealth of experience. To try to put a limit on "temporary absence"...which by dictionary definition means transient..therefore already defined...will have serious implications for PAs in current/future employment. Wages will be reduced and and job opportunities diminished for a mature aged group.</p>	
151.	Paul Conroy	
	<p>Hello, I would like to make a submission on this topic, in relation to reducing to 12 hours per week</p> <p>The maximum time a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant can cover for the pharmacists absence.</p> <p>I think you should re consider under the following headings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You are effectively down grading the profession of Pharmaceutical Assistant to the point where they can't provide enough cover for the pharmacists break entitlements every week. This could end the profession of the assistant as we know it. People invested time and energy in qualifying for this profession and have over 30 years of experience to leverage off. 2. The small rural Chemist would have to close more often as the pharmacists takes time off. 3. It will create stress amongst pharmacists where they feel they can't take time off. 	

	This is a real anti-rural initiative which you should re consider.	
152.	Judith Tierney	
	<p>Regarding the above proposed regulation, I would like to raise a number of points:</p> <p>I have known my local Pharmaceutical Assistant for 30 years, and she has covered for her employers' absences consistently, diligently and legally supporting their customers by providing temporary absence cover for many weeks in every year.</p> <p>This temporary absence cover includes holiday cover for the supervising and superintendant pharmacists a well as routine weekend and rota cover. It also includes other temporary absences such as funerals, family crises, and sicknesses.</p> <p>I doubt that her work during that period constituted a threat to the health, safety or wellbeing of any of her customers.</p> <p>Why should the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland choose to limit the roles of Pharmaceutical Assistants after more than 30 years' work, when the qualification is (I believe) no longer available and the people the proposed ruling affects a small and decreasing number of (mainly) women?</p>	
153.	Freda Buckley	
	<p>I have worked at my present pharmacy for 40 years, qualified for 30 years. I have worked with pharmacist for 32 of 40 hours per week. Customers know and trust the P.A. who has provided them with service for all the 40 years. The business values and recognises the P.A. years of experience. Temporary absence was not an issue when I qualified and I never signed up to Code Of Practice and have not been working in accordance with it but have been employed based on different understanding of temporary absence. According to European Convention on Human rights everyone is entitled to equal employment, and attempt to impose minimum hours of service as part of the qualification will have far greater impact on women, violating the equality rights guarantee in the Constitution and under ECHR. Health and safety is a concern where locums with minimum experience and no knowledge of the customers and business cover temporary absence</p>	
154.	Helene Daly	
	I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant for the past thirty six years. I have been working competently, professionally and by the letter of	

	<p>the law of the PSI for that entire time. That law was explained to me on my conferring and as far as I am concerned that said law has not changed. I have been working within that law in the same pharmacy for my entire career. I have worked alongside many supervising pharmacists and I have worked in the temporary absence of many supervising pharmacists during that time. At no stage during those thirty six years have I been informed that anything has changed in the law or that any proposal or sample suggestion of change to the law by the various committees of the PSI has been rubber stamped by the minister to make it law. Until this happens I will continue to work as i was trained,educated and conferred to work.</p> <p>Now,as regards this proposal of twelve hours cover in one week, I wholeheartedly disagree with it as I disagree with the fifteen hour proposal the PSI tried to enforce previously. The PSI introduced this Pharmaceutical Assistants Course for their convenience totally. They were very keen to have safe pharmacy practice and patient safety and to get away form the unqualified wife/husband/child/sister etc covering when the pharmacist was sick or unable to come to work. The PSI were thrilled to come up with this training course and were very happy to make us pay in time and money for our qualification and our yearly registration fees when it suited them. They were confident they had qualified us to the highest standard ,to allow us to cover for the pharmacist totally legally in his temporary absence.Now however,they have decided to undermine the qualification they gave us to such a degree it's almost rendered unless, this can only be because they don't need us anymore and want to get rid of us!!!! I am totally disgusted with this, as are all my pharmaceutical colleagues and friends. Lastly,I want you to give me one example of any qualification in any profession which states that you are qualified for the job for twelve hours ,but one moment after that you become unqualified.....how can you even think that is workable or feasible in any shape or form????.</p> <p>My suggestion to you is that you leave the supervising pharmacist in each shop the final decision as to how long the pharmaceutical assistant covers in his/he temporary absence for this reason. In my working life no supervising pharmacist has abused this law and I have never abused it either. I do not want to be a pharmacist, I do not want to own or open a pharmacy. I simply want to keep working in a profession I love,safely and with competency for the rest of my working days. Please allow me the dignity to do that.</p> <p>Yours sincerely Helene Daly PA.</p>	
155.	Elizabeth Ryan	
	MY name is Elizabeth Ryan, I am a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant, having completed the apprenticeship and courses.	
156.	Anette Meaney	
	I am writing to you in relation to the proposed draft rules for public consultation as to what constitutes the temporary absence of a pharmacist, as provided for under Section 30 of the Act.	

I am a Pharmacy Technician who has been working with Pharmacy Assistants since I qualified. From my experience, they are the back bone of the running of the pharmacy. They are the people that have been there for years, the people the customers look for when they come in. The following are the reasons why this cannot go ahead:

“Rule 6 states that a pharmacy owner or superintendent pharmacist shall not operate a retail pharmacy business in the temporary absence of a registered pharmacist unless:

a period of temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week”

The terms of this ‘draft code’ would in fact make a largely negative impact on the employment of the majority of pharmaceutical assistance for the reasons below:

* In the event that the pharmacist is on temporary leave, Brenda would not be able to stand in for as long as required if the draft rules were defined, meaning that a locum pharmacist would have to fulfil this role. This may affect the community feel and familiarity for customers of small pharmaceutical businesses.

* as a customer I would prefer to see the pharmacist and pharmaceutical assistance that I know and trust rather than a stranger dealing with my prescription, and would feel far more uncomfortable gaining pharmaceutical advice from a locum pharmacist.

* In Brenda’s 32 years of experience and qualification as a pharmaceutical assistance, she has strived to create effective professional relationships with customers, and to continuously improve practice and her professional education, gaining invaluable experience, far superior to that of a newly qualified pharmacist. However the proposed draft rules now appear to state that a pharmacist would be better desired to fill over the 13th hour of temporary absence, regardless of their competency and years of experience and qualification.

* I believe that the draft rule expresses an utter disregard to years of service and dedication to the role as a pharmaceutical assistant. I find it very upsetting that the terms of her employment could be so belittled and meaningless, expressing a lack of trust in this role

* The proposal of this draft rule could also affect her desirability as a candidate in employment, this could mean wage cuts, or cuts in employment hours, it is unfair to propose this large impact on her employment considering her expenses such as mortgage and loans, Brenda is by no means near retirement.

	<p>* It is of illogical thinking to propose a rule of being able to act in ‘temporary absence’ for 12 hours and on the 13th hour not being able to cover. The rule appears far too rigid and unrealistic to real life situations in employment, for example to cover sickness, traffic delays, funerals e.g. of the pharmacist.</p> <p>In consideration of the above argument, it is apparent that the original purpose in providing a ‘fair and workable model’ for the definition of “temporary absence” evidently failed to meet its aim. It is clear to see that it is unfair to dictate the future of someone’s employment by changing the fine print in their terms of employment. Additionally, it is unimaginable to think that years of experience and dedication are overridden by the desire to have an inexperienced pharmacist in the place of a pharmaceutical assistance post 12 hours a week. In my opinion this does not serve as patient and public safety, under direction of the PSI. Finally, I would like to propose that if the definition of temporary absence has to be changed, the realistic amount of hours done under temporary absence must be taken into great consideration, and must be well over 12 hours a week in order to provide safe practice.</p> <p>Thank you in advance for your consideration of the points in this submission.</p>	
157.	Dympna Collins	
	<p>Name: Mary Dympna Collins (nee Ward)</p> <p>Qualified: Sept 1970</p> <p>Employment History:</p> <p>1970-1973 Fulltime at XXXXXX</p> <p>1973-1976 Parttime at XXXXXXXX</p> <p>1973-1976 Parttime at XXXXXXXX</p> <p>1976-1980/81 Fulltime at XXXXXXXX</p> <p>1981-1986 Partime at XXXXXXXX</p>	

Parttime at XXXXXXXX

Parttime at XXXXXXXXXX

Assistant's Maternity Leave at XXXXXXXX

1986-1989 Fulltime at XXXXXX

1989-Present Fulltime at Same Pharmacy but under new ownership, XXXXXXXX

Total of 30 years next month in same premises. Worked fulltime until 2009, then 3 days per week permanently.

Throughout my career, I have worked according to the terms of my qualification under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890. I did not seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my behalf. I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that would diminish the terms of my qualification: the terms I have worked to since my conferral and registration in 1970 over 45 years ago. At the time of conferral, temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to my employability. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover, sick leave and family occasions. I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification, post conferral.

I undertook the course in good faith. It was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI. It is unbelievable that the professional body which conferred on me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 45 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally under their umbrella all those years.

I served as an apprentice for three years. My master was himself a Gold Medal Recipient in his faculty. He loved his profession and respectfully taught me. I learned about life in that apprenticeship. Customer safety, Confidentiality, and Dignity were paramount. In staged and thoroughly guided phases, I grew into my role.

I weighed pounds and ounces, grammes and drams, measured accurately fluid ounces and millilitres. I formulated, calculated, titrated and compounded. The dispensing motto was accuracy, neatness and speed. Under my master's watchful eye, I dispensed

mixtures, ointments, creams, lotions, potions, eye drops and suppositories.

Three years later, I headed to Shrewsbury Rd. It was a challenge. I attended lectures in Chemistry, Pharmaceutics, Pharmacology, Pharmacognosy and Poisons, and I learned the doses. My eminent lecturers were Ms Mary Roe, Ms Ingrid Hook, Professor RF.Timony, Mr Christy O'Connor, Mr Val Harte, Mr Des Corrigan and Mr OWEN Corrigan. I failed the poisons exam in June, but thankfully succeeded in passing my exam in Sept 1970. From the outset, I understood where my qualification would take me. I would always be an assistant post apprenticeship, conferred a qualified one 'qualified to cover the pharmacy in his/her temporary absence'. In the real world of 1970 that was clear as daylight.

I was invited back to work as a Qualified Assistant with my former Master. With his encouragement and growing trust, I developed, copying all of his skills. In his absence, I was always mindful of two things;

1: The responsibility with which I was entrusted

2: His Certificate on the wall.

It has been a special career for me. During the past 30 years it has been my good fortune to work alongside numerous newly qualified pharmacists. I learned so much from them. I'm still learning. I have been the constant figure in the pharmacy. I have introduced each new pharmacist to the customers and placed the latter in their care. I have helped the pharmacists with the nuts and bolts and day to day running of a pharmacy business. I have explained schemes and forms and systems. My help has always been greatly appreciated.

I have coded, uncoded, submitted and subscribed. I have listened, learned, consulted, guided, helped, assisted, supported and encouraged customers, shop staff and technicians. I have mourned and cried. But yes I have lived and laughed also.

It has to stand for something.

Is a diminished qualification to be my reward for a lifetimes work? Can you imagine telling customers, husband, family and friends that my career which I value so highly, was a lie. Is that to be my legacy to my family?

Imagine it being yours.

	<p>The society failed its High Court Action in 1985. So now it appears there is a new approach. The pharmacist will be guilty of an offence if he/she allows me to cover on the 13th hour. So the society is Judge and Jury, and its members are the executioners. Is that Fair? Is that Restrictive? Is it Bullying and Harrassment?</p> <p>It is Discriminatory towards a small number of ageing females who have loyally served in local community pharmacies for decades, and who in no small way have enabled the survival of same.</p>	
158.	Mary Meaney	
	<p>I am writing to you in relation to the proposed draft rules for public consultation as to what constitutes the temporary absence of a pharmacist, as provided for under Section 30 of the Act.</p> <p>“Rule 6 states that a pharmacy owner or superintendent pharmacist shall not operate a retail pharmacy business in the temporary absence of a registered pharmacist unless: a period of temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week”</p> <p>The terms of this ‘draft code’ would in fact make a largely negative impact on the employment of the majority of pharmaceutical assistant for the reasons below:</p> <p>In the event that the pharmacist is on temporary leave, the pharmaceutical assistants would not be able to stand in for as long as required if the draft rules were defined, meaning that a locum pharmacist would have to fulfil this role. This may affect the community feel and familiarity for customers of small pharmaceutical businesses.</p> <p>As a customer, I personally would prefer to see the pharmacist and pharmaceutical assistance that I know and trust rather than a stranger dealing with my prescription, and would feel far more uncomfortable gaining pharmaceutical advice from a locum pharmacist.</p> <p>I believe that the draft rule expresses an utter disregard to years of service and dedication to the role as a pharmaceutical assistant. I find it very upsetting that the terms of their employment could be so belittled and meaningless, expressing a lack of trust in this role</p> <p>The proposal of this draft rule could also affect their desirability as a candidate in employment, this could mean wage cuts, or cuts in employment hours, it is unfair to propose this large impact on their employment considering their expenses such as mortgage</p>	

	<p>and loans, as many of them are by no means near retirement.</p> <p>It is of illogical thinking to propose a rule of being able to act in 'temporary absence' for 12 hours and on the 13th hour not being able to cover. The rule appears far too rigid and unrealistic to real life situations in employment, for example to cover sickness, traffic delays, funerals e.g. of the pharmacist.</p> <p>In consideration of the above argument, it is apparent that the original purpose in providing a 'fair and workable model' for the definition of "temporary absence" evidently failed to meet its aim. It is clear to see that it is unfair to dictate the future of someone's employment by changing the fine print in their terms of employment. Additionally, it is unimaginable to think that years of experience and dedication are overridden by the desire to have an inexperienced pharmacist in the place of a pharmaceutical assistance post 12 hours a week. In my opinion this does not serve as patient and public safety, under direction of the PSI. Finally, I would like to propose that if the definition of temporary absence has to be changed, the realistic amount of hours done under temporary absence must be taken into great consideration, and must be well over 12 hours a week in order to provide safe practice.</p> <p>Thank you in advance for your consideration of the points in this submission.</p>	
159.	Noreen Shaw	
	<p>I am a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant, I served three years apprenticeship followed by a nine months college course and passed my exams in March 1984.</p> <p>Since then I have worked as a QA. I am 63 years old and pharmacy is my life, it's all I am educated for. I cannot turn my hand to any other career and at my age I don't think retraining would be of much use to me.</p> <p>I love my job, I enjoy dealing with the public and have a good rapport with them and the staff I work with. I've always assumed that I would work up to my pension age of 66, as not working would be totally alien to me.</p> <p>I have always endeavoured to keep up to date with everything new in the pharmacy world. I've attended classes over the years and am always up to date with new developments as regards drugs and pharmacy practice.</p> <p>If the PSI go ahead with their plans to define temporary absence, I am certain to lose my job. The shop I work in, employs one</p>	

	<p>supervising pharmacist, one OTC staff member and one student who works on Saturdays. I cover the pharmacist's day off. At any one time there are only two people working together.</p> <p>For me to work 12 contact hours with my supervisory pharmacist..... to enable me to then work four unassisted days the following month.....would require my boss to cut the hours worked by the OTC staff member by 12hours a month. This would be disastrous for this young woman, who has a 2 year old son to provide for.</p> <p>Please reconsider your decision to define temporary absence with a definite number of hours. If something is not 'broken' why try to fix it? You are planning to alter irrevocably, the lives of circa 400 people.....mostly women.....within the age group of 56 to over 70. If the youngest was to work until retirement age - that is only another ten years of The Pharmacist Assistant role as we know it and shouldn't that be adequate to the PSI??</p>	
160.	Martina Healy	
	<p>It has come to my notice that the P.S.I. has invited submissions from interested parties re the definition of Temporary Absence in regards to Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>My interest is that my sister is a Qualified Assistant and has worked in pharmacy since she qualified in 1982.She –like many more of her colleagues works on days off for the pharmacist who is happy to leave her in charge and also does his holiday cover. He has no problem with that situation and is happy to leave his customers in her capable hands.</p> <p>How can it be that somebody can obtain a qualification over thirty years ago and now all of a sudden it can be taken away.Along with the financial implications there is the “sense of worth” being taken away.</p> <p>I myself being a teacher of the same vintage wonder what my reaction would be to younger teachers being more qualified than myself? taking away my job and I left on the scrap heap with all my years of experience.</p> <p>I don t think this is a very fair draft proposal in regards to a group of mainly women of a certain vintage - 50+ who have only at most 10 years left to work.</p> <p>In conclusion- I don t think this Draft Proposal should be made law</p>	

161.	Elaine Healy	
	<p>It has come to my notice that the P.S.I. has invited submissions from interested parties re the definition of Temporary Absence in regards to Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>My interest is that my sister is a Qualified Assistant and has worked in pharmacy since she qualified in 1982. She –like many more of her colleagues works on days off for the pharmacist who is happy to leave her in charge and also does his holiday cover. He has no problem with that situation and is happy to leave his customers in her capable hands.</p> <p>How can it be that somebody can obtain a qualification over thirty years ago and now all of a sudden it can be taken away. Along with the financial implications there is the “sense of worth” being taken away.</p> <p>I myself being a teacher of the same vintage wonder what my reaction would be to younger teachers being more qualified than myself? taking away my job and I left on the scrap heap with all my years of experience.</p> <p>I don t think this is a very fair draft proposal in regards to a group of mainly women of a certain vintage - 50+ who have only at most 10 years left to work.</p> <p>In conclusion- I don t think this Draft Proposal should be made law</p>	
162.	Mary Bernard	
	<p>I strongly agree with the proposed draft rules to define the temporary absence of a Pharmacist and the requirement for regular supervision of Pharmaceutical Assistants by a Pharmacist to ensure that they are competent to cover a temporary absence.</p> <p>I believe this is necessary as there is a significant disparity between the knowledge and expertise of a Pharmacist and Pharmaceutical Assistant.</p>	
163.	Anne Marie Flynn	
	<p>It has come to my notice that the P.S.I. has invited submissions from interested parties re the definition of Temporary Absence in regards to Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p>	

	<p>My interest is that my sister in law is a Qualified Assistant and has worked in pharmacy since she qualified in 1982. She –like many more of her colleagues works on days off for the pharmacist who is happy to leave her in charge and also does his holiday cover. He has no problem with that situation and is happy to leave his customers in her capable hands.</p> <p>How can it be that somebody can obtain a qualification over thirty years ago and now all of a sudden it can be taken away. Along with the financial implications there is the “sense of worth” being taken away.</p> <p>I myself being a teacher of the same vintage wonder what my reaction would be to younger teachers being more qualified than myself? taking away my job and I left on the scrap heap with all my years of experience.</p> <p>I don't think this is a very fair draft proposal in regards to a group of mainly women of a certain vintage - 50+ who have only at most 10 years left to work.</p> <p>In conclusion- I don t think this Draft Proposal should be made law.</p>	
164.	Bernadette Knowles	
	<p>I am writing to express my objection to the proposed draft rules for qualified pharmaceutical assistants.</p> <p>I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in 1976. I am 61 years old. For many years I worked five days per week and for the last number of years I have been working four days per week in this role. I am working in the same pharmacy since 1999. In the forty years I have been employed, I have always covered the temporary absences of the pharmacist, whether for annual leave, sick leave, days off, emergencies or any other reason, as is my legal entitlement.</p> <p>I work according to the terms of my qualification under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890.</p> <p>I never agreed to work within the PSI draft Code of Practice as it was never a legal document and the content of this Code does not reflect the status of my qualification and role.</p> <p>My issue of concern is with the proposed change to the concept of ‘Temporary Absence’. The concept of ‘Temporary Absence’ has an established custom and practice interpretation in terms of pharmacy practice since 1890. It is synonymous with ‘Not Permanent’.</p>	

	<p>I cannot agree to a proposed definition of 'Temporary Absence' that reduces the terms of my qualification within which I have worked since my conferral and registration in 1976.</p> <p>I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I completed in good faith (and at significant personal and family expense) which was formulated, examined and validated by the PSI. It is unacceptable that the body which conferred upon me a qualification that legally entitled me to work in a specific manner for forty years is now seeking to redefine the terms of this qualification in a manner that seeks ultimately to invalidate my role and levels of responsibilities.</p> <p>I refuse to accept the current proposal to redefine 'Temporary Absence' and feel this proposed definition is without rationale, logic, knowledge or understanding of the working environment and what my role involves on a daily basis.</p> <p>I request as a matter of priority that you withdraw the current draft proposal for definition of 'Temporary Absence' and reconsider an alternative definition that fully recognises my qualification, expertise and experience.</p>	
165.	Marina Gorey	
	<p>While I can understand the need for the PSI to define "temporary absence" in the case of Pharmaceutical Assistants, I do have a problem with the systematic disregard for the professionalism and expertise with which Pharmaceutical Assistants have carried out their duties for the past number of decades. Bearing in mind that "Assistants" have been working, ostensibly, as Pharmacists for a minimum of 30 years,generally working up to 40 hours per week, their vocational training cannot be ignored and their livelihoods wiped out by only allowing them to work a maximum of 12 hours per week.I feel this needs to be reconsidered.</p> <p>Has there been any consultation with the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association to come up with what would be suitable arrangement?</p> <p>I operate a pharmacy in the North West of Ireland and there may be a number of pharmacist locums in other parts of the country but it is getting increasingly more difficult to find a pharmacy locum in this area. There are however a couple of long standing Pharmacy Assistants,whom, incidentally I can trust more than some of the newly qualified pharmacists,and who, from time to time, help me out for a day off. If this particular regulation gets passed as it is, I will no longer be able to call on any of these trusted professionals who I have, for so long, relied on for the "odd "day.</p>	

	<p>Finally I feel that excluding the Pharmaceutical Assistants from the fitness to practice clause does not make any sense. It disregards their professionalism and experience in pharmacy and I think rather than discouraging them from continuing education they should be included in the Continuing Professional Development that we pharmacists participate in.</p> <p>I would just ask, that we as a Profession and You as our Governing Body would not wipe away the livelihood of a section of exceptionally experienced, highly trusted and professional component of the pharmacy team.</p>	
166.	Margaret Fitton	
	<p>I am writing as a Qualified Assistant, who qualified in 1979, and have worked the temporary absence of the pharmacist for the best part of 30 years. at present I work 36 hours between two pharmacies owned by the same company. I work to cover the temporary absence of the pharmacist in both places of my employment according to their needs.</p> <p>I have covered in this capacity and do not pose a threat to public safety. Customers know and trust me and am more competent, and in touch with patients than a single day locum who does not know customers, and or pharmacists who do not have English as their first language. I have had many instances of patients returning to the pharmacy when I am on duty for clarification, as they did not understand what was said them. This is especially the case with elderly patients.</p> <p>I took my qualification in good faith, and the course was devised, administered and examined by the Society, and have worked within the parameters of my qualification, by not keeping 'open shop' for my own benefit.</p> <p>Working under what is proposed as temporary absence will have a detrimental effect on my ability to hold onto my job.</p> <p>It will have an impact on my economic circumstances as I am the 'bread winner' in the household, as my husband has XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.</p> <p>It will impact on my economic, social and cultural rights, as this restriction is more than necessary.</p> <p>The concept of 'temporary absence' has an established meaning since 1890, meaning 'not permanent'.</p> <p>Narrowing of parameters has the effect of interfering with an established right to practice, which has constitutional protection (articles 40.3 and or 43.</p>	

	As an older woman I feel the proposed restrictions on my working life are discriminatory, and as most assistants work part time, and are predominantly female the imposition of hours of service will have a far greater impact on women violating the equality rights guarantee in the constitution and under EHCR.	
167.	Patricia Coyle	
	<p>I am a qualified assistant working full time at present in the same shop for the last 22 years</p> <p>I have always worked full time. Worked only in two other shops I have always worked with great pride and confidence within the temporary absence. I cover days off lunch time holidays and any unforeseen time off by the pharmacist.</p> <p>My employer has stated to me that by work status will be effected by the proposed changes This will mean loss of hours and earnings I have always loved what I work at. If the changes go ahead I feel that my qualification as a qualified assistant as I have understood It to be are being taken away from me. These changes will effect me in my wages and how I will feel about myself</p> <p>How can I feel if something I have worked hard at and loved Felt proud of my job attended educational evenings and suddenly this is all to be taken away from me My qualification no longer means the Same thing</p> <p>After 35 years of working within the rules of temporary absence It will be a hard blow to take</p>	
168.	Monica O Sullivan	
	<p>My first thought on reading the proposed draft was "shame on them". How is it possible that after 40 years unbroken service to Pharmacy that my Council would even think, never mind, to draft such guidelines?</p> <p>After 40 years working as a Qualified Assistant I am being thrown on the scrap heap. 40 years of Registration Fees and this is what is thought of me, make me unemployable.!!</p> <p>On that point , what happens to €80,000 / € 100,000 collected from us surviving assistants each year, from middle -aged women, many widowed , as I am, who HAVE to work to pay mortgages, send their families to college, with no pension provisions to provide for us. These next years working were to ensure some savings when I hoped to retire at 65 years. I can not survive on 12 hours per week.</p>	

Why should I work as a Technician these last years? How can it possibly work in a pharmacy, Qualified Assistant for 12/ 24 hours and then not dispense / check scripts for the remainder of the week. !! This would not work.

What does our Council do for us Assistants?

We experience AGEISM, SexISM, HARRASEMENT, BULLYING, RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION, UNSAFE WORKING CONDITIONS.....ie 12 Hours WORK ROTA WITH NO FOOD BREAK,NOT EVEN A TOILET BREAK!!! every day at work. We work all the unsocial hours , late nights, weekends, both Saturdays and Sundays, and Bank Holidays. We do not receive the national recognised rates of pay for Sundays and Bank Holidays. You are not committed to our safety at any standard, especially not to "the highest standard"again shame on you.

Returning to my Registration Fee : What does it fund? Transparency , please.

It is time for all the above highlighted issues to be addressed. It is a disgrace that the Regulatory Body for Pharmacy continues to ignore the working conditions of its Registrants, both Assistants and Pharmacists. Allow the Oxford Dictionary or similiar bodies to define the English language and take care of the Business with which you are elected to do.

The above conditions in the working place were already outlined to you and the correspondence was ignored, not even acknowledged. Why must it always take a "whistleblower" to highlight problems that are overlooked/ ignored by the governing bodies of this country.

Qualified Assistants as outlined above work in unfavourable conditions , in many pharmacies, we have done so for many years, we do it to provide for our families , to pay mortgages, to provide for our looming retirement (in approx 10 years, all qualified assistants will be of retirement age).

The question has to be asked: why is the Council trying to define the word temporary when they would serve the pharmacy profession better if they used their time and our money to bring the standards of work to the accepted national guidelines for a dedicated, middleaged, mostly female group of pharmacy professionals.

Temporary Absence is "temporary".

169.	Helena Napier	
	<p>I am concerned that the proposals regarding pharmaceutical assistants may well be heavy handed given the react that in approx ten yrs this situation will resolve itself. These assistants have served the public well all these years and not only that have provided a reliable service for registered pharmacists. Pharmacists have depended on the assistants and had good reason to be confident in doing so. Pharmaceutical Assistants educated themselves through four years of college, have paid their dues and provided essential services to us, the public. Things will become very difficult for pharmacists, assistants and customers of pharmacies if these new proposals are adopted. For the sake of the short time involved, these assistants should be allowed to serve out their time in appreciation for the service they have given the Irish people. As a member of Irish society, I do not consider treatment of pharmaceutical assistants under new proposals to be fair to any party.</p>	
170.	Valerie Baker	
	<p>I am writing in response to the proposed change to the working conditions of the pharmaceutical assistants, reducing the hours of cover to 12 hours in a week.</p> <p>I have been getting my medications from my pharmacy for many, many years. The pharmacy consists of one pharmacist and a pharmaceutical assistant who covers when the pharmacist is away.</p> <p>I can get my medications any time and am most impressed with the standard of care of the pharmaceutical assistant. Changing the law to a maximum of 12 hours in a week will mean that the pharmaceutical assistant will not be able to cover annual leave and unplanned time off as she does now and therefore will not be able to fulfil her current role.</p> <p>I do not understand a reason to make this change and would be grateful if you would reply to tell me why and why do you now want to change the working conditions to make it impossible for a pharmaceutical assistant to hold their current job.</p>	
171.	Anna Doyle	
	<p>Regarding the above proposed regulation, I would like to raise a number of points:</p> <p>I have known my local Pharmaceutical Assistant for 14 years, and she has covered for her employers' absences consistently, diligently and legally supporting their customers by providing temporary absence cover for many weeks in every year.</p>	

	<p>This temporary absence cover includes holiday cover for the supervising and superintendant pharmacists as well as routine weekend and rota cover. It also includes other temporary absences such as funerals, family crises, and sicknesses.</p> <p>I doubt that her work during that period constituted a threat to the health, safety or wellbeing of any of her customers.</p> <p>Why should the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland choose to limit the roles of Pharmaceutical Assistants after more than 30 years' work, when the qualification is (I believe) no longer available and the people the proposed ruling affects a small and decreasing number of (mainly) women?</p>	
172.	John Boles	
	<p>I wish to make the following observations on the proposed regulations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I depend on a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant to cover the pharmacy XXXX on occasions. She lives approximately two miles from this pharmacy, and in an emergency, can be here in ten minutes. 2) You are now proposing to reduce the number of hours for which she can legally cover a pharmacy. 3) If this rule is changed, it would mean that if the Pharmaceutical Assistant had already worked for twelve hours in a week, the pharmacy might have to close if no alternative cover could be found. 4) I can understand why lorry drivers and bus drivers have their hours of work regulated, as they might suffer from fatigue. I do not understand the necessity to impose an arbitrary time constraint on Pharmaceutical Assistants. 5) This is completely at odds with the PSI's current understanding of 'temporary absence'. 6) If a change is made, it could be challenged in the courts, and if the PSI were to lose, the costs of this case would in effect be borne by either pharmacists or pharmacies. 7) In view of the fact that there are now no courses for the qualification of Pharmaceutical Assistants, relatively few people bearing this qualification remain in the state. In another ten years, there will be very few, if any. It does not seem necessary to legislate for such a small group of people, bearing in mind the potential financial risk outlined in point 6 above, and practical inconvenience to pharmacies and their customers. 	
173.	Bridie Martin	
	I was incensed recently to hear that the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland is proposing to try to prevent a qualified	

	<p>pharmaceutical assistant from working for more than twelve hours in any week without a pharmacist being present. I cannot understand the logic in this.</p> <p>I have had my medication dispensed for many years by a very competent qualified assistant. She has been in charge of the pharmacy on many occasions in the absence of the owner, a qualified pharmacist. I have the utmost confidence and trust in her and I cannot understand how you would propose that suddenly she cannot work for longer than 12 hours in a week without supervision.</p> <p>I have had experience with locums and although they are more qualified on paper there is no way they can match the years of experience, care and attention that I get from the pharmaceutical assistant whom I trust implicitly.</p> <p>I think it is a sad day when a hard working lady who has worked for most of her life with a qualification that was conferred upon her might suddenly be told that her qualification means nothing. When she is at a vulnerable stage with only a few years left to retirement she will be treated with disrespect and discarded. Why???</p> <p>Shame on you for attempting to treat a qualified, experienced professional person like that.</p>	
174.	Frances Campion-Cassidy	
	<p>I am a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant who has worked in community pharmacy for the past forty years and am shocked and appalled by the draft proposals put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society and circulated to members of the profession and the general public for consultation</p> <p>I began my studies in 1976 with three years of articulated apprenticeship and completed a fee-based fourth year, paid for by me, in the School of Pharmacy on Shrewsbury Road, Dublin. Having passed my exams I received a qualification which entitles me to work in the Temporary Absence of the pharmacist the only condition attached is that I do not conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my own account. For the past forty years I have worked under these conditions. Considering that the course was run by the Society, accredited by it, and my qualification awarded by it, I am incredulous that the same Society is trying to downgrade a qualification which it offered, and awarded, until the early eighties</p> <p>I have, over the past forty years, provided cover for lunch hours, days off, holidays, sick leave, family weddings and</p>	

emergency cover for funerals,etc.

This draft proposal clearly changes my work practices and, therefore, if implemented will change my employability. Since 1994 the Society has purported to use a draft Code of Practice, which I have never seen despite efforts made by our Association, This draft Code of Practice was never signed by us and is not a legal document- unlike my signed Articles of Tutelage, not to mention the Qualification awarded to me by the Society which grants me undefined Temporary Absence

The Society, though asserting that it is concerned with Public Safety, has no requirements for and does not recognise our commitment to Continued Professional Development or include us in Fitness to Practice. Despite this, I personally have paid for courses and have received certificates of attendance, going back to the year 2000, from the Irish Centre for Continuing Pharmaceutical Education and, more recently, the Irish Pharmaceutical Union Academy. The courses range from Pharmaceutical Care in Pregnancy and Breast-feeding; Dermatology- Acne and Psoriasis; Travel Health; Management of Infertility; Management of Common Eye Conditions; Managing Warfarin; Pharmaceutical Care of the Elderly Patient; Women's Health-Update on Hormonal Contraception; Hypertension; Men's Health; Diabetic Patient Care; Asthma and Inhaler Technique, to name a few. My full list of lectures attended and Certificates awarded is available for your perusal.

In conjunction with the above I joined the Irish Institute of Pharmacy and have started my ePortfolio.

I do not understand our exclusion. We are a professional group who each have given an average of forty years caring for people in the Pharmacy sector and ensuring best practice. Despite our obvious commitment we are not included. Our exclusion ensures that we are sidelined. An example of this, already, is the vaccination programme.

If the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society is implemented, the established right to practice by a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant, which attracts constitutional protection as both a personal and property right (Articles 40.3.1 and 43 of Bunreacht na h-Eireann), will be interfered with. In addition, the draft proposals will disproportionately impact on one sector of society, middle-aged women, and is therefore contrary to the European Convention of Human Rights.

These draft proposals are an insult to Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants. As professional people we have standing and this should be recognised. Our contribution to Pharmacy over the years cannot be denied. It is beyond belief that thirty six years after

	the conferral of my qualification it is under attack by the same Society that awarded it in the first place. Undefined Temporary Absence,as per my Qualification and my work practice over the past forty years,is the only acceptable outcome.	
175.	Aine O Rioila, Nora White, Angela Lory & Aishling Reilly	
	<p>I write as a member of the public and as a person who has worked in community pharmacy for over 30 years. I have worked with a number of qualified assistants over my years in pharmacy and never had an issue with their qualification. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill in when the Pharmacist is not there. I have worked with qualified assistants as they covered the Pharmacists-days off, lunch times, holiday's, illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. I also worked with Qualified Assistants when they did locums many times.</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use a "common sense" approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising Pharmacists are concerned I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining "temporary absence"</p> <p>I do not see how it could be considered "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed, for example, returning from lunch or having a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist who is absent 1 minute after the 12 hours expires. Would the shop have to close or break the law?</p> <p>I do not understand and how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 30-50 years post conferral. This qualification has stood for many years. Why is there a need to change it now?</p> <p>In short I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable</p>	
176.	Marie Gavin and Niall OSullivan	
	<p>The council of the PSI has proposed draft rules for public consultation as to what constitutes the "temporary absence" of a pharmacist under Section 30 of the Act</p> <p>The purpose of these rules is to provide for a "fair and workable model" for the definition of temporary absence</p> <p>X XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXXX XXXXXX XXXXXXXX is part of a small group of pharmacies. Our working model comprises of the following</p> <p>Superintendent Pharmacist XXX Supervising Pharmacist XXX Pharmacist XXX Qualified Assistant XXX Pharmacy Technician XXX</p> <p>We are fully compliant with all PSI requirements There was no issue with our work rota on our PSI inspection. Over the years we</p>	

	<p>have had significant difficulties throughout the group recruiting locum pharmacists We work in a socially deprived inner city area. Many of our patients suffer from psychiatric illness We have many travellers and illiterate patients. Many of our patients need a special understanding We strive to offer a team effort supported also by our local GPs and the 1r teams. Forcing us to employ a locum pharmacist who is unfamiliar with our patient profile, due to the implementation of restricted hours for Qualified Assistants'. will increase the risk of error and misunderstanding for our patients It is frankly dangerous to force this change upon us.</p> <p>This pharmacy is open 56.5 hours weekly The supervising pharmacist covers approx 40 hours weekly. Between the support pharmacist and the pharmaceutical assistant the remainder of the hours are recovered. Additionally the qualified assistant overlaps with both the pharmacist and the supervising pharmacist in addition to covering on her own when required. continuity of care vital in the provision of safe patient care</p> <p>Looking at the specific implementation of a 12 hour limit will reduce the pharmacy working hours available to the pharmaceutical assistant</p> <p>In the 10 years since this pharmacy was established the use of a Qualified Assistant for holiday and temporary cover has become an established right. To propose a defined maximum period of 12 hours in any one week will have legal implications on us as employers and practical implications for our patient care We have always worked to the existing Code of Practice which we feel is a fair and workable mode.</p> <p>We propose that the current code continue unchanged</p>	
177.	Helen Blanchfield	
	<p>I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in 1979. I worked in the 'Temporary Absence' of Pharmacists since 1979. 'Temporary Absence' meaning pharmacists holidays his 1 her day off each week and whenever unscheduled pharmacists absence may have arisen during my employment i.e. funerals, hospital appointments etc.</p> <p>However due to a change in my our personal circumstances I went back working full time in</p> <p>2006, this allowing me to work under the rules of the 1994 'Code of Practice', working 15 hours with the Pharmacist and covering their holidays and 1 day each week.</p> <p>Personally for me that if the council define 'Temporary Absence' as being 12 hours a week cover, it will mean my employer having to get emergency locum cover in the event of any emergency occurring after my 12 hours cover that week. This is not fair or</p>	

	<p>workable for the Pharmacist or Qualified Assistant. It would not be in the best interest or care of the patient. It is far too restricted and will lead to only one thing for Assistants, pay cuts, loss of hours and unemployment.</p> <p>We are mostly women in our late 50's with no pensions, some of us are widows with mortgages and children in college. It is sad to think that after all our years working in pharmacy 35 - 40 years, that our own regulatory body is causing this stress in our lives by downgrading our qualifications. I am hoping there will be some further thought put into the situation, seeing as this is a self-limiting issue as we will all be retired over the next 7 - 9 years.</p>	
178.	Therese Kavanagh	
	<p>I have waited till now to send you a submission as I kept thinking to myself if I read the proposed draft rules often enough I will eventually see the logic, rational, sense, fairness or workability of some of them. I have not managed to grasp any of the aforementioned.</p> <p>When I read a rule that is not immediately clear and unambiguous I wonder why such a rule would be made. When a simple thing is made complicated I wonder why. !!</p> <p>The public are entitled to more information. If there is a risk for the public when a qualified assistant is operating the business of a pharmacist then the society should address this and inform the public before they are asked to make a submission.</p> <p>I do not understand the need have a specific number of hours specified. The result of doing this would be to make the entire qualified assistant register redundant. The Society seem to be doubting the worth of the qualification that they themselves conferred on this group of people. They are either competent or they are not. They cannot be competent for 12 hours a week and then not competent and then competent again the next week. Once qualified they should not have to prove themselves every month. That is what being qualified means, is it not?</p> <p>The fact that qualified assistants are not subject to fitness to practice means the Pharmaceutical Society is not regulating properly. Assistants should not be penalised for the shortcomings of the Society.</p> <p>I suggest that it would serve the public better if the Society spent some time working out how to regulate properly, i.e. holding everyone on their registers to account. Making sure every person the society gives a licence to is competent and that they maintain that competency.</p> <p>These draft rules do nothing to assure best practice. They give no assurance to the public. On the contrary, they place doubt in the mind of anybody reading such ridiculous rules.</p>	

	<p>It is way beyond my comprehension that anybody could really believe that rule 6 and 7 are anyway fair, workable or best practice. Any person that has ever worked in a retail business would know that watching the clock all week to make sure one is not breaking the law is not workable. Why would any employer be happy to employ someone whose worth runs out after 12 hours every week? Assistants have always been entitled to cover the Pharmacists holidays and sick days and any unplanned or unexpected absence. To take away this entitlement changes the meaning of the qualification.</p> <p>Traditionally an assistant was entitled to cover up to two months at a time. The Houses of the Oireachtas recorded this in 1962 Dail Debate Vol.194 No 5, on Wednesday 28th March</p> <p>It was with this belief that people signed up to do this course, having been given assurance time after time that the “qualification would not be altered in any way”. Who could think this is a fair way to be treated? How could any reasonable person think it is fair to change the meaning of a qualification 30 to 40 years post conferral?</p> <p>The Draft rules are not fair or workable nor do they give assurance to anybody of best pharmacy practice. I suggest that the council of the society redraft simple rules that make common sense. The same common sense that is used to determine what the whole time charge of a supervising pharmacist is. If the Supervising Pharmacist is present in the shop for a substantial amount of the opening hours then by reason of logic when they are not there they are temporarily absent.</p> <p>I request that the Pharmaceutical Society stop harassing and abusing assistants. Do the job you are supposed to do and make rules that are fair and workable and make common sense. That is how you would best serve the profession of pharmacy and the public.</p>	
179.	Ken Baker	
	<p>I have been informed by my pharmacist assistant of the pharmaceutical Association of Ireland's intent to place major restrictions on her work practices and working hours. My understanding is that the vast majority of individuals affected by this proposed change are women with 30 + years serving the public in this role.</p> <p>It seems rather bizarre that the Pharmaceutical Association would bring forward any proposal when the position of Pharmaceutical Assistant will be phased out in the near future in any event due to retirement of current pharmaceutical assistants from the labor force.</p> <p>The argument that the PSI is making these changes to "provide public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety" is not convincing. We the general public have been served well by these individuals for many years and while they may have received less intensive training than pharmacists they have built up a substantial level of expertise through working in the industry over many years. Far greater in fact than the new hire pharmacists that they will be replaced with if this proposal is carried.</p>	

	<p>I appeal to the PSI to drop this proposal. I do not believe that to press forward with this proposal would have any positive effect on patient welfare. It may in fact have the opposite effect by taking a vast amount of experience out of the work force. I think it would also be grossly unfair to the many individuals that have served the public well over their working career and who I believe are entitled to continue in this career until they retire with dignity and the full support of the PSI who created this very position to begin with.</p> <p>My thanks for allowing us the public have our say in this matter.</p>	
180.	Annette Halliday	
	<p>I am a qualified pharmaceutical assistant. I work according to the terms of my qualification under section 19 of the pharmacy act 1890. I have worked for 40+ years and continue to work in the presence of and in the temporary absence of the pharmacist, I work 32hrs a week and cover her days off, holidays, sick leave and any other unforeseen absences. Therefore I cannot agree to a definition of "temporary absence" that will reduce the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferral and registration in 1972 and thus reduce my value as an employee. As a pharmaceutical assistant I always have the utmost regard for safe pharmacy practice and patient safety. So why is my qualification now under threat. I never agreed to the draft code of practice. I have not been working in accordance with the draft but have been employed based on a different understanding of qualified pharmaceutical assistant for 43yrs. Article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights prohibits discrimination and given that Pharmaceutical Assistants are predominantly female any attempt to impose hours of service as part of the qualification of the conditions of exercise of the profession will have a far greater impact on women, violating the equality rights guaranteed in the Constitution and under ECHR.</p> <p>I would like to know why you want to change the terms of my qualification? I fulfilled all the requirements to gain my qualification in 1972 and am perplexed as to why the PSI has now decided to try to reduce the value of my qualification and impose undue hardship. I am the only breadwinner in my house. Do we not deserve your respect? Many qualifications have changed over the years including Pharmacists but the same penalties are not being imposed on them. Why are we being victimised?</p> <p>When I started this journey in 1968 I felt very fortunate to be given the opportunity to gain a 3rd level qualification and now after 43yrs you want to diminish its value and imply that I have been working illegally all along. How can you tell me this is FAIR and WORKABLE it is not!</p> <p>There are less than 400 qualified pharmaceutical assistants left, we are a dying breed, please let us pass on with dignity and maintain the same rules as we have worked to post conferral, the status quo, no more no less.</p>	
181.	Sean Pilkington	
	<p>I am writing to you to strongly object to your proposal to define temporary absence for Qualified Assistants . I have two very good friends who are Assistants and have been so helpful to me as a member of the public going into a community pharmacy over the years . I cannot stress how helpful and informative they have been to me and my family regarding</p>	

	<p>our medication and indeed our health problems .</p> <p>They have been Qualified Assistants for nearly 40 years now and have worked really wonderfully according to the terms of their Qualification under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 which is a long time . It is extremely difficult for assistants to agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of their qualification they have worked to since their conferral and registration by the same Pharmaceutical Society in the 1970,s.</p> <p>At the time of their conferral , temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on them with regard to employability .</p> <p>I think that it is a sad state of affairs and quiet cruel of a Society they have been a member of for nearly 40 years now, deem it necessary to demean them now as most of them head towards retirement .</p> <p>I would respectfully ask you to leave them alone and have a bit of respect for them .</p> <p>They are a group of mostly women who deserve to be left in peace !</p>	
182.	Josephine Faughnan	
	<p>I would like to make a submission on your draft proposals on “temporary absence”. As I cannot put a face on “the registration and qualification recognition unit” I am addressing this to yourself, who has a name and a face! I do have a certificate of qualification and registration issued by you (the PSI) so I daresay the aforementioned unit does not have a problem with my registration or qualification.</p> <p>Your email of 8th February states “A Pharmaceutical Assistant is a person who is competent to transact the business of a Pharmacist.....” your proposals on temporary absence state “a registered pharmaceutical assistant means a person whose name is entered in the register...” So you recognise me as competent and registered – you simply cannot make up your mind if I am competent on Monday rather than Tuesday, perhaps from 6 – 9 on a Wednesday but definitely not 6 – 9 on a Friday as well. How absolutely ludicrous.</p> <p>I have worked in this profession for over 40 years and it has given me, my late husband and my family a wonderful standard of living. I have never seen unemployment. Does that tell you something of the competencies of qualified assistants? I have covered absences of hours, days, weeks, months, years, sick days, half days, holidays, honeymoons all over the country in many different pharmacies. I can say without a shadow of doubt that my colleague pharmaceutical assistants would have been equally in demand, despite the efforts of the Pharmaceutical Society over many years to undermine our capacity to work.</p> <p>In your communication of February 8th you claim your proposals are for “a fair and workable model”. Fair and workable for whom? Who’s agenda is this? It certainly is not fair to qualified assistants. Is it fair or workable for a rural pharmacist who needs</p>	

	<p>to go to a funeral but the magical 12 hours have been exceeded. Your suggestion that your proposals “provide public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety” is ironic considering you have no problem allowing a pharmacist from Slovenia or Spain to locum in Ireland with English dictionary in hand, and this provides safe pharmacy practice! You employ that I (after 12 hours) may be incapable of providing such a service. All pharmacists are not equally qualified, is a degree from Belgrade the same as a degree from Belfast? When I qualified (as I recollect) there were MPSIs who did not have pharmacy degrees. Perhaps there are some such pharmacists still practising. Is the pharmacy degree of today the same as the pharmacy degree of 40 years ago? I doubt it. I have no problem with CPD (this is merely a new name for an old phenomenon) if that is what you require. Neither do I have a problem with accountability – I have always been accountable to my employers. I have yet to hear of a pharmacist who has never made a mistake, and I would contend that if he/she made such a claim he/she would be lying.</p> <p>Finally, your draft proposals would require that the pharmacy owner and superintendent pharmacist should ensure that “the pharmaceutical assistant has the requisite knowledge, skills, including language skills and fitness to act...” This alone, I would submit, should be the criteria for employing pharmaceutical assistants in the temporary absence of the pharmacist. Would the owners of pharmacies (and they would all have been single independent pharmacies) who employed pharmaceutical assistants in the early years have continued to do so but for they believed them to be competent, reliable, grounded, qualified, capable persons? In more recent times we have the emergence of the chains – and I am proud to be employed by Lloyds who while adhering to PSI guidelines have had the resources to continue to employ me and to value my competence. Not all my colleagues have been quiet so fortunate – and I return to the example of the pharmacist who needs to nip out but his qualified assistant has worked her quota of hours. This is not fair or workable. As your main concern about temporary absence seems to be our continued competence after 12 hours I suggest you leave it to the management/owner/ superintendent structures to deal with – just as you expect those structures to work in the employing of pharmacists of many different nationalities. After all do you assess “the language skills and fitness to act” of a pharmacist from Barcelona or do you assume it to be the responsibility of the management structure/owner/employer/superintendent to ensure that he/she has the requisite skills. Covering long absences such as we have done in the past is no longer practicable or safe for qualified assistants (or pharmacists) in view of the long opening hours so I ask you to leave the interpretation of temporary absence to those on the ground, at the coal face, who are best positioned to decide what is safe and fair for all employees. Thanking you.</p>	
183.	Jacinta McGowan	
	<p>My name is Jacinta McGowan, Qualified in September 1977 On qualifying as a Pharmaceutical Assistant and with faith in my qualification and myself I went to Nigeria in March 1978 as a lay volunteer with the Medical Missionaries of Mary. I replaced a Qualified Assistant at a Mission Hospital and worked in the Pharmacy for two years. Suffice to say it was challenging and I was part of a great team of religious and lay people working at the Mission Hospital. That Hospital has now long been handed over to the Government, but while there we reached out to the sick and did our best.</p>	

	<p>On return to Ireland I worked in XXXXXXX town for three years and was well respected there in a local Community Pharmacy. In September 1983 I commenced work in my native town here at XXXXXX. I was part of the progressive development of that Pharmacy and that Company for thirty one years. In my time I worked with many Pharmacists and always within the boundaries of my qualification. I was proud to encourage many young Pharmacists in their chosen career and some have progressed and now manage their own business.</p> <p>Qualified Assistants worked and studied under the guidelines as set down by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland . This argument re “Temporary Absence” has been so long on the agenda it is pathetic. One cannot take away the years of work, knowledge and experience Qualified Assistants have brought to Community Pharmacy able to maintain their work life balance knowing their business was in safe responsible hands in their absence.</p> <p>The next decade will see the Qualified Assistant almost a “person” of the past as we are a dwindling cohort. We have done our best and continue to do so within the realms of the qualification that we received from the same body that now sees us as some professional threat or “thorn in the side”.Qualified assistants have always been an intrinsic part of the caring profession.</p> <p>Please allow common sense to prevail . Please respect your own colleagues who have served Pharmacy well for many years and do not undermine the qualification of Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>“We may not always have the cure, but we must always care”</p>	
184.	Catherine McKenna	
	<p>I am contacting you because I have recently become aware that there is a problem concerning the cover that can be provided by pharmaceutical assistants. Over the years I have been looked after by several assistants who are part of a team and cover for others in their absence. 12 hours seems an unreasonable and unworkable restrictions for people who have been in the work force for a long number of years.I totally support their case.It is unreasonable to totally change someone's working conditions at this point.I am sure I am not alone in this viewpoint.</p>	
185.	Breda Mc Connon	
	<p>I disagree with the new proposal to define temporary absence as twelve hours per week.</p> <p>Like most of my colleagues I've been working as a legally qualified pharmaceutical assistant for almost forty years. I have always worked within the guidelines set down for me by The Pharmaceutical Society when I qualified in 1976. My qualification has always been very important to me and something I have always been very proud of. To move the goal posts almost forty years later on something that was signed and sealed for me by the then President of The Pharmaceutical Society seems to me to be unfair, illegal and immoral.</p> <p>There are only approx. 395 qualified assistants still in existence, the majority of these in their fifties and sixties. These people work in a committed fashion with the customers with whom they have built up a trustworthy relationship already abiding by your</p>	

	<p>rules of providing safe pharmacy practice and patient safety. I propose you leave things as they are and as they were when I received my certificate in 1976 and under the same guidelines as qualified assistants have worked for the past 126 years.</p>	
186.	Margaret Jacqueline Davis	
	<p>Proposed changes to rules regarding temporary absence cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>I qualified as a pharmaceutical assistant in May 1978, since then I have worked as a qualified assistant. For the last 23 years I have worked in the same pharmacy, working a minimum of 15 hours per week,</p> <p>I never agreed to the draft code of practice, but have worked according to the terms of my qualification under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890.</p> <p>This change of rules will reduce my value to my employer without consultation or compensation. It would have serious consequences for my livelihood, and it ignores my years of accumulative experience,</p> <p>At the time of conferral, temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to my employability. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover and for sick leave etc., having done so for the last 38 years,</p> <p>I trust that this proposed amendment will not proceed, If otherwise, please contact me and provide adequate notice so I can take legal advice.</p>	
187.	Jason Melvin	
	<p>I am writing to you to strongly object to your proposal to define temporary absence for Qualified Assistants .</p> <p>My mother and my aunt, who have been Qualified Assistants for nearly 40 years each and have worked diligently according to the terms of their Qualifications under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 which is 126 years now.</p>	

	<p>It is extremely difficult for Assistants to agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of their qualification they have worked to since their conferral and registration by the Pharmaceutical Society in 1975 and 1978 respectively .</p> <p>At the time of their conferral , temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on them with regard to employability .</p> <p>It is very sad to think that a Society they have been a member of for nearly 40 years , deem it necessary to demean them now as they head towards retirement .</p> <p>I would respectfully ask you to leave them in peace.</p>	
188.	Jenny O'Malley	
	<p>I am writing to you to strongly object to your proposal to define temporary absence for Qualified Assistants .</p> <p>My mother in law and my aunt, who have been Qualified Assistants for nearly 40 years each and have worked diligently according to the terms of their Qualifications under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 which is 126 years old now.</p> <p>It is extremely difficult for Assistants to agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of their qualification they have worked to since their conferral and registration by the Pharmaceutical Society in 1975 and 1978 respectively .</p> <p>At the time of their conferral , temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on them with regard to employability .</p> <p>It is very sad to think that a Society they have been a member of for nearly 40 years , deem it necessary to demean them now as they head towards retirement .</p> <p>I would respectfully ask you to leave them in peace.</p>	
189.	Carmel Morey	
	<p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant with over thirty years experience working in community pharmacy. I embarked on a career choice, having chosen a course in good faith which was formulated ,examined and privately run by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland.</p>	

	<p>I have been employed based on an understanding of temporary absence that is not in accordance with the draft Code of Practice that you propose. This is a draft Code of Practice that I never agreed to.</p> <p>I am incensed and saddened that a society which created my career and for which I have strived to maintain a working ethic of the highest standard has now deemed it necessary to diminish my qualification.</p> <p>It is in my opinion mean spirited, and the question I ask myself is WHY?.</p> <p>Why would a body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over thirty years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.</p> <p>The role of the Qualified Assistant is self limiting given that the course no longer exists and in ten years or so will have all retired.</p> <p>It is unbelievable that you propose any change in my qualification that would undermine my right to work, and I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification.</p> <p>At a time where the health services are so overburdened one would assume that the society would be more concerned with maintaining and protecting and providing support for all its representatives instead of alienating and undermining long serving workers with a wealth of knowledge and experience.</p> <p>I have copied this letter to my politicians and representatives.</p>	
190.	Hannah McFadden	
	<p>As an employer of a Pharmaceutical assistant for 30 years, I am surprised at the restrictive interpretation of the "Temporary Absence" for the cover of Pharmacist duties by Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>While an allocation of a time restriction to the term may seem to be necessary, I don't understand the necessity for the supervised work by probably a newly qualified inexperienced fully qualified pharmacist during the month previous to the unsupervised period. In real life it is usually the other way round.</p> <p>The cohort of PSs who are still practising are coming up to retirement age and are funding for that, the restrictive hours will render this group unemployable and as a result will not be able to pursue their constitutional right to earn their living as they have been for years.</p> <p>I don't feel that the expenditure of our hard earned money by the PSI to fight a probable challenge in the courts is justified.</p>	

	This matter will resolve itself within the next 5/10 years with the natural retirements and the more and more availability of newly qualified pharmacists.	
191.	John Fitzsimons	
	We object to this proposal.	
192.	Eva O' Leary	
	<p>I understand that PSI are looking for submissions re the Draft Proposal to define Temporary Absence in regard to Pharmaceutical Assistants</p> <p>I am a Leaving Cert student who have put my number one choice on my CAO as pharmacy. I got my interest in pharmacy through my aunt who is a working Pharmaceutical Assistant. This proposal leaves me thinking do I really want to be part of a society who takes away a qualification thirty years down the line. Could the same happen to me when I will be three quarters of the way through my working life?</p> <p>I do not think this Draft Proposal either fair or workable.</p>	
193.	Geraldine Fitzgerald XXXXX	
	<p>I qualified as a PA in May 1979 I understood that that qualification entitled me to act in the 'temporary absence' of a pharmacist, (be it holidays, days off, sickness etc). Although 'temporary absence' was never defined, I understood that it did not entitle me to keep open shop on my own account, which I accepted.</p> <p>Over the forty years since qualifying, I have worked on and off under these terms. In the early days I did single day/weekly locums, but not for long as I preferred to work on a regular basis where I knew the run of the shop/ customers/practice procedures. I then went on to work in regular positions that entailed working in the same place at least one day a week. At this time I also did their holidays and relief work.</p> <p>For the last fifteen years I have worked in one pharmacist owned pharmacy for two days a week, where I am presently employed. Sometimes the pharmacist was present, sometimes not. Nothing was set in stone as I never agreed to the 'draft code of practice', so I have been employed based on a different understanding of temporary absence to what the PSI now proposes. In this employment(for fifteen years) I have provided days off, holidays, emergency cover in a pharmacy where I have built up a good reputation and relationship with both customers, local Doctors and local practices.</p> <p>I have worked with young locums from time to time and where I very much respect and value their depth of knowledge, I do not feel that it is 'safer practice' to bring an unknown young locum pharmacist into the pharmacy where I work for a day (with no knowledge of patients, local surgeries doctors writing etc) in preference to allowing a QA with forty years' experience to cover the day because they have exceeded their 'twelve hour a week deadline'</p> <p>I must add that over the last number of years, I feel there is a movement to undermine my qualification. I have consistently felt</p>	

	<p>under a complement to be allowed to work in my chosen profession. I do not wish to keep open shop on my own account, but do wish to continue working as a respected qualified person with forty year service to pharmacy without being undermined by young pharmacists and PSI representatives. (A young pharmacist has recently told my Pharmacist employer that I was working illegally.)</p> <p>I do however very much enjoy working with young pharmacists as I feel that the combination of my experience and their scientific knowledge, which is a new and very welcome addition to the profession, is a perfect blend of good pharmacy practice. I also feel it is incredulous that today, in this technologically driven world where we have information at our fingertips, that the PSI now at this time finds it necessary to diminish our professional role.</p> <p>In all my years working there has never been a period where a colleague (pharmacist) has not been available on the other end of a phone to discuss and/or offer advice on a particular case. A second opinion for all pharmacy staff is in my opinion safe practice.</p> <p>Therefore what do I propose?</p> <p>1: That I be legally allowed to work in the capacity that I have always worked ie, in the temporary absence of a pharmacist without prejudice.</p> <p>2: That I work within a 'code of practice' of the PSI and the pharmacy where I work and abide by the rules set out by the PSI and the superintendent pharmacist.</p> <p>3: That 'temporary absence' continues to mean what it states and what I originally believed my qualification to mean: that I could not open shop on my own account.</p> <p>4: That as a Q A I be required to partake in CPD hours in order to keep up to date with the ever expanding profession: update our knowledge instead of trying to replace us</p> <p>5: That the movement to get rid of the Q A end, and that the PSI respect our experience and qualification as a necessary and valuable asset to Pharmacy today, where the leaning is to replace community pharmacy with a faceless technological profession. The Q A has many qualities to add to community Pharmacy where we have become a reliable, trusted, familiar face, providing continuity to customers as opposed to the recent tendency of young pharmacists to move from place to place.</p> <p>I would just like to add that in the days when there was a shortage of Pharmacists both pharmacists and the PSI were willing to tolerate the Q A. But this has changed due to the huge numbers graduating outside of Ireland.</p> <p>In these days when Pharmacy has undergone so many changes, the struggling community pharmacist will not be able to afford to keep the temporary Q A on if these new proposals come into being. We will no longer be a viable option. Ie: to employ u every week and still have to pay a locum should we exceed the twelve hour deadline.</p> <p>Finally I may or may not continue working in Pharmacy, due to all of these recent developments, which I consider to be continual harassment.</p>	
194.	Kay Healy	

I understand that the PSI are looking for submissions from interested parties re Temporary Absence in regards to Pharmaceutical Assistants.

I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant who qualified in 1982. When I did my Leaving Certificate-I decided on making my career in Pharmacy. I understood by the description of the course that I was undertaking that I would be able to work in a pharmacy with a pharmacist and able to manage it on my own whenever he was absent. This I did all my career. I worked fulltime in several different pharmacies without any difficulty.

In 2000- I started working for a pharmacist with two shops. In one shop I worked with pharmacists. In the other – I worked a lot on my own and sometimes had a pharmacist for a couple of hours a day and sometimes not- until 2012. Due to a downturn in business – a redundancy was required – I was selected for redundancy ahead of newly employed pharmacists. When I questioned this – I was told that due to “the fifteen hour rule” – I was now less valuable to him. This Code of Practice was never a signed document and has lead to a lot of Pharmaceutical Assistants loosing jobs and hours. I would like to see a copy of this signed document?

Since being unemployed – I have found it difficult to get work. A lot of the work I get is where I work on my own – covering days off and holiday work for pharmacists who are happy to leave me in charge.

It seems ridiculous to me that for thirty years I have been able to do a job but now all of a sudden that experience is going to count for nothing. How can it be that a qualification given by yourselves be downgraded? We – Pharmaceutical Assistants all undertook our training in good faith and it is most disappointing at this stage of our careers to be treated in this way. No pharmacist wants a Pharmaceutical Assistant except they are able to work on their own when required to. A technician can fulfil all other duties in a pharmacy. This move reduces us to technician status!

We all have commitments- based on our expectations of a certain income to which we are accustomed- such as mortgages, college fees and some households are single income for various reasons! In my case – I have another good ten years to work. This combined with the four years I have been virtually unemployed gives me a loss in the region of 1 million pre tax based on my previous fulltime salary. How does the PSI propose to compensate me for this!

This proposal is unprecedented in any European state and I don t think it is fair or workable

195.	<p>Conor Martin</p> <p>The PSI , in it's role as the body accountable for the effective regulation of pharmacists and pharmacies in Ireland, seeks to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the public by ensuring standards within the industry. As part of this protection, the PSI now proposes to introduce rules/regulations which will define the number of hours a PA can cover during a Pharmacists 'temporary absence'.</p> <p>It could be assumed that the PSI seeks to limit these hours of temporary absence to 12 hours per week (& then only if a PA has worked 12 hours in the preceding four weeks) because essentially the PSI doesn't regard PA's as suitably qualified to work for more than 12 hours a week. How can a person be qualified to work for 12 hours and not for 13?</p> <p>Apart from the risk implied by the need for this limitation of hours, the 12 hours per week is completely impractical in a retail pharmacy setting. (After a 4 week break, how would a PA get re-employed as a PA?). So impractical that such a move would in effect discourage the employment of PA's and effectively eliminate them from the workforce.</p> <p>If the standards and abilities of a group ,(which has served the pharmacy industry during times when very little cover was available) , is of concern to the PSI surely subjecting PA's to mandatory CPD and Fitness to Practice standards would be a fairer and safer route to a more practical resolution to the current impasse?</p>	
196.	<p>Joseph Haire</p> <p>Submission under the Public Consultation on Draft Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016.</p> <p>The Council of the PSI has proposed these draft rules in order to provide for 'a fair and workable model for the definition of temporary absence which also provides public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and public safety.'</p> <p>In my submission I intend to address, 1) The necessity to change the rules, 2) the fairness of the proposed rules, and most importantly, 3) patient care and patient safety.</p> <p>1) The Necessity for these Rules</p> <p>There is no necessity to amend the current guidelines governing temporary absence. There is currently a workable model for the definition of temporary absence that has served Irish patients well for over 20 years. Under the Pharmacy Act 2007 the competency of Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants is recognised and as a result the PSI maintains a register of Pharmaceutical Assistants. Furthermore the Act provides for a robust clinical governance structure within retail pharmacy business with the superintendent pharmacist responsible for the overall professional and clinical management of the pharmacy. To fulfil this</p>	

obligation Superintendent Pharmacists will recruit the best available professional and support staff and mould them into a **consistent** and highly motivated team committed to the delivery of highest quality pharmaceutical patient care.

The necessity for these rules is further questioned by the fact that all remaining registered Pharmaceutical assistants completed their examinations on or before 1985 and therefore will be retiring in the not too distant future.

2) Fairness

Pharmaceutical Assistants are vastly experienced members of the pharmacy workforce. These draft proposals are grossly unfair to Pharmaceutical Assistants as they fundamentally weaken their long established role in Irish pharmacies and undermine that recognition of their competency enshrined in Irish Law.

They are unfair to superintendent pharmacists who with due regard for their obligations under the 2007 Pharmacy Act and due regard for the continuity and quality of care available to patients have recruited Pharmaceutical Assistants onto their pharmacy teams.

They are unfair to supervising pharmacists who currently work closely with their pharmaceutical assistants on a daily and weekly basis and thrust them to maintain patient care and patient safety in their temporary absences within current guidelines.

Most importantly they are unfair to patients who have long established and trusted relationships with pharmaceutical assistants.

3) Patient Care and Patient Safety

Under current guidelines governing temporary absence cover Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants are required to be permanently employed in the pharmacy for at least 15 hours per week and as such are **consistent** members of the pharmacy team and will have an in depth knowledge of the pharmacy's patient's, the local doctor's and their prescribing practices and the internal policies and procedures of the pharmacy. These draft rules permit temporary absence cover where the Pharmaceutical Assistant is employed for just 12 hours in the previous month so may not have been in the pharmacy for the previous 29 days. Any proposal which fragments the pharmacy team and favours an inconsistent staffing model is likely to weaken the continuity of care in the

	<p>pharmacy and could even put patient safety at risk.</p> <p>These draft rules further fragments the pharmacy team by excluding Pharmaceutical assistants from covering the annual leave of the Supervising Pharmacist. Again from a patient care and patient safety perspective covering the annual leave of a supervising pharmacist with a permanently employed qualified pharmaceutical assistant as permitted by the current guidelines is vastly superior to a situation in which a Superintendent Pharmacist may have no choice but to cover a two week annual leave period with several different registered pharmacist locums of varying qualities and with no experience of the pharmacy or it's patients.</p> <p>These draft rules do nothing to improve patient care delivery or patient safety and the PSI in its role of protecting the health safety and wellbeing of the public should amend them to a framework similar to the current guidelines which promote consistency in the delivery of quality patient care.</p>	
197.	Cliona Connolly	
	<p>With reference to the proposed draft rules put forward by the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland I request you to review the following points.</p> <p>I qualified as an Assistant to a Pharmaceutical Chemist on 16th April 1981.</p> <p>During my training and on receipt of my Certificate I was informed that I was permitted to conduct the Business in the Temporary Absence of the Pharmacist.</p> <p>The draft rules which you are proposing are altering the basis on which The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland trained me. Having worked for 17 and a half years for the same business , I was compelled for family reasons to reduce my hours to 16 hours per week. This permitted my Pharmacist employer to have a “rest day” in accordance with the “Organisation of Working Time Act 1997” and to conduct necessary off-site business including one-to-one patient care when required with seriously ill house-bound patients , as well as visits to nursing homes or to collect urgent medications for patients.</p> <p>Temporary Absence is very simply that. I am there when the Pharmacist is temporarily called away. The Temporary Absence as specified in the Pharmacy Act 1890 section 19 is putting Patient Care first.</p> <p>“Force Majeure” ; Medical Appointments or Emergencies ; Funerals ; Parent-Teacher Meetings ; Holiday periods are all temporary absences. Most will have a definite return date or time , but some could take a little longer. I was led to believe if a pharmacist could not , within a reasonable time , determine a return date , then a locum would be organised to ensure Patient Care and Patient Safety at All times.</p> <p>The Pharmacy Assistant , as the permanent worker , knows the patients and the business , better than any Pharmacist locum who is “thrown in the deep end” if no qualified personnel are available, to assist, in the day-to-day requirements of the patients /</p>	

customers.

The recommendations which the PSI have put forward would force my employer to terminate my employment as the business could not facilitate another pharmacist staff member to cover the time off.

Are you prepared to compensate us as Certified and Registered Qualified Assistants to Pharmaceutical Chemists for loss of earnings and loss of employment due to this draft plan ?

The age-group and gender affected by your plans specifically are Women from 55years upward.

We should not be discriminated against. We should be permitted to work part-time. Our employers have a wealth to gain from the experience we have gained over the years.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland until the 1960s trained everyone via Apprenticeship to Qualified Assistant level from which they could achieve the next level of Pharmaceutical Chemist.

My recently deceased Mother had trained and qualified as a Pharmaceutical Chemist through that system. She would be horrified that the training I received and all the years of service to the Profession of Pharmacy would be taken away instantly by the "stroke of a pen".

I was trained to put Customer Safety and Patient Care first. A maximum of twelve hours per week would cause difficulty even for individual patient consultations or vaccinations by the Pharmacist as the Pharmacist would not be "supervising " my work at that time. Allowing me to be responsible for my own duties for twelve hours temporary absence yet saying that I would be putting patient safety at risk by taking responsibility after that period is totally illogical.

To date there are many times when I have worked for more than 12 hours per week without the supervision of a Pharmacist.

Have you any evidence that I put patient's safety at risk ?

The PSI gave me my certificate and now you are telling me that I am no longer allowed to cover the temporary absences of the Pharmacist which I have been legally entitled to do for 35 years.

I believe the Pharmacists were informed that the 12 hours were mentioned in a code of practice.

I have had frequent communication by post and email from the PSI over the years but I was not asked to vote nor was I informed that my job specification and my Employment Rights and conditions were being altered , my Qualification was being down-graded by the Pharmaceutical Society who trained me.

The PSI signed me into an Apprenticeship , conducted a Course to Qualification and Certification , required me to pay Registration since I qualified in 1981 and are now planning on terminating my employability as a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant.

A Professional Organisation should be doing it's best to harness the years of experience that are still available from our members not forcing them into unemployment .

It should be harnessing our experience and Developing and Educating everyone for the Future of the Pharmaceutical Profession.

Fitness to Practice and CPD can be used to ensure that ALL Qualified Personnel are adequately trained to benefit Everyone , Professionals and Patients , going forward.

We should all be working together not trying to eliminate the experience of the years.

198.	Margaret O Shea	
	<p>Taking into account that you have been in discussion with the PPA on the above role,for some months, I find the Draft Publication very arrogant.</p> <p>I Qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in 1975 and have consistently worked in this position since qualifying.I consider my position a very responsible one. I have always enjoyed my work and find it very rewarding. I am in my current position, XXXXXX Cork, for in excess on 20 years. During that time I have a gained a very good working knowledge of the business and in particular have formed good relationships and trust with the customers (patients). This relationship also extends to the Doctors and Medical Institutions in the area.</p> <p>To my knowledge the position of the PA, as it is defined at present, works very well and is now an integral part of the business and accepted as such by all who work in this business.</p> <p>While I am aware that nobody goes on forever,I never anticipated that my qualifications and work effort over the past 40 years would be diminished by your unnecessary proposal. The undermining of peoples lively hood is a very serious issue. This proposal has already affected the moral of the assistants in their workplace which is a matter of great concern.</p> <p>In your document dated 22/02/2016 'The Council of PSI....' you state ' The purpose of these rules is to provide for a fair and workable model for the definition of'temporary absence', which also provides public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety'. The inference being that present model does not meet these criteria. This is not a true reflection of the current model I believe.</p> <p>Also in yours of 22/02/2016 you use phrases like ' we seek to achieve and 'our vision' but nowhere in this document do you give the stakeholders a valid or logical reason for changing a model that is working perfectly and has been for a number of decades now.</p> <p>I think that this is a very poorly conceived document, and does nothing to enhance the position of the PA, and should be withdrawn immediately.</p>	
199.	<p>Ark Medical Centre (<i>Dr J Mc Feely, Dr J Coghlan, Dr A Kovacs,Dr R Paratian,Dr E Coyle,Nurse Mc Kee,Nurse Mc Colgan,Nurse Kilcoyne Catherine Doherty Manager,Eileen Dorrian Manager,Marie Meehan Admin,Laura Elliott Admin,Karen Mc Crossan Admin,Louise Doherty Admin</i>)</p>	
	<p>We are contacting you in support of the local pharmacy assistants. We feel very strongly that they are capable of their role in the pharmacy and have been in their position for a number of years. By reducing the temporary absence to 12 hours a week it will result in job losses and sever pressure on the pharmacists. We would appreciate if you would re consider this decision</p>	
200.	Michael O'Neill-Mockler	
	XXXXXX	

XXXXXXX

2nd March 2016.

In the absence of a Registrar, I am submitting these few observations, in addition to the card.

In 1962, during the final year leading to a Diploma in Pharmacy, the Students Union comprising degree students only, voted to bar PA students from the Union. Over half a century later, these now qualified PAs are effectively being barred from the practice of their profession. Some years ago, I asked the inspector while the Pharmacy Technician exam did not include a separate Forensic paper and was told that it was EU law. Fair enough, but when I questioned about the status of the PA in Sweden, I was fobbed off with an evasive answer. During my own research on the matter, I discovered that any difference there between a pharmacist and a PA is that the latter cannot own a pharmacy. There is no mention of hours per day, week or month. A Swedish PA is legally entitled to be in charge.

I'm not a solicitor or barrister, but what is being laid down is law of one interpretation. The casualty is justice and there is a grave case of it here. What is inherent in the Society's dictum is that a PA will not have full time employment in one establishment but will be reduced to locum work. Very few will be fit to do this.

Yours etc

Michael O Neill-Mockler BA MPSI

Re: Submission in response to proposed draft rules Pharmaceutical Society
of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical
Assistants) Rules 2016

The proposed changes to rules defining temporary absence do not reflect that:

- The concept of 'temporary absence' has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice since 1890. It is synonymous with 'not in permanent charge', as outlined in the certificates conferred to PA by the PSI.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pharmacy practice is part of the 'real world', where normal life challenges arise such as sickness, funerals, traffic delays. Defining 'temporary absence' in concrete terms, i.e. exact hours, will make it an offence for PA to cover 5 minutes over 12 hours Narrowing the factual parameters pertaining to the practice of pharmaceutical assistants by prescriptive measures has the effect of interfering with an established right to practice on the part of pharmaceutical assistants, depriving loyal and responsible pharmacy professionals with over 35 years experience of the right to earn a living Defining 'temporary absence' in terms of 'hours' will do nothing to advance 'safe pharmacy practice', subjecting PAs to mandatory CPO and Fitness to Practice will. <p>Signed</p>	
201.	Elizabeth O'Connor XXXXX	
	<p>Re: "Temporary Absence"</p> <p>Issue</p> <p>To whom it concerns,</p> <p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant: registration number XXXXX.</p> <p>I started work as a qualified assistant in June 1977 with a pharmacist who tragically became a widow in August that same year.</p>	<p>XXXXXX</p> <p>XXXXXX</p> <p>XX XXXXX</p> <p>Ireland</p> <p>XXXXXX</p> <p>2/3/2016</p>

	<p>She had to set about rearing three children under five and needless to mention she had numerous appointments, school, meetings, sports events and meetings pertaining to her business to attend to. Over the subsequent thirty six years I worked for her covering various hours depending on her needs. I worked for fifteen years in a pharmacy where the owner/pharmacist was quite ill and my work included cover for numerous doctors and hospital visits. Now as I am getting older myself, my work is on a needed basis, to fill in where permanent staff need time off. I am often called upon at short notice. May I remind you in a lot of these cases a qualified pharmacist is sought and not available.</p> <p>Since my conferral, I have worked according to the terms of our qualification under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890; do not seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my own account. I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferral, and registration in 1977. At the time of conferral “temporary absence” was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to my employability. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence; for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover and such leave etc.</p> <p>I have paid the highest rate of tax and every levy loaded upon me and there were many. All this contributed to educating two generations. I wont get a state pension until I’m sixty six. You may say this has nothing to do with you. If you reduce or diminish my qualification in any way you are rendering me unemployable and this unable to make a living.</p> <p>I cannot accept any dim____tion or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI. It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specified manner for nearly forty years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all these years.</p> <p>Yours faithfully</p> <p>Elizabeth O’Connor</p>	
202.	Geraldine McCarthy	

Dear Sir, Madam

I am a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant having received my qualification from the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland in 1973.

I have worked in numerous pharmacies for the past 40 years and have been in my current employment for nearly 20 years. During that time I have consistently endeavoured to update my knowledge and skills regularly by attending lectures and seminars, for example those given by the IU with a view to ensuring I am always abreast of developments and changes in the industry.

In the many years since I qualified and more particularly in my current pharmacy I regularly provide temporary cover in the absence of the pharmacist. This temporary cover changes from sick days to holidays and emergency cover, but more important is central to the terms of my contract employment and to the very reason I was employed in the first place almost 20 years ago.

The definition of “temporary absences” that is being proposed in the Code of Conduct suggests that “temporary absence” amounts to 12 hrs in a week. These proposed changes will serve to undermine and devalue the qualification I have received from the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. The vast experience I have gained in the last 40 yrs.

More seriously, it would have serious ramifications to the terms and conditions under which I am employed – reducing the amount of hours I can work in the absence of the pharmacist. The result of any reduction in those hours will in effect cause me to lose my employment as I will no longer be a useful resource upon which the pharmacist can rely on to operate his business on a day to day basis.

I cannot support or agree to these proposed changes and I would urge you to consider the implication and consequences of those changes not only to the livelihoods of Pharmaceutical Assistants like myself – but also to the effective operation of many pharmacies in particular to the small independent pharmacy who will potentially be losing a valuable resource and also highly experienced personnel. I hope the foregoing has been useful and I look forward to engaging with you in the future on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Geraldine McCarthy

203.	Siobhan Cadogan	
	<p style="text-align: right;">29/2/16</p> <p>To Whom It may Concern:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having worked as a qualified pharmaceutical assistant for over 30 years I object to attempts being made yet again to define “temporary absence”. • I embarked on this career in good faith and have worked in the temporary absence, ie not permanently, of the pharmacist covering lunchtime, days off and holidays. Any change will impact greatly on my employability and therefore my earnings. As a single woman this will be detrimental in the extreme. • This proposed downgrade of my qualification after years of loyalty to pharmacy and customers is unfair. • It is also unworkable. In the real world the unexpected happens, people get delayed after 12 hours cover am I to say “no” to someone in need of medication? How is this putting the public first? • I would also like to remind those putting this forward that they are dealing with people, individuals depending on their qualification to earn a living. This proposal will impact greatly on their ability to do so. • In conclusion I would also like to add that very little time has been given to us to address a proposal which will have such negative impact on pharmaceutical assistants position in pharmacy. <p>Yours faithfully</p> <p>Siobhan Cadogan</p>	
204.	Mary O’Neill	
		23/2/2016

	<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p> <p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant. I never agreed to the draft Code of Practice. I qualified in 1975, and have worked in my present employment the last twenty six years working 18-20 hours hrs a week. Hours worked weekly in “temporary absence” vary.</p> <p>I have worked according to the terms of my qualification under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890.- do not seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on own account.</p> <p>Cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferral and registration in 1975. At the time of conferral temporary absence was not defined and so conferral rights on me with regard to my employability.</p> <p>I have always been legally entitled to cover a pharmacist n their temporary absence for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover and sick leave etc.</p> <p>Cannot accept any diminition or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated/validated examined and privately run by the PSI. It seems unbelievable that the good body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 40 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Mary O Neill</p>	
205.	Thomas Pringle	
	<p>Temporary Absence Consultation</p> <p>A Chara,</p> <p>I wish to make a submission on the consultation on temporary absence currently being carried out by the</p>	

society.

I am very concerned at the proposed changes in this consultation. I believe that the changes proposed will fatally undermine the qualifications of Pharmaceutical Assistants already working for many years in pharmacies around the country. It appears to me that the current arrangements for temporary absence are adequate and work well. I have not seen any justification for the proposed changes that makes any sense and would like an explanation of what the problem is that these changes intend to resolve.

I believe that even from the point of view of pharmacists themselves that the new regulations will be unworkable and represent a significant change in work practices within pharmacies that could lead to the reduction in the number of Pharmaceutical Assistants. It would also make it very onerous for pharmacists to arrange for cover for themselves for temporary absences.

I would urge the society to scrap these proposed changes and maintain the current system into the future.

Yours faithfully,

206.	Tony O'Dowd	
	<p>Submission on Temporary Absence cover</p> <p>As a member of the public I wish to make submission on the above draft rules.</p> <p>As I understand it there are 11 rules most of which are definitions and not really up for discussion. I would have a problem with two rules ie Rules 6 and 7.</p> <p>I read that the PSI are looking for a "fair and workable "model and are trying to provide the public with the assurance of best pharmacy practice and patient safety.</p> <p>Rule 6</p> <p>The impression these rules give me is that the PSI considers that there is a risk that after 12 hours a week the Pharmacy assistant is no longer competent. If this is true I do not understand how they can be competent again the next week for another 12 hours. As a member of the public I am concerned that the PSI are sending mixed messages to the public as to whether these people are properly qualified. I would respectfully suggest that if the qualification is in doubt then the fault lies with the people who educated, examined and qualified this grade of people. Then I would ask who else did they qualify? Should we be looking at any other pharmacy qualifications?</p> <p>I also hear on the PSI website the definition of the role of the Supervising Pharmacist. It talks of using common sense when defining "whole time charge". I would determine that when the Supervising Pharmacist is not present in the shop that they are temporarily absent. Why can the same common sense not apply here?</p> <p>I do not understand the need for the Assistants to perform "skilled assistances" for a specified time on an ongoing basis. Once the Supervising Pharmacist is confident that a person is capable and competent that should be enough.</p> <p>The qualification that Assistants have has stood the test of time for over 100 years. I do not consider it fair to change the meaning</p>	

	<p>of what a qualification is when these people have been working in the profession for a minimum of 30 years. I do not believe that the PSI has the right to bring about the demise of an entire register of people them themselves qualified. This is exactly what will happen if these rules become law.</p> <p>I do not consider these rules to be “fair and workable” and in no way address any public safety issues. Do you think you are implementing these rules on my behalf.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p>	
207.	Josephine Patricia O’Neill	
	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>The 2016 proposed draft rules purporting to provide a "fair and workable model" for the definition of 11temporary absence" will not in my view provide a fair definition of the term.</p> <p>I am a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant with over 40 years experience in retail pharmacy. For many of these years I have worked on a full time basis and often whilst the pharmacist was temporarily absent. Presently I am employed on a part time basis...I work 22 hours per week and 6 of those are in temporary absence of the pharmacist,working alongside a pharmacy technician or a counter assistant;these 6 hours are late night opening on Thursday and Friday. I cover lunches on the days I work full days and on these days I work with another Pharmaceutical Assistant. I cover the pharmacist's day off and also cover anytime the pharmacist needs time off to attend meetings,lectures, parent teacher meetings,trips to wholesaler as well as annual leave or when the pharmacist is absent from the pharmacy to deliver prescriptions or when he is in the consultation room to give vaccinations or needs to have private consultations with a patient....i.e. when the pharmacist is "temporarily absent" from the business.</p> <p>When I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in 1972 "temporary absence" was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to my employability.I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover,sick leave etc.Temporary absence was exactly that..."the pharmacist temporarily absent" from the business. I have never sought to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my own behalf.</p>	

	<p>The proposed changes will have a huge impact on me in relation to employment and thus future earnings. In my view if I cannot provide cover for greater than 12 hours in any one week I am unemployable and my qualification is reduced to that of Pharmaceutical Technician and as such remuneration will be reduced to that of technician.</p> <p>Because of this I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post registration to a course that I undertook in good faith which was validated, examined and privately run by the P.S.I. It seems surreal that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 40 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.</p> <p>My recommendation is for the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association to take legal action to enforce the existing accepted definition of "temporary absence" to be maintained.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p> <p>Josephine Patricia O'Neill</p>	
208.	Fergus Brennan	
	<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>The proposed changes to rules defining temporary absence do not reflect that:</p> <p>The concept of 'temporary absence' has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice since 1890. It is synonymous with 'not in permanent charge', as outlined in the certificates conferred to PA by the PSI.</p> <p>Pharmacy practice is part of the 'real world', where normal life challenges arise such as sickness, funerals, traffic delays. Defining 'temporary absence' in concrete terms, i.e. exact hours, will make it an offence for PA to cover 5 minutes over 12 hours</p> <p>Narrowing the factual parameters pertaining to the practice of pharmaceutical assistants by prescriptive measures has the effect of interfering with an established right to practice on the part of pharmaceutical assistants, depriving loyal and responsible pharmacy professionals with over 35 years experience of the right to earn a living</p>	

	<p>Defining 'temporary absence' in terms of 'hours' will do nothing to advance 'safe pharmacy practice', subjecting PAs to mandatory CPO and Fitness to Practice will.</p> <p>As a practicing community pharmacist who has been on the PSI register for the last 29 years, I wholeheartedly support the Pharmaceutical Assistants in their efforts to retain the current sensible precedents, In the context of qualified assistants being subject to mandatory CPO and appropriate Fitness to Practice requirements.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>Fergus Brennan MPSI Registration</p>	
209.	John Minihan	
	<p>The 1994 Code of Practice agreement negotiated by the PSI Council and the Pharmaceutical Assistants Executive has been the Code of Practice adopted by Pharmacy, it was circulated to members and the subject of PSI inspections and interpretation since 1994. Its interpretation and intent was clear and it has become the de-facto regulation. If the intent of the proposed Statutory Instrument is to regularise what the 1890 Act provided for, together with the 1994 Code of Practice Agreement and the Pharmacy Act 2007 it should be done in a manner that is in keeping with the 1994 agreement, regardless of the assertion that this was 'more of an understanding than an agreement'.</p> <p>I find it disturbing that despite the many hours of discussions in the preparation of the 2007 Act by both the pharmacy profession, the PSI, the Dept of Health and indeed the legislative process that the 1994 Code of Practice agreement which underpinned the interpretation of this section of the act is now being set aside for a new interpretation which has no basis or rationale.</p> <p>I appreciate that there is a need to ensure current practice does not conflict with the 2007 Act and should not undermine the statutory role of the Pharmacist. In bringing forward this change. The statutory instrument should reflect in full the terms and conditions of the 1994 draft Code of Practice. To do otherwise effectively states to Pharmaceutical Assistants, that ' your competence and the manner in which you have conducted your duties since 1972 has</p>	

	<p>been reassessed and is no longer deemed acceptable' This brings into question the professional competence and integrity of Pharmaceutical Assistants in the eyes of the customers and patients they serve as well as the staff they work with. Furthermore it undermines their legitimate professional expectation, earnings and in my opinion is a disservice to the pharmacy 'profession'.</p> <p>By virtue of the fact that the Qualification ceased in 1985 we now have a limited number of Pharmaceutical Assistants who fall into the category and to now redefine their competence and ability is morally wrong. If the driving force behind these proposals is 'patient safety' a more balanced approach would be to ensure that all registered Pharmaceutical Assistants are subject to mandatory CPO and Fitness to Practice regulation instead of arbitrary time constraints which effectively say your competence is now "time specific".</p> <p>Whatever advice is driving the need to initiate change to the interpretation of the 2007 Act by way of Statutory Instrument, it should be made in such a way as to reflect the terms and conditions of Agreed Code of Practice that we all have worked to since 1994. To do otherwise is in conflict with the spirit of the Act as drafted, debated and passed through the Houses of the Oireachtas.</p> <p>The proposal to retrospectively interpret the 1994 Code of Practice agreement to fundamentally change the status of the Qualified Assistant is in my opinion misguided, unnecessary and serves to further undermine the profession of pharmacy in the eyes of those working in the profession, patients I customers and the wider public.</p> <p>Yours sincerely John Minihan 4th March 2016</p>	
210.	Brigid Edel O'Connell	
	<p>Submission in response to proposed draft rules-Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016</p> <p>The concept of 'temporary absence' has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice since 1890. It is synonymous with</p>	

	<p>'not in permanent charge', as outlined in the certificates conferred to PA by the PSI.</p> <p>Pharmacy practice is part of the 'real world', where normal life challenges arise such as sickness, funerals, traffic delays. Defining 'temporary absence' In concrete terms, I.e. exact hours, will make it an offence for PA to cover 5 minutes over 1 2 hours</p> <p>Narrowing the factual parameters pertaining to the practice of pharmaceutical assistants by prescriptive measures has the effect of interfering with an established right to practice on the part of pharmaceutical assistants, depriving loyal and responsible pharmacy professionals with over 3 5 years experience of the right to earn a living</p> <p>Defining 'temporary absence' in terms of 'hours' will do nothing to advance 'safe pharmacy practice', subjecting PAs to mandatory CPO and Fitness to Practice will.</p> <p>Edel O'Connell PA</p> <p>I wish to add that having worked as a PA in a professional confidential and compassionate manner given the nature of our jobs I find it insulting and demeaning to have my right to work undermined in this way. I urge you to address this matter by some other route such as suggested above.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Brigid Edel O'Connell</p>	
211.	Claire Archer	
	<p>Tuesday 1st March 2016</p> <p>To whom it concerns,</p> <p>My name is Claire Archer. I am the supervising pharmacist at XXXXXX XXXX. Please find attached the pre-written submission from</p>	

the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association. I would also like to add that I have worked alongside a Pharmaceutical Assistant for over ten years who has covered by days off, my holidays, my infrequent lunches and also inevitable 'emergencies'. She is experienced, reliable and highly professional and I feel that the proposed measures are an affront to her and all Pharmaceutical Assistants who have greatly contributed to the pharmacy profession for many years.

I also wonder whether this proposed definition of 'temporary absence' is based on specific evidence or rationale.

I am not entirely convinced that this measure will enhance patient safety, especially when I consider the caliber of Pharmaceutical Assistant that I have encountered, and indeed learned from, in my career to date.

Please note I am not a pharmacy owner so I do not have vested interests but I feel compelled to support my colleagues who justifiably feel that their profession is under threat.

Thank you,

Yours sincerely

Claire Archer M.P.S.I

Supervising Pharmacist, XXXXXX XXXX.

Submission in response to proposed draft rules-Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016

- The concept of 'temporary absence' has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice since 1890. It is synonymous with 'not in permanent charge', as outlined in the certificates conferred to PA by the PSI.
- Pharmacy practice is part of the 'real world', where normal life challenges arise such as sickness, funerals, traffic delays. Defining 'temporary absence' in concrete terms, i.e. exact hours, will make it an offence for PA to cover 5 minutes over 12 hours

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrowing the factual parameters pertaining to the practice of pharmaceutical assistants by prescriptive measures has the effect of interfering with an established right to practice on the part of pharmaceutical assistants, depriving loyal and responsible pharmacy professionals with over 35 years experience of the right to earn a living • Defining 'temporary absence' in terms of 'hours' will do nothing to advance 'safe pharmacy practice', subjecting PAs to mandatory CPO and Fitness to Practice will. 	
212.	Edwina Ledwik	
	<p>To Whom it may concern; We should show respect for PA's. I would like to add that in my experience the PA provided a valuable service when Irish Pharmacy was in need of help and continued to do so when pharmacists became more plentiful. He in small town Ireland where it is difficult to get a good quality locum to cover days off and holidays it is vital we have local PA's to help us out. Please do not offend these hardworking professionals as they near the end of their careers.</p> <p>Kind regards</p> <p>Edwina Ledwik</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Submission in response to proposed draft rules-Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of 'temporary absence' has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice since 1890. It is synonymous with 'not in permanent charge', as outlined in the certificates conferred to PA by the PSI. • Pharmacy practice is part of the 'real world', where normal life challenges arise such as sickness, funerals, traffic delays. Defining 'temporary absence' in concrete terms, i.e. exact hours, will make it an offence for PA to cover 5 minutes over 12 hours • Narrowing the factual parameters pertaining to the practice of pharmaceutical assistants by prescriptive measures has the effect of interfering with an established right to practice on the part of pharmaceutical assistants, depriving loyal and responsible pharmacy professionals with over 35 years experience of the right to earn a living 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining 'temporary absence' in terms of 'hours' will do nothing to advance 'safe pharmacy practice', subjecting PAs to mandatory CPO and Fitness to Practice will. 	
213.	Deirdre Fitzgerald, Eamon Murphy, Orla Slattery, Sinead Murphy	
	<p><u>Submission on the Draft Proposals for Pharmaceutical Assistants re Temporary Absence.</u> I write as a member of the public. I have had many dealing with a number of qualified pharmaceutical assistants over the years, and I have never had an issue with their qualification. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill in when the Pharmacist is not there. These assistants cover for Pharmacists on their days off, lunch times, holidays illness cover and other unforeseen absences.</p> <p>I do not see how it could now be considered 'fair and workable' for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed for a particular unforeseen reason. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist who is absent over the specified time. Would the pharmacy be then breaking the law?</p> <p>I do not understand why now it is felt necessary to change a law of a qualification which has been in place for over 30 years. Why is it deemed necessary to now change the law?</p> <p>Personally I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p>	
214.	Mat Deville, Sheila Sweeney, Joan Harding, Margaret Clarke, Charlei Dwane, Anne McCarthy, Eileen Moynihan, Timothy Moynihan, Philip Horan, Eamonn O'Connor & Cathleen O'Connor and others (not legible)	
	Submission on Draft Proposals re Temporary Absence	

	<p>I write as a member of the public and as a person who has worked in community pharmacy for over 30 years. I have worked with a number of qualified assistants over my years in pharmacy and never had an issue with their qualification. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill in when the Pharmacist is not there. I have worked with qualified assistants as they covered the Pharmacist -days off, lunch times, holiday's, illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. I also worked with Qualified Assistants when they did locums many times.</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use a "commonsense" approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising Pharmacists are concerned I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining "temporary absence"</p> <p>I do not see how it could be considered "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed, for example, returning from lunch or having a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist who is absent 1 minute after the 12 hours expires. Would the shop have to close or break the law?</p> <p>I do not understand how and how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 30-50 years post conferral. This qualification has stood for many years. Why is there a need to change it now?</p> <p>In short I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p>	
215.	Jennifer Scully, Noelle Cashin, Peter Going, Anne Marie Going, Patricia Conroy, Sharon McEvoy, Catherine Moore, Patrick Bourke, Jacintha Conroy, Robert Moore, Kathleen Bourke, Tom Conroy, Paul Ging, Claire Ging BSc, Noel Jennings, Mary Ging, Fergus Byrne, Serena Brennan, Shay Flannery, and others (not legible)	
	<p>I have recently learned of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland which seeks to impose a restriction on the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>I fundamentally disagree with this proposal as I feel that is a discriminatory and vindictive as it seeks to change a long established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p> <p>Given that the Pharmaceutical Assistants will cease to practice in the next 15 years, it seems unnecessary to now impose these</p>	

	<p>new conditions on a sector of employees who have acted at all times in a manner consistent with their qualification.</p> <p>Surely the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland can focus their energies on matters more urgently in need of their attention. The overpricing of medicines in Ireland relative to other countries for example would appear to be a matter more worthy of this level of scrutiny and attention.</p> <p>I am requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined above.</p> <p>Yours faithfully,</p>	
216.	<p>John Brown, Michael Burke, Michael Murphy, Fiona Burke Brian Burke, Claire Burke, Helen Flynn, Marie Burke and others (not legible)</p>	
	<p>Public Consultation on draft Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016</p> <p>To: Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland</p> <p>I have visited my local pharmacy throughout most of my life and have benefited greatly from the advice, services and medicines provided. Most of my dealings were with the qualified pharmaceutical assistant.</p> <p>I had always assumed the qualified pharmaceutical assistant had a secure, rewarding career, based on her professionalism, her knowledge and the respect with which she was treated by the pharmacy owner. I cannot imagine that she would have undertaken the four year course to become a qualified pharmaceutical assistant without the expectation of a lifelong fulfilling career.</p> <p>However, the Public Consultation on your website now seeks to severely restrict the number of hours per week the qualified pharmaceutical assistant may work and makes no mention at all of standing-in for the pharmacist on his holidays or for emergencies. I cannot understand why you are trying to do such damage to qualified pharmaceutical assistants, who have provided such a useful, helpful and safe service for so long and I ask that you withdraw this consultation document and instead facilitate and support qualified pharmaceutical assistants to replace the pharmacist in his temporary absence, without</p>	

	limits. Apparently the qualified pharmaceutical assistants' certificate, provided by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland and signed by its officers, guarantees this right.	
217.	Sandra Burke, Rita Malone and others (not legible)	
	<p>TO: Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland</p> <p>I have been a lifelong customer of my local pharmacy and during that time I have received much useful medical advice and have had many of my prescriptions dispensed by qualified pharmaceutical assistants.</p> <p>I see from the public consultation document on your website that you, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, are undertaking measures to restrict the work and limit the number of hours during which the qualified pharmaceutical assistant may replace the pharmacist. It has always been my understanding that qualified pharmaceutical assistants could perform all the duties of the pharmacist except own or manage the pharmacy. I cannot understand how a person is qualified and competent to dispense prescriptions and give advice for 12 hours and then be incompetent thereafter until next week!</p> <p>I am writing to object in the strongest terms to the proposals in this consultation document. Instead of attempting to enforce ageist and sexist discrimination, surely the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, in the 21st century should be facilitating and supporting these highly skilled and experienced professionals, so they can work without limits.</p>	
218.	<p>Rory McEvoy, Margaret Dunne, Grainne Dunne, Pat Kelly, Andy Dalton, Sean Delaney, John Kelly, Louise Kelly, Ange Delaney, Martha Dalton, Mia Arenace, Geraldine Duffy, Melissa Wood, A Bergin, Sheila Bergin, Dan O'Sullivan</p> <p>Eadaoin McEvoy, Anne Kelly, Margaret Kelly, Aileen Branagan, John Gorman, John Bracken, Pdraig Kelly, Karen Plunkett, Aisling Bracken, Gerard Kelly, Paul Kelly, Mary Butler, Patrick Kelly, Salvatore Mezzapelle, Joan Mezzapelle, Antoinne Mezzapelle, Roberto Mezzapelle, Darina Wallace, D Phelan, Seamus McEvoy</p> <p>Kathryn Phelan, Caroline Keane, Martina Lawless, Grant McEvoy, Elaine Kelly, Sheerean Connolly,</p>	

	Glenda Forde, Trevor Maher, Deirdre Holland, Deirdre Maher, Jamie-Ann Cuddihy, Pat Smyth, Sean Brennan, Orla Dunne, Carmel Hogan, Pat Dunne, Margaret Smyth, Grainne Feeney	
	<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p> <p>I have recently learned of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland which seeks to impose a restriction on the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>I fundamentally disagree with this proposal as I feel that is a discriminatory and vindictive as it seeks to change a long established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p> <p>Given that the Pharmaceutical Assistants will cease to practice in the next 15 years, it seems unnecessary to now impose these new conditions on a sector of employees who have acted at all times in a manner consistent with their qualification.</p> <p>Surely the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland can focus their energies on matters more urgently in need of their attention. The overpricing of medicines in Ireland relative to other countries for example would appear to be a matter more worthy of this level of scrutiny and attention.</p> <p>I am requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined above.</p> <p>Yours faithfully,</p>	
219.	Sean O'Murchu	
	<p>Dear Council members,</p> <p>As a customer for many years of P.A. XXXXXX XXXXXXXX whom I regard as being equally skilled and able as any pharmacist I would just like to add my voice to many and say <u>SHAME ON YOU!</u> To suddenly decide to change the rules of what a temporary absence</p>	28/2/16

	<p>entails after 126 years is not only reprehensible but shows a callous disregard for all those years when P.A.s supported pharmacists in their own careers throughout this land. I urge you all to think again.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Sean O Murchu</p>	
220.	Geraldine Walsh	
	<p style="text-align: right;">29/2/16</p> <p>To Whom it May Concern,</p> <p>I am a P.A. who took the examination in 1981. I have worked full time since then keeping up to date with Pharmacy developments and education. I have worked in my present position 40 hours per week for the last sixteen years. I work alongside two pharmacists (a husband and wife team). I cover their lunch, day off and their annual holidays (two weeks) since absence. I am at this stage very familiar with the running of their business, customer base and dispensary stock. They are always contactable when absent.</p> <p>I work within the current Code of Practice and feel that any devaluation of that code would have serious consequences for my present employment and any further employment</p> <p>Geraldine Walsh XXXXX</p> <p>(short unscheduled absence is also an essential cover)</p>	
221.	Margaret McLoughlin	
	<p style="text-align: right;">29 February 2016</p> <p>To Whom it may concern,</p>	

	<p>I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in 1974. This qualification entitled me to cover the “temporary absence” of the pharmacist. This I did fulltime up to 2004 and part time since then under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 I do not seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my own accord.</p> <p>I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification. When I was conferred temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights to me with regards to my employability. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for days off, holidays, etc.</p> <p>I cannot accept any dimi????? Or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated, validated examined and privately run by the PSI. It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 41 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Margaret McLoughlin</p>	
222.	Desmond Brady Pharmacist	
	<p style="text-align: right;">28/2/2016</p> <p>To Whom it may concern</p> <p>My name is Desmond Brady and live at XX XXXXXXXXXXX XXXXX, XXXXXXXX XXX. I am a qualified Pharmacist (XXXX) for over fifty years and a member of the IPU (XXXXX).</p> <p>I am shocked and saddened at the new proposals for the treatment of “Qualified Assistants”. I personally have worked alongside these “QA”s and find ???? them excellent and highly professional. To me they are the back bone ???? of pharmacy.</p> <p>Surely everybody once qualified has the right to work within the meaning of the Act.</p>	

	<p>Please give this your careful consideration.</p> <p>Thank you</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Desmond Brady MPSI</p>	
223.	Rita Gamble	
	<p>Rita Gamble</p> <p>RE: PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND (REGULATION OF TEMPORARY ABSENCE COVER BY PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANTS) RULES 2016</p> <p>Submission on Draft Proposals re Temporary Absence</p> <p>I write to you as a member of the public and as a person who has worked in community pharmacy for 33 years. I have worked with qualified Registered Pharmaceutical Assistant for the last 33 years. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill the role of a pharmacist in his/her temporary absence. Since the Pharmacy Act 1890 they have been permitted to cover the pharmacist's days off, lunch times, tea breaks, holiday's illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. At other times has done locum work in other pharmacies when requested to do so.</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use a "common sense" approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising Pharmacists are concerned, I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining "temporary absence".</p> <p>I do not see how it could be considered "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed, for example returning from lunch or having a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist who is absent 1 minute after the 12 hours expires. Would the shop have to close or break the law?</p> <p>I do not understand how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 30 to 50 years post conferral. This qualification has stood since the Pharmacy Act 1890. Why is there a need to change it now? This qualification has stood for many years. Why is there a need to change it now?</p>	

	<p>In short I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p>	
224.	<p>Vivienne Jervis</p>	
	<p>ivienne Jervis,</p> <p>RE: PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND (REGULATION OF TEMPORARY ABSENCE COVER BY PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANTS) RULES 2016</p> <p>Submission on Draft Proposals re Temporary Absence</p> <p>I write to you as a member of the public and as a person who has worked in community pharmacy for 29 years . I have worked with qualified Registered Pharmaceutical Assistant for the last 29???? years. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill the role of a pharmacist in his/her temporary absence. Since the Pharmacy Act 1890 they have been permitted to cover the pharmacist's days off, lunch times, tea breaks, holiday's illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. At other times has done locum work in other pharmacies when requested to do so.</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use a "common sense •approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising Pharmacists are concerned, I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining "temporary absence".</p> <p>I do not see how it could be considered "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed, for example returning from lunch or having a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist who is absent 1minute after the 12 hours expires. Would the shop have to close or break the law?</p> <p>I do not understand how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 30 to 50 years post conferral. This qualification has stood since the Pharmacy Act 1890. Why is there a need to change it now? This qualification has stood for many years. Why is there a need to change it now?</p>	

	<p>In short I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p>	
225.	Martina Wimsey	
	<p>The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, Fenian St., Dublin.</p> <p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I would like to make a submission to the Public Consultation on draft Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence cover by Pharmaceutical Assistant) Rules 2016.</p> <p>My submission is against these proposed rules. I have worked in pharmacy as a Counter Assistant for 40 years and for the past 27 of them I have worked with a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant. The shop we work in has seen many changes over the years, i.e. different qualified staff coming and going and changes to business hours.</p> <p>As the pharmacy is located in a rural area, our customers rely very much on the Assistant as she is the only constant and familiar face they recognise ,trust and value. Her experience and knowledge is very much appreciated by the customers. She is competent and reliable and the health, safety and wellbeing of the public is central to her work. Her work standards, in my opinion, is on a par with the qualified pharmacists I work with and has always been willing to share her experience and knowledge with them, which was very much appreciated.</p> <p>Temporary Absence has never been defined and I cannot understand, after 126 years, why the PSI is attempting to do so now. Nor can I understand the logic of being able to act in temporary absence for 12 hours and on the 13th hour not being able to cover.</p>	

	<p>Apart from all of the above, the undermining of these professionals by the PSI, in this fashion, is not only shameful and reprehensible. I would ask the PSI to reconsider their actions in a manner that is proactive in protecting this group of professionals instead of marginalising them to the extent that many will lose their jobs.</p> <p>Martina Wimsey.</p>	
226.	<p>Donald H Lea</p> <p>I have seen online the proposals to change the Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants Rules 2016.</p> <p>Article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights explicitly prohibits discrimination. This means that everyone is entitled to the equal enjoyment of all of the rights in the ECHR. Given that Pharmaceutical Assistants are predominantly female and that part-time workers within the profession are predominantly female, any attempt to impose minimum hours of service as part of the qualification of the conditions of exercise of the profession will have a far greater impact on women, violating the equality rights guarantee in the Constitution and under ECHR.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <hr/> <p>Donald H. Lea</p>	
227.	<p>Mary Reynolds</p> <p>SUBMISSION ON DRAFT RULES FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION RE "TEMPORARY ABSENCE"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant working in Community Pharmacy for 39 years. I served a three year period of tutelage to a registered pharmaceutical chemist followed by an academic course for a period of one academic year and passed my examination as prescribed by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. This course which was formulated, validated and examined by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland qualified me as a Pharmaceutical Assistant and entitled me to "transact business in the temporary absence of the Registered Pharmacist" but did not entitle me to conduct or manage a business or to keep open shop on my own account. • This is the context in which I worked for the past 39 years. I have never agreed to the draft Code of Practice which has no 	

legality and I certainly cannot agree to the proposed definition of "temporary absence" that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since 1977.

- Attempting to redefine "temporary absence" after 126 years for persons who have operated under original definition amounts to a downgrading of my qualification and has the potential to adversely affect my employment status.
- Narrowing the factual parameters pertaining to the practice of Pharmaceutical Assistants by prescriptive measures has the effect of interfering with an established right to practice on the part of the Pharmaceutical Assistant which attracts constitutional protection as both a personal and property right (Articles 40.3 and or 40)
- The Council of the PSI in its draft proposal for the definition of "temporary absence" wishes to provide public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety however the PSI has refused to include Pharmaceutical Assistants under mandatory CPD or Fitness to Practice. This would be far more beneficial to addressing patient safety than imposing arbitrary hours.
- I am extremely upset that the PSI who conferred upon me a qualification 39 years ago and allowed me to work in a specific manner for 39 years are now redefining the terms of my qualification. Shame on you!
- The "status quo" should remain while the current cadre of Pharmaceutical Assistants continue in employment.
- I do not support this draft proposal as it both downgrades and degrades the status of Pharmaceutical Assistants.



228.	Mary Lea	
	<p>I am a XXXXX XXXXX year old woman who is appalled to read the manner in which the livelihoods of women of my age and younger are being threatened by the PSI.</p> <p>Over the years I have received a thoroughly professional and caring service from the Qualified Assistants with whom I have come into contact. Surely it is better to be looked after by someone who knows me and my medical history than a locum who knows nothing about me? How is continuity of service to be ensured when Qualified Assistants can provide only twelve hours of cover a week and cannot cover holidays thereby necessitating the use of locums?</p> <p>Reading the proposals for change on the PSI site I note that the phrase, "Including 1anguage skills" is used. Qualified Assistants are all Irish born and qualified for over thirty five years. I simply do not understand what is being implied here.</p> <p>The idea that the PSI is now trying to downgrade a qualification that the Society itself awarded is mind blowing. I know of no other qualification which has been treated in such a disgraceful manner.</p> <p>The members of the PSI would doubtless regard themselves as members of a caring profession. In my view not much care is being taken of the Qualified Assistants who have worked in their profession in excess of 35 years. To see their qualification which has had legal standing for over a century downgraded diminishes them both personally and professionally. These people are at a time in their lives when they have family members still dependent on them financially for at least the next 10-15 years. Yet your proposals will result in making them less employable, depriving them of their ability to earn a living.</p> <p>I am very angry with the shabby manner in which these people who have provided such a sterling service are being treated by the PSI. Shame on you.</p>	
229.	P O'Reilly	
	<p>PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND (REGULATION OF TEMPORARY ABSENCE COVER BY PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANTS) RULES 2016</p> <p>SubmissiononDraftProposalsreTemporaryAbsence</p>	

	<p>I write to you as a family member of a Qualified Registered Pharmaceutical Assistant for the last 38 years. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill the role of a pharmacist in his/hers temporary absence. They have covered the pharmacist's days off, lunch times, tea breaks, holiday's illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. At other times has done locum work in other pharmacies when requested to do so.</p> <p>As the PSI prefer to use a "commonsense" approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising Pharmacists are concerned, I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining temporary absence".</p> <p>I do not see how it could be considered "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed, for example returning from lunch or having a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist who is absent 11 minutes after the 12 hours expires. Would the shop have to close or break the law?</p> <p>I do not understand how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 38 years post conferral. This qualification has stood since the Pharmacy Act 1890. Why is there a need to change it now? My family member has served pharmacy service well over the last 38 years with only 7 years still they will retire. Why is there a need to change it now?</p> <p>In short I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p>	
230.	Ciaran O'Reilly	
	<p>PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND (REGULATION OF TEMPORARY ABSENCE COVER BY PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANTS) RULES 2016</p> <p>Submission on Draft Proposals re Temporary Absence</p> <p>I write to you as a family member of a Qualified Registered Pharmaceutical Assistant for the last 38 years.. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill the role of a pharmacist in his/hers temporary absence. They have covered the pharmacist's day off, lunch times, tea breaks, holiday's illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. At other times has done locum work in other pharmacies when requested to do so.</p> <p>As the PSI prefer to use a "commonsense" approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising Pharmacists are concerned, I do</p>	

	<p>not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining "temporary absence".</p> <p>I do not see how it could be considered "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed, for example returning from lunch or having a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist who is absent 1 minute after the 12 hours expires. Would the shop have to close or break the law?</p> <p>I do not understand how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 38 years post conferral. This qualification has stood since the Pharmacy Act 1890. Why is there a need to change it now? My family member has served pharmacy service well over the last 38 years with only 7 years still they will retire. Why is there a need to change it now?</p> <p>In short I do not consider the draft proposal to be either fair or workable</p>	
231.	Mary Morris	
	<p>To the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society,</p> <p>I am a qualified pharmaceutical assistant. I have worked according to the terms of my qualification under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890, which entitled pharmaceutical assistants "to transact the business of a licentiate of the pharmaceutical society in his <u>temporary absence</u>, but shall not be entitled to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on their own account".</p> <p>I did not agree to the draft Code of Practice of 1994 which was never a legal document.</p> <p>My career in pharmacy spanned almost 40 years. Having qualified I worked for two years in Dublin in two pharmacies, covering days off, holidays, lunch hours and emergencies like funerals etc. I then moved back to the South East and worked in a pharmacy full time, but covering at least two days per week, plus lunch hours and holidays, and all other absences of the pharmacist. My next position was for approximately 14 years and still covered all of the temporary absences. I am, at present, employed in two pharmacies (for the past 20 years). I work with the pharmacist 2-3 days per week and cover days off, lunch hours, late openings and some of the holidays. This is all done very professionally and successfully and to the</p>	

	<p>satisfaction of my employers and customers alike. I have been complimented on my competence and professionalism at all times.</p> <p>I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification. At the time of my entering into the Pharmacy Assistants Course and Indeed my conferral, "temporary absence" was not defined and so, conferred onto me rights with regard to employability. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence.</p> <p>The proposed changes would have a detrimental effect on my career and employment and would greatly reduce my earning power. It seems to me that employers are being intimidated under the so called 1994 draft which was never legal. Also some of my colleagues have suffered loss of earnings because of intimidation by inspectors of the PSI. This is totally unjust and morally wrong, as pharmaceutical assistants are within their rights to cover in temporary absence as they have always done.</p> <p>In conclusion, I cannot accept any diminution of my qualification that was undertaken in good faith which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI. It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for almost forty years is now attempting to define the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I have been working illegally all those years. Please let us go on with our lives and continue to do the job that we qualified to do. In light of all this I ask you to rescind your draft proposal.</p>	
232.	Lena Townsend	
	<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>I have recently learned of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland which seeks to impose a restriction on the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants. •</p> <p>I fundamentally disagree with this proposal as I feel that it is discriminatory and vindictive as it seeks to change a long</p>	

	<p>established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p> <p>Given that the Pharmaceutical Assistants will cease to practice in the next 15 years, it seems unnecessary to now impose these new conditions on a sector of employees who have acted at all times in a manner consistent with their qualification.</p> <p>Surely the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland can focus their energies on matters more urgently in need of their attention. The overpricing of medicines in Ireland relative to other countries for example would appear to be a matter more worthy of this level of scrutiny and attention.</p> <p>I am requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined above.</p>	
233.	<p>Gabrielle Manton</p>	
	<p>I have recently learned of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland which seeks to impose a restriction on the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants. ↵</p> <p>I fundamentally disagree with this proposal as I feel that it is discriminatory and vindictive as it seeks to change a long established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p> <p>Given that the Pharmaceutical Assistants will cease to practice in the next 15 years, it seems unnecessary to now impose these new conditions on a sector of employees who have acted at all times in a manner consistent with their qualification.</p> <p>Surely the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland can focus their energies on matters more urgently in need of their attention. The overpricing of medicines in Ireland relative to other countries for example would appear to be a matter more worthy of this level of scrutiny and attention.</p> <p>I am requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined above</p>	
234.	<p>Noel O’Gorman</p>	

	<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>I have recently learned of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland which seeks to impose a restriction on the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants. 1</p> <p>I fundamentally disagree with this proposal as I feel that it is discriminatory and vindictive as it seeks to change a long established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p> <p>Given that the Pharmaceutical Assistants will cease to practice in the next 15 years, it seems unnecessary to now impose these new conditions on a sector of employees who have acted at all times in a manner consistent with their qualification.</p> <p>Surely the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland can focus their energies on matters more urgently in need of their attention. The overpricing of medicines in Ireland relative to other countries for example would appear to be a matter more worthy of this level of scrutiny and attention.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">•</p> <p>I am requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined above.</p>	
235.	Frances Baker	
	<p>I am writing in response to the proposed change to the working conditions of the pharmaceutical assistants, reducing the hours of cover to 12 hours in a week.</p> <p>I am 79 and have been getting my medications from my pharmacy for many, many years. The pharmacy consists of one pharmacist and a pharmaceutical assistant who covers when the pharmacist is away.</p> <p>I can get my medications any time and am most impressed with the standard of care of the pharmaceutical assistant. I have complete faith in her and what will I do if she is not there. Changing the law to a maximum of 12 hours in a week</p>	

	<p>will mean that the pharmaceutical assistant will not be able to cover annual leave and unplanned time off as she does now and therefore will not be able to fulfil her current role.</p> <p>I do not understand a reason to make this change and would be grateful if you would reply to tell me why and why do you now want to change the working conditions to make it impossible for a pharmaceutical assistant to hold their current job.</p>	
236.	Eithne Tennyson	
	<p>I write as a member of the public and as a person who has worked in community pharmacy for over 30 years. Over the years I have worked with a number of qualified assistants and have never found any issue with their qualifications. I have found them to be professional and competent as they fulfil the role of the pharmacist in their temporary absence.</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use a "common sense" approach when</p> <p>Defining "whole time charge" where supervising pharmacists</p> <p>are concerned, I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive</p> <p>When defining "temporary absence".</p> <p>I fail to see how it can be –"fair and workable" for one to be breaking the law should the 12 hours run out if the pharmacist got delayed. In this case who is guilty? The pharmacist or the qualified assistant. Would the shop have to close or risk breaking the law?</p> <p>I fail to see how it is now considered necessary to change the</p>	

	<p>Meaning of a Qualification 30 - 50 years after attaining qualification.</p> <p>Why Is there any need to change It now?</p> <p>1 do not consider these draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p>	
237.	Joanne Quinlan	
	<p>I have recently learned of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland which seeks to impose a restriction on the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants. ,</p> <p>I fundamentally disagree with this proposals I feel that it is discriminatory and vindictive as it seeks to change a long established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p> <p>Given that the Pharmaceutical Assistants will cease to practice in the next 15 years, it seems unnecessary to now impose these new conditions on a sector of employees who have acted at all times in a manner consistent with their qualification.</p> <p>Surely the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland can focus their energies on matters more urgently in need of their attention. The overpricing of medicines in Ireland relative to other countries for example would appear to be a matter more worthy of this level of scrutiny and attention.</p> <p>I am requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined above.</p>	

238.	Miriam Forde	
	<p>I have recently learned of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland which seeks to impose a restriction on the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants. 1</p> <p>I fundamentally disagree with this proposal as I feel that it is discriminatory and vindictive as it seeks to change a long established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p> <p>Given that the Pharmaceutical Assistants will cease to practice in the next 15 years, it seems unnecessary to now impose these new conditions on a sector of employees who have acted at all times in a manner consistent with their qualification.</p> <p>Surely the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland can focus their energies on matters more urgently in need of their attention. The overpricing of medicines in Ireland relative to other countries for example would appear to be a matter more worthy of this level of scrutiny and attention.</p> <p>...</p> <p>I am requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined above.</p>	
239.	Patrick Kilgarriff	
	<p>My Qualified Assistant has worked for me for 17 years. She also did her training with me. In my opinion she does not pose a health and safety risk. She knows customers and has provided them with a service for 17 years and they trust and value her experience.</p> <p>Temporary absence in my view is just that. A Qualified Assistant is a person who is competent to transact the business of the pharmacist in his /her temporary absence and also may operate to provide skilled assistance to pharmacist.</p> <p>Therefore I see no need to change the definition of temporary absence. In fact I think it will affect employment</p>	

	prospects of Qualified Assistants	
240.	Cathy Mullarkey	
	<p>am a Pharmaceutical Assistant qualified in 1977. I have worked since 1977 with a different understanding of temporary absence - that which is stated on my Cert. I have been employed in the same pharmacy since 1999. I work 5 days per week and cover the pharmacists lunch hour and day off. The proposed contract will change my relationship with my employer as I will no longer be able to provide cover for temporary absence as stated in draft rules.</p> <p>I do not seek to keep open shop or manage a business on my own account but have always worked according to the terms of my qualification. I do not agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification, a qualification bestowed on me by the PSI in 1977 and formulated and validated by the PSI and now seems to say that I have worked illegally for all those years. This will also have a big impact on my prospects for employment.</p>	
241.	Mary Ellard	
	<p>I write as a member of the public and as a person who has worked in community pharmacy for over 30 years. I have worked with a number of qualified assistants over my years in pharmacy and never had an issue with their qualification. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill in when the Pharmacist is not there. I have worked with qualified assistants as they covered the Pharmacists-days off, lunch times, holiday's, illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. I also worked with Qualified Assistants when they did locums many times.</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use a "common sense" approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising Pharmacists are concerned I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining "temporary absence"</p> <p>I do not see how it could be considered "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed, for example, returning from lunch or having a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist who is absent 1 minute after the 12</p>	

	<p>hours expires. Would the shop have to close or break the law?</p> <p>I do not understand and how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 30-50 years post conferral. This qualification has stood for many years. Why is there a need to change it now?</p> <p>In short I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p>	
242.	<p>Sinead Carron</p>	
	<p>RE: PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT' PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND (REGULATION OF TEMPORARY ABSENCE COVER BY PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANTS) RULES 2016</p> <p>Submission on Draft Proposals re Temporary Absence</p> <p>I write to you as a member of the public and as a person who has worked in community pharmacy for 25 years .I have worked with qualified Registered Pharmaceutical Assistant for the last 25 years. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill the role of a pharmacist in his/her temporary absence. Since the Pharmacy Act 1890 they have been permitted to cover the pharmacist's days off, lunch times, tea breaks,holiday's illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. At other times has done locum work in other pharmacies when requested to do so.</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use a "common sense "approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising Pharmacists are concerned. do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining "temporary absence".</p> <p>I do not see how it could be considered "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed, for example returning from lunch or having a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist who is absent 1 minute after the 12 hours expires. Would the shop have to close or break the law?</p> <p>I do not understand how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 30 to 50 years post conferral This qualification has stood since the Pharmacy Act 1890. Why is there a need to change it now? This qualification has stood for many years. Why is there a need to change it now?</p> <p>In short I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p>	

243.	Angela Smyth/Angela Kavanagh	
	<p>Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistant.. 1 message</p> <p>Angela Kavanagh <xxxxx@xxxxx.xxx> To: consultation@psi.ie</p> <p>To whom it concerns,</p> <p>Mon. Feb 29, 2016 at 7:13PM</p> <p>I wish to lodge a submission against the draft regulations concerning the above. History I am a qualified assistant and I have worked since 1978. I have worked in my current employment for the past 30 years. I never agreed to the draft Code of Practice. During this time I have NOT been working in accordance with the draft Code of Practice and have been employed on a different understanding of "temporary absence". Therefore I feel this new draft regulation will impact negatively on my employment prospects. I have always worked under the terms of my qualification as described under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890- "do not seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my own account" but may provide professional cover in the "temporary absence" of the pharmacist.</p> <p>Impact of implementation.</p> <p>The implementation of this draft would downgrade my qualification and I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith, which was formulated, validated, examined and run by the PSI.</p> <p>In fact this course was endorsed and promoted by my master tutor at the time. Having been conferred with my qualification and was registered with the PSI had an expectation of where my career path should go and I feel it is unacceptable of the PSI to "change the goalposts" now. Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights explicitly prohibits discrimination. The PSI by enforcing these draft regulations is discriminating against a group of workers who are predominantly female and part time workers by imposing minimum hours of service as part of</p>	

a pre obtained qualification which was obtained under different rules at the time of qualification.
The logic behind these draft regulations makes no sense.How can I be qualified to cover for 12 hours and not for 13 hours?
It will actually be an offence to work for 13 hours a week.
It will become impossible for an employer to employ someone who by no fault of their own may commit an offense by working for 12 hours and 5 mins.
Every pharmacy has a supervising pharmacist who works fulltime and I feel rather than defining "temporary absence" by hours it would make much better sense to say the Qualified Assistant may cover when the supervising pharmacist is absent.

Current employment

In my current position I have worked in the "temporary" absence of a pharmacist " for the last 30 years..
I have used my professional judgment on a daily basis and I have never posed a health and safety risk. I have always kept up to date with CPO and in fact I have proved an immense source of information for all the newly qualified pharmacists (and not so newly qualified) that have passed through in those 30 years.
I understand patient safety and safe pharmacy practice forms the basis of these draft rules ,however we as Pharmaceutical Assistants would welcome compulsory CPO and Fitness to Practice. We are a professional body and therefore should be treated so.
Over the years I have built up a brilliant customer relationship and many customers have benefited hugely from my vast experience and knowledge. This is crucial to patient safety.

I have acted in the "temporary absence" of the pharmacist at some stage every working day. Whilst the pharmacist had a tea break ,lunch break, went to a wedding ,funeral or holiday,or it may have been that the pharmacist was in the consultation room and was unavailable to oversee the sale of certain items.
On the basis of my current working arrangements the proposed draft regulations would be unworkable.

I hope you will give my submission a lot of consideration and realise the impact your proposals will have on my future and that of my Qualified Assistant colleagues .

The timing of the draft has not allowed any consultation with my local TD due to election business .I would like to maintain the right to further negotiations after the submission deadline if required. Yours Sincerely
Angela Smyth

244.	Carmel O'Loinsigh	
	<p>I wish to make a submission on the draft proposals on temporary absence. I read that the PSI are looking for a fair and workable model. I do not see anything fair or workable in these draft proposals. I do not understand how anybody could think it is fair to change completely the meaning of a qualification more than 30 years after the qualification is awarded. I don't know of any other profession that would treat their registrants in this disgraceful way.</p> <p>Qualified Assistants were educated and examined by the very Organisation that is now bringing the qualification into question. The fact that qualified assistants are not subject to fitness to practice is not the fault of the assistants rather it shows how the Pharmaceutical Society are not performing their duty of care to the public. It would serve a much better purpose to regulate properly and not act in a callous way that will completely undermine almost 400 people's right to use their qualification.</p> <p>The word temporary means a period of time with no upper or lower limit. That is what was understood when assistants undertook to do the 4 year course they did. It is unfair to change that understanding now. To go from being able to cover a pharmacist's day off, lunch breaks, holidays, sick leave and any unplanned absence to just 12 hours per week with no exceptions will make most assistants unable to perform the job they were employed to do.</p> <p>I do hope the PSI will come to see sense and see what any fair minded person can see. These draft proposals are far from fair and workable.</p> <p>Carmel O'Loingsigh</p>	
245.	Emily Kelly	
	<p>I am a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant since 1979 and have been working for the past 35 years in retail pharmacy.</p> <p>When I qualified and received my diploma, I was eligible to be employed under section 6 of the 1994 Agreement in a pharmacy "on a permanent basis for not less than 15 hours per week and could cover annual leave of a pharmacist that did not exceed 14 calendar days in any one single episode".</p> <p>I have always been legitimately entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence, days off, sick leave etc.</p> <p>The proposed changes in Rule 2016 will limit the work of a P.A. and thus change their working lives. I work part time, i.e. 22 and a half hours per week. I worked according to the terms of my qualification under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890, and I do not</p>	

	<p>seek to "manage or conduct a business or keep open a shop on my own account".</p> <p>I cannot agree to a definition of "temporary absence" that diminishes my qualification which was endorsed by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. It is unthinkable that the Institution that conferred a qualification that allowed me to work in a certain aspect now try to limit the terms of that qualification.</p> <p>The understanding of the term "temporary absence" has existed for many years where the pharmacist is elsewhere on a temporary basis. There is no logic of been able to work in "temporary absence" for 12 hours and then on the 13th hour, not been able to cover.</p> <p>There is also the impact of the woman's right to social, economic and cultural rights that would be thus confined in her right to work.</p>	
246.	Nora White, Angela Long & Ashling Reilly	
	<p>I write as a member of the public and as a person who has worked in community pharmacy for over 30 years. I have worked with a number of qualified assistants over my years in pharmacy and never had an issue with their qualification. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill in when the Pharmacist is not there. I have worked with qualified assistants as they covered the Pharmacist's days off, lunch times, holiday's, illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. I also worked with Qualified Assistants when they did locums many times.</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use a "common sense" approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising Pharmacists are concerned I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining "temporary absence"</p> <p>I do not see how it could be considered "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed, for example, returning from lunch or having a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist who is absent 1 minute after the 12 hours expires. Would the shop have to close or break the law?</p>	

	<p>I do not understand how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 30-50 years post conferral. This qualification has stood for many years. Why is there a need to change it now?</p> <p>In short I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p>	
247.	<p>Donal O'Lamgigh</p>	
	<p>I write as a member of the public and as a person who has worked in community pharmacy for over 30 years. I have worked with a number of qualified assistants over my years in pharmacy and never had an issue with their qualification. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill in when the Pharmacist is not there. I have worked with qualified assistants as they covered the Pharmacist's days off, lunch times, holiday's, illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. I also worked with Qualified Assistants when they did locums many times.</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use a "common sense" approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising Pharmacists are concerned I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining "temporary absence"</p> <p>I do not see how it could be considered "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed, for example, returning from lunch or having a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist who is absent 1 minute after the 12 hours expires. Would the shop have to close or break the law?</p> <p>I do not understand how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 30-50 years post conferral. This qualification has stood for many years. Why is there a need to change it now?</p> <p>In short I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p>	

248.	James Williamson	
	<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p> <p>Just a short note to say that I have my son doing medicine in XXXXXX and would like to continue working part-time, as I am on the State pension (€xxx weekly), for another few years.</p> <p>My record has been good, as you should know, and all my employers (pharmacists) have been happy with my work.</p> <p>Our jobs in pharmacy are in jeopardy as you have issued directives ?? to pharmacists concerning our work status, which you are attempting to diminish ??.</p> <p>I'm told many Assistants have lost their jobs already. My work-days are greatly diminished also.</p> <p>There are not too many of us left and it seems wrong to do this to a loyal and very able group and well qualified people.</p> <p>Reducing our work status is wrong and nobody wants to go the legal route to resolve this issue.</p> <p>However we cannot allow an injustice to be carried through. Even to give postal courses or courses through the internet to update Q.As ?? in the more recent developments in pharmacy is a much better idea.</p> <p>Anyway to diminish ??? our legal limits and still take our fees is a further slight ????? on us also. Nobody wants the courts.</p> <p>Yours</p> <p>Jim Williamson</p> <p>Please excuse writing</p> <p>We could be included in the Continue Education (Pharmacy) Programme as long as they were pitched at a <u>low</u> fee.</p>	
249.	Mary R	

To qualify as a pharmaceutical assistant I served my apprenticeship, studied, sat & passed the examinations as set and approved by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. Now after practising my qualification full time for 39 years, I am aghast to learn that the PSI is attempting to restrict my ability to work at what has been and continues to be my lifetime career as well as my sole means of income.

This is all the more serious and indeed upsetting considering that I have been recently widowed and am a lone breadwinner. The PSI has not got the right either legally or morally to force a situation in which I could be made redundant which is effectively what you appear to be trying to achieve.

Indeed the record shows that the Society's attitude to the pharmaceutical assistants over a long number of years has been antagonistic and hostile. We have regularly been subjected to disparagement and stress during inspections when the inspectors have constantly tried to impose limits on the extent of our cover, despite we being legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence, on their days off, during holidays and during sick leave.

Indeed there is no evidence to suggest that pharmaceutical assistants have been other than competent *and* capable in carrying out their duties at all times, which makes it difficult to understand why the council would continue to plot behind closed doors to remove our livelihood and effectively negate our qualifications and our right to continue to work at our chosen profession.

There is clearly a contract between us in regard to which you are seeking to avoid honouring your obligations in respect of. As our professional regulatory body you have a clear and undeniable obligation to respect and protect the entitlements and rights which you awarded us on completing your own recognised training and qualifying process.

For me personally, any attempt to further restrict my rights to work as a pharmaceutical assistant and thereby deny me the right and ability to earn a living is totally unacceptable and constitutes a breach of the contract between us, and for which I will hold the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland wholly accountable.

I also fail to understand why the Council are unwilling to engage openly on this matter with the PAA in a fair and transparent manner, affecting as it does the livelihood and futures of each individual member..

250.	Olive Thompson	
	<p>I am a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant and have worked in my present job for the past 25 years. I never agreed to the draft Code of Practice but have been employed based on a different understanding of 'temporary absence'. I presently work 32 hours each week in the same pharmacy and am working 41 years as a qualified assistant.</p> <p>In my opinion an assistant who is working permanently in a pharmacy knows the customers, doctors and their prescribing habits and is a better position than some pharmacist who comes in as a locum who very often has no interest or commitment or loyalty to a patient.</p> <p>Having worked according to the terms of our qualification under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 it is very unfair to reduce the terms of my qualification. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover and for sick leave etc. It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 40 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.</p> <p>There seems to me no logic in saying one can carry on for 12 hours and one minute later it is illegal.</p> <p>The proposed changes could impact hugely on my employment and earnings.</p> <p>Olive Thompson (P.A.)</p> <p>PS A permanent Pharmaceutical Assistant knows the customers and the customers trust that Assistant who has provided them with a service for many years.</p> <p>O.T.</p>	
251.	Pauline Comack	
	<p>I write to you as a family member of a Qualified Registered Pharmaceutical Assistant for the last 38 years. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill the role of a pharmacist in his/her temporary absence. Since the Pharmacy Act 1890 they have been permitted to cover the pharmacist's days off, lunch times, tea breaks, holiday's illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. At other times has done locum work in other pharmacies when requested</p>	

	<p>to do so.</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use a "common sense" approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising Pharmacists are concerned, I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining "temporary absence".</p> <p>I do not see how it could be considered "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed, for example returning from lunch or having a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist who is absent 1 minute after the 12 hours expires. Would the shop have to close or break the law?</p> <p>I do not understand how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 38 years post conferral. This qualification has stood since the Pharmacy Act 1890. Why is there a need to change it now? My family member has served the pharmacy service well over the last 38 years with only 7 years until she will retire. Why is there a need to change it now?</p> <p>In short I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p>	
252.	Aideen Gillen	
	<p>I write to you as a family member of a Qualified Registered Pharmaceutical Assistant for the last 38 years. My understanding of the qualification is that they are competent to fill the role of a pharmacist in his/her temporary absence. Since the Pharmacy Act 1890 they have been permitted to cover the pharmacist's days off, lunch times, tea breaks, holiday's illness cover and any other unforeseen absences. At other times has done locum work in other pharmacies when requested to do so.</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use a "common sense" approach when defining "whole time charge" where Supervising Pharmacists are concerned, I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining "temporary absence".</p> <p>I do not see how it could be considered "fair and workable" for a person to be at risk of breaking the law should their 12 hours run out if the Pharmacist got delayed, for example returning from lunch or having a family emergency. In such a case who would be guilty of the offence? The Qualified Assistant or the Pharmacist</p>	

	<p>who is absent 1 minute after the 12 hours expires. Would the shop have to close or break the law?</p> <p>I do not understand how any fair minded person could consider it fair to change utterly the meaning of a qualification 38 years post conferral. This qualification has stood since the Pharmacy Act 1890. Why is there a need to change it now? My family member has served the pharmacy service well over the last 38 years with only 7 years until she will retire. Why is there a need to change it now?</p> <p>In short I do not consider the draft proposals to be either fair or workable.</p>	
253.	Marian S Kelly	
	<p>I write as a member of the public who has worked in community pharmacy with a number of qualified assistants over 35 years and have not had an issue with their qualification. I understand they are competent to fill in when a pharmacist is not on the premises when they work and also when they do locums.</p> <p>I can't understand what is "fair" when the "12 hours" run out! What would the PSI suggest if a number of these cases are only minimal over the "time" Are the pharmacists and the assistant breaking the law.</p> <p>Almost all these assistants are within retiring age so why question their qualification now!!</p> <p>This proposal draft is unfair and unworkable.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Marian S Kelly</p>	
254.	Anonymous Pharmaceutical Assistant	
	<p>I am a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant. I qualified in 1978. I did not agree to the draft Code of Practice and have not been working in accordance with it. My employment is based on a different understanding of "Temporary Absence".</p> <p>I have worked as a Pharmaceutical Assistant for the past 38 years, with 28 of those in my present place of employment. I have</p>	

	<p>always worked according to the terms of my qualification under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890.</p> <p>I cannot agree to a definition of “Temporary Absence” that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferral and Registration in 1978. At that time, “Temporary Absence” was not defined so conferred rights on me with regard to my employability. I have always been entitled, legally, to cover for a Pharmacist in their “Temporary absence for their Entitlements to days off, holiday cover, sick leave etc. I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI. It seems unbelievable that the Body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 38 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally for all those years.</p> <p>As I am qualified to work in the absence of a pharmacist, logically I can do that for any number of hours.</p> <p>From a Health and Safety point of view it would be logical for Pharmaceutical Assistants to be included in “Fitness to Practise” and CPD but apparently this is impossible according to the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland.</p>	
255.	Anna McCarthy	
	<p>As a qualified Assistant since the late 1970s it seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to wor in a specific manner for the past thirty five years is now trying to change the terms in a way that would suggest I was working illegally for those years.</p> <p>I cannot accept that this qualification post conferral which I undertook in good faith which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI may be changed.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Anna McCarthy</p>	

256.	Thomas Kennedy	
	<p>All Pharmaceutical Assistants are aware that they are “entitled to transact the business of _____ of the Pharmaceutical Society in his/her Temporary Absence but shall not be entitled to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on their own account”.</p> <p>Qualified Assistants realise that the term Temporary Absence” can be interpreted in many ways.</p> <p>Traditionally the Qualified Assistants has covered short absences by the Pharmacist and this has worked well down through the years in the profession.</p> <p>I am a Qualified Assistant who was trained in accordance with the Rules of the Society and duly examined and given to understand that I am competent and entitled to transact the business of the Pharmacist during his Temporary Absence.</p> <p>I am permanently employed give days a week in the same Pharmacy for the past forty years since 1976 (under two ownerships).</p> <p>Both proprietors have felt that I have been capable of covering their brief periods of temporary Absence with no danger to public health and maintaining Safe pharmacy Practise by doing so and I’m sure the same applies to all other Qualified Assistants.</p> <p>Having qualified in 1972 I am close to retiring as a lot of Pharmaceutical Assistants are. There is still a large number of Assistants who will have many more years of work and I feel the proposed changes will reduce the earning power of Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical Assistants have and do give loyal service to the Pharmacies in which they work and I think it would be unfair and unjust to define Temporary Absence as 12 hours.</p> <p>I have enjoyed my life working within the Pharmacy profession and hope to work for several more years.</p> <p>I realise that the profession is evolving and would be delighted if a fair approach to the matter will be taken in view of the service that I and all other Qualified Assistants have given to the Profession.</p> <p>In a few short years the tradition of the Qualified Assistant will have expired and the question of Temporary Absence will no longer</p>	

	<p>exist.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Thomas Kennedy (Qualified Assistant Reg No XXXXX)</p> <p>PS I served my apprenticeship with the late David R_____ MPSI, XXXXX, XX. XXXXXXXX who was a silver medallist and an examiner for the Society for several yeasers.</p>	
257.	Breda Dunne	
	<p>I wish to make the following submission to the Council of the PSI regarding the issue of Temporary Absence and the Pharmaceutical Assistants. I qualified as an Assistant to a pharmaceutical chemist in May 1976. – Certified by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland and conferred on me under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890. For the past 40 years I have worked within the parameters of my qualification. I currently work 25 hours per week, usually working about 16 hours in the temporary absence of the Pharmacist.</p> <p>As a pharmaceutical Assistant I never agreed to and never worked in accordance with the draft Code of Practice which as it turns out is not a legal document. I have worked in the temporary absence of the Pharmacist – As is my entitlement.</p> <p>The effects of the draft will need to be examined. It will greatly affect the livelihoods of the PAs. I can and need to work until retirement age as do many PAs, who have little or no pension. This could result in redundancy for PAs.</p> <p>I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification – one that I have worked to since my conferral and registration in 1976.</p> <p>I cannot accept any diminution of my qualification which was formulated, validated and examined by the PSI.</p> <p>I am requesting that the PSI reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal.</p>	

	<p>Yours faithfully</p> <p>Breda Dunne.</p>	
258.	Mary O’Rafferty	
	<p>I am writing to you about the proposed changes to my status as a Qualified Assistant. I have worked very hard all through my career and put every effort into care, attention and detail always as regards my work!</p> <p>I was made redundant in recent years in a pharmacy which had to close down due to new pharmacy openings and competition etc. I had left a job I had been in for about eighteen years to take up a position in that pharmacy.</p> <p>Since then I work in two different pharmacies on a part time basis and am very glad to get an extra days work when offered it. Under the proposed changes to “temporary absence” I will not be able to do this. After all my years in pharmacy this will have a major effect on my life and financial situation. My certificate states that I am qualified to “transact the business of a pharmaceutical chemist during _____ “temporary absence”. This has never been defined. How could the Pharmaceutical Society award me a qualification and then diminish that status?</p> <p>Personally I check all details presented to me to the best of my ability. If in doubt I check with the pharmacist, doctor or whoever I need to get in contact with. I am extremely concerned (CONCERNED) about the safety of the customer as if it was a member of my own family I was dispensing for!</p> <p>I hope you will think deeply about the consequences for Qualified Assistants if proposed changes are implemented. Life is hard enough with the recession and the cost of living including registration fee to the Pharmaceutical Society. I just want to be able to pay my bills and expenses and live a simple life – not anything extravagant or outlandish.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Mary O Ra__erty</p>	

259.	Daragh Corby	
	<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>Regarding the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016 Draft, I would make the following observations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) “Temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week”. Qualified Assistants who cover a Pharmacist’s day off in the average pharmacy (which is often for 9 hours per day), in addition to his/her statutory lunch breaks (5 hours per 5 day week), and two periods of 15 mins per working day (ie 2 ½ hrs per 5 day week) will be doing so far 16 ½ hours per week. This does not include unscheduled short absences such as delivery of medicines by the Pharmacist to a patient’s home etc. It would also appear that no longer can a qualified assistant cover a pharmacist’s annual leave. It would seem obvious therefore that this restriction to 12 hours per week would make a qualified assistant’s position redundant in the average pharmacy, or at the very least lead to a significant pay reduction as their status would be severely diminished. (2) The 12 hour restriction implies that a crime will have been committed if the qualified assistant works 15 minutes more than the 12 hours eg if the pharmacist is delayed in returning from his/her lunch. (3) Pharmaceutical Assistants have an established right to practice, and I suspect that any arbitrary changes to this right would be unconstitutional. The relevant Minister who would sign such regulations, would most likely be acting beyond his legal power or in legal terms ultra vires. (4) If such changes are in fact legal, and Pharmaceutical assistants are as a result made redundant etc, the issue of compensation will arise, and I would be fearful that the PSI will end up on the hook. <p>I wish you well with your deliberations and hope that a fair and workable solution for all parties involved can be reached.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Daragh Corby</p>	
260.	Anne Costello	

	<p>To Whom it may concern,</p> <p>I do not agree with the proposed rules to define temporary absence. As a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant with over 32 years experience I do not seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my own account.</p> <p>I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification. I have worked in pharmacy since 1983 and I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence. I have been working part time in the same pharmacy for over 20 years. I have been working according to the guidelines set down by the PSI.</p> <p>I consider myself a very valuable member of the pharmacy team and in the absence of the pharmacist conduct the business of the pharmacy in a professional and safe manner. I do not consider myself a health and safety risk and strive to deliver a safe service to all who come into the pharmacy.</p> <p>If this change is made, my terms of employment will change and I consider it unfair to be at risk of breaking the law should my 12 hours run out if the pharmacist is delayed for any reason. In that case who is guilty of the offence, the pharmacist or the Qualified Assistant? Would the shop close or do you break the law?</p> <p>The qualification has stood for many years and this change will change the terms and conditions of employment which could result in unemployment for me and my colleagues.</p> <p>In short I do not consider the draft proposal to be fair or workable.</p> <p>Sincerely</p> <p>Anne Costello</p>	
261.	Tony Buckley	
	<p>My wife has worked in Pharmacy for 40 years has qualified for 30 of them. She has worked with the Pharmacist for 32 hours of 40 hours per week.</p> <p>Customers know and trust the pharmaceutical assistant who has provided them with service for all the 40 years.</p>	

	<p>The business values and recognises the pharmaceutical assistants years of experience.</p> <p>“Temporary absence was not an issue when she qualified why is it now”</p> <p>The interpretation of “Temporary Absence” that has stood for many years is where the pharmacist is away from the pharmacy on a temporary basis.</p> <p>Tony Buckley</p>	
262.	Gwen Poole	
	<p>To whom it may concern</p> <p>I wish to object to the proposal to define “Temporary Absence”.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical Assistants qualified with the understanding that they could cover for pharmacists as above. The new proposal is far too limiting and also unjust, as it downgrades their qualification, endangers their ability to find employment, and therefore earn a living.</p> <p>Since the P.A. course is no longer, and afters years of loyal service. They should be recognised to fill the current criteria without further demands.</p> <p>I feel that they should be left to work, as they have been professionally.</p> <p>Yours truly</p> <p>Gwen Poole</p>	
263.	Gillian Houg	
	<p>To Whom it may Concern</p> <p>Re: Proposal to Define “Temporary Absence”</p>	

	<p>Pharmaceutical Assistant qualified with the understanding that they could cover for Pharmacists as above.</p> <p>The new proposal is far too limiting and I would think unjust. It down-grades their qualifications, endangers their ability to find employment and therefore earn a living.</p> <p>I would wonder if it is ever lawful. I have dealt with Pharmaceutical Assistants for many years and think they are invaluable.</p> <p>Yours faithfully</p> <p>Gillian Houg</p>	
264.	Morian Grennan	
	<p>I am a registered pharmaceutical assistant XXXXX for the passed 40 years. I am 30 years working for my present employer. I have worked according to the terms of my qualification under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890. I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification.</p> <p>AT the time of my conferral temporary absence was not defined. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover and for sick days etc. I cannot accept any diminution of this qualification that I undertook in good faith which was formulated/validated examined and privately run by the PSI. It seems unbelievable that, the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 40 years is now defining the terms of its qualification, in a manner that would suggest I was illegally working for the past 40 years.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Morian Grennan</p>	
265.	Joanne McGrath	
	<p>I am writing to you as a superintendent pharmacist who has employed a pharmaceutical assistant for the last 3 years. In that time we have worked closely together and I recognise and greatly value the pharmaceutical assistant's wealth of knowledge and years of experience. In my professional judgement these far outweigh my own and those of many locums with minimum experience</p>	

	<p>and no knowledge of my customers and business.</p> <p>My interpretation of “temporary absence” is that which has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice since 1890. It is synonymous with “not in permanent charge,’ ie ‘not conduct business on own accord’ (as outlined on pharmaceutical assistant’s certificate of qualification from the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland.</p> <p>I operate in a small rural village where already we are feeling the effects of pressure on rural GP services. I find it very difficult to get locum cover for holidays, maternity leave etc... as young pharmacists are not available or not willing to work outside urban centres. Therefore a pharmaceutical assistant gives me an opportunity to tackle the ever-expanding ‘regulatory’ side of the business and to achieve a far greater work-life balance.</p> <p>My position as ‘sole trader’ would become untenable should the pharmaceutical assistant be no longer ‘qualified’ to cover for more than 12 hours in any one week. I operate in the real world with real financial and time constraints and where normal life challenges arise such as sickness, funerals etc...I believe I am also entitled to one or two weeks annual leave when I am away from the business altogether. I would feel much more at ease knowing my pharmaceutical assistant is covering in my ‘temporary absence’ than an emergency locum with no knowledge or experience of my business.</p> <p>In summary defining ‘temporary absence’ in concrete terms, exact hours etc..lacks logic or knowledge of the real world. It would do nothing to advance ‘safe pharmacy practice’ and ‘patient care’ which I hope the PSI would promote on my behalf.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Joanne McGrath</p> <p>MPSI XXXX</p>	
266.	Adrienne O’Keeffe	
	<p>To Whom It may Concern</p> <p>I am a registered Assistant Pharmacist No XXXXX. I enclose a copy of my certificate. I have paid my registration fee every year since I qualified. As one of almost 400 Qualified Assistants 200 of whom are still working, I wish to tell you that your proposal to</p>	

	<p>define "Temporary Absence" will make us a professional body unable to practise.</p> <p>It would actually be illegally for you to carry out this proposal.</p> <p>We are already loosing earnings and some of us will loose our jobs if this proposal is carried through.</p> <p>This cannot be fair</p> <p>Yours</p> <p>Faithfully</p> <p>Adrienne J O'Keeffe (nee Brophy)</p>	
267.	Alison Vincent	
	<p>To the Registrar and Qualification Unit</p> <p>It was with grave concern that I see that the PSI wishes to define "temporary absence", for pharmaceutical assistants given that this matter was previously dealt with in the High Court on 27th February 1985, before Justice Costello, please find attached Court Ruling.</p> <p>It is my understanding that temporary absence may not be defined or purported to be defined. See section 1(a).</p> <p>Also that "temporary absence" should if necessary be a matter for interpretation by a competent court, in a particular case, see section 1 (c). I feel that any attempt by the Pharmaceutical Society to define temporary absence is diminutive of status, an erosion of statutory rights and therefore constitutes restrictive practise.</p> <p>As a consequence it would not promote the economic and professional welfare of all qualified pharmaceutical assistants, in particular those who work part-time.</p> <p>My qualification as a pharmaceutical assistant was not something I bestowed on myself. It was earned after completion of 4 years study and examination as set out by the PSI in 1981.</p>	

	<p>I have previously forwarded the details of this court case to the PSI and did not receive any acknowledgement of same.</p> <p>As my qualification is gov_____ by a stat_____, the actions of the Society in my opinion are repugnant to the constitution and EU Regulations</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Alison Vincent Reg XXXXX</p> <p>Two page enclosure The High Court Wednesday 27 February 1985 before Mr Justice Costello</p>	
268.	Willie O'Dea	
	<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p> <p>I write in regard to XXXXXX of XXXXXXXX who contacted me recently in regard to the role of Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>I submit a copy of Ms XXXXX's comments below for your information.</p> <p>From: "XXXXXXX" To: <XXXXXX.XXXX@XXXXXXXXXX.ie> Date 03/03/2016 00:08</p> <p>Subject:- -</p> <p>Public Consultation re-role of Pharmaceutical Assistants</p> <p>Dear Mr Willie O'Dea</p> <p>As you may know, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) currently have a Public Consultation process open (http://www.thepsi.ie/consultations.aspx) on their draft rules for Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants. I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in 1981 and the clear understanding of all in the Retail Pharmacy business at that time was that I and my colleague Assistants were authorised to dispense prescriptions and offer patient advice equally with a</p>	

	<p>Pharmacist. The single restriction placed on the role was that we could not open or manage a Pharmacy in our own right. On that basis, it was totally legitimate and very common practice that a Pharmaceutical Assistant (or Qualified Assistant, as we were known) could cover for the Pharmacist with the implication that there was a Pharmacist running the outlet who was absent. There was no definition in place of what length of absence was permitted.</p> <p>In their recent proposal to redraft the rules to define this Temporary Absence, the PSI have put forward a definition where 'the period of temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week' and the Pharmaceutical Assistant must have 'provided 12 hours of skilled assistance in the previous month at the same registered retail pharmacy business. This is an arbitrary definition which, if implemented, will seriously impact on my ability and the ability of my colleagues to earn a living in the role for which we qualified. The effect will be to force many of us out of employment because we will no longer be able to provide the cover required by many pharmacists - which we have been providing in many cases for years - particularly in the smaller pharmacies.</p> <p>The proposed change flies in the face of reason as for example, if I were to reach the proposed 12 hour limit at say at 3pm one afternoon. my qualifications become redundant at 3:01 pm but becomes valid again say the afternoon following Monday. It is furthermore impractical in that it does not allow for the day to day emergencies eg Pharmacist delayed in returning to work family illnesses etc.</p> <p>This in my view and of my colleagues, will, if implemented be a grave injustice to a small group of people (c. 400) in retrospectively removing a well-accepted facet of their qualification and placing many of them at risk of unemployment.</p> <p>I would urge you to make representations to the PSI through their Public Consultation process, advising them that what they propose in their definition of Temporary Absence is both impractical and discriminatory to Pharmaceutical Assistants</p> <p>Yours sincerely XXXXXX</p>	
269.	Tom Ginnety	
	<p>To whom it may concern</p> <p>I would like to submit some observations regarding Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants and the draft regulations</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While I respect the ambition to define temporary absence, I think that defining a temporary absence as an absolute “hours” leaves little room to maneuver in the event of an emergency, illness, bereavement, etc I find it difficult to rationalize that 12 hours is lawful, but by the proposed definition 13 hours cover would be an offence and somehow be more harmful to the public • I have employed various pharmacists and pharmaceutical assistants (PA) over the course of 20 years and in my experience, although not qualified pharmacists, I found PA, to be competent , diligent and exceptionally ethical and responsible towards my patients and clients ... more than some of their pharmacist colleagues on occasion, I might add • I object to their omission from mandatory CPD, as this would only further safeguard the patient / public • I think some consideration should be given to the cohort of PA still gainfully employed, all of whom must be over fifty years old, and the knock-on effect these rather stringent regulations will have for their employment, which will no doubt be curtailed , jeopardized or perhaps even terminated by redundancy. • Perhaps the authors should go back to the drawing board and come up with a more human based proposal, which does place a fitness to practice onus on PA and a CPD commitment likewise, and allow PA more latitude once certain goals or criteria are met <p>Respectfully,</p> <p>Tom Ginney MPSI</p>	
270.	Carmel B O’Loinsigh	
	<p>As a member of the public I wish to make submission on the above draft rules.</p> <p>As I understand it there are 11 rules most of which are definitions and not really up for discussion. I would have a problem with two rules ie Rules 6 and 7.</p> <p>I read that the PSI are looking for a “fair and workable “model and are trying to provide the public with the assurance of best</p>	

	<p>pharmacy practice and patient safety.</p> <p>Rule 6</p> <p>The impression these rules give me is that the PSI considers that there is a risk that after 12 hours a week the Pharmacy assistant is no longer competent. If this is true I do not understand how they can be competent again the next week for another 12 hours. As a member of the public I am concerned that the PSI are sending mixed messages to the public as to whether these people are properly qualified. I would respectfully suggest that if the qualification is in doubt then the fault lies with the people who educated, examined and qualified this grade of people. Then I would ask who else did they qualify? Should we be looking at any other pharmacy qualifications?</p> <p>I also hear on the PSI website the definition of the role of the Supervising Pharmacist. It talks of using common sense when defining “whole time charge”. I would determine that when the Supervising Pharmacist is not present in the shop that they are temporarily absent. Why can the same common sense not apply here?</p> <p>I do not understand the need for the Assistants to perform “skilled assistances” for a specified time on an ongoing basis. Once the Supervising Pharmacist is confident that a person is capable and competent that should be enough.</p> <p>The qualification that Assistants have has stood the test of time for over 100 years. I do not consider it fair to change the meaning of what a qualification is when these people have been working in the profession for a minimum of 30 years. I do not believe that the PSI has the right to bring about the demise of an entire register of people them themselves qualified. This is exactly what will happen if these rules become law.</p> <p>I do not consider these rules to be “fair and workable” and in no way address any public safety issues. Do you think you are implementing these rules on my behalf.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Carmel B___ Ui Loingigh</p>	
271.	Margaret O’Brien	

	<p>I wish to make the following points in relation to your proposal in relation to the above item.</p> <p>I am a qualified .assistant having received my .qualification from the PSI in 1975. This qualification entitled me to 'transact the business of a pharmaceutical chemist during his temporary absence' and I have worked in this capacity for the past 41years.Iwork 18 hours per week at present and during this time I provide cover for the pharmacist during his temporary absence which includes lunch hour, funerals, holidays and any other occasional absence.</p> <p>I have always worked In accordance with my qualification under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 and I would advise that I do not seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open a shop on my own account. I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since 1975. Furthermore I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of my qualification post conferral given that I undertook my course in good faith and which was run by the PSI.</p> <p>In addition I feel that your attempt to define temporary absence as 12-hours per week restricts my ability to work as I would be unable to cover holidays or sickness leave or other unforeseen circumstances. I should be able to cover these requirements within my ability to cover during the temporary absence of the pharmacist. I feel that your attempted imposition of a weekly limit defined In hours limits my employment opportunities and in these circumstances is in contravention of Article 14 of The European Convention on Human Rights.</p> <p>Finally I would like to request your organisation to reconsider your proposal and to take into account the invaluable service that your "assistant" members have given to our industry over the years. Also I would request the leadership of PSI to reflect on how it can best serve and accommodate the needs of “assistant” members to maximize our contribution to pharmacy instead of minimising that contribution</p>	
272.	P Walshe	
	I have worked with various Pharmaceutical Assistants for 20 years.	

	<p>It is unclear to me as to why there is a need to change their working conditions. At no stage did I feel that the public were at risk.</p> <p>They are nearly all of retiring age, so why penalise them at this stage of their lives and make them feel as though they are not valued?</p> <p>Where a Qualified Assistant may have a contract, the retrospective redefinition of "temporary absence" may lead to a legal quagmire and may leave them unable to fulfill their contracts. This may leave the Society open to legal action as some may face compulsory redundancies and may feel that they have just cause for legal action/compensation.</p>	
273.	Anne Dunne	
	<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>I refer to the Proposal by the PSI to attribute a definition to the term 'temporary absence' as referred to in the Pharmacy Acts 1890 to 2007 ('the proposal') and which Proposal will, if enacted, have very serious adverse consequences for Pharmaceutical Assistants in particular, but also for Pharmacists, the broader Health Profession and the general Public.</p> <p>I am a Retired Pharmaceutical Assistant and as such I feel/ can be particularly frank about the purported reasoning behind the Proposal referred to above. I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant (PA) in 1971 and practised as such for forty three years within the parameters of my qualification under Section 19 THE Pharmacy Act 1890, until I retired two years ago.</p> <p>From my reading of the Proposal and from a legal interpretation of same furnished to me, it is quite evident that the PSI endeavouring to limit the working hours of PA's and to limit the parameters within which a PA may work so as to almost make the qualification worthless in that the strait jacket as proposed would make the position of PA virtually unworkable within any real sense of the phrase as the hours of work will be so restricted as to make any real livelihood next to impossible to earn and also the strictures as proposed</p>	

would unnecessarily limit the freedom of the Pharmacist employing any PA.

It would be untenable and in fact farcical that a PA would be permitted to work 12 hours per week and thereafter their Qualification would not be acceptable for the rest of that given week. Regardless of the absurdity of the said contention the Proposal would create a hazardous situation for the Pharmacist engaging the PA should an emergency arise and the Pharmacist has to leave

unexpectedly, or should the Pharmacist be delayed for any reason or indeed should the Pharmacist get ill.

Under the guise of 'safe pharmacy practice' and 'patient safety' the PSI appears to be attempting to retrospectively alter the qualification of PA and also it is turning its back on 126 years of established convention and which convention has worked most satisfactorily for the said period for all involved.

There is a phrase that springs to mind-' If it ain't broken don't fix it.' So it really begs the question- what is the real motive behind the proposal?

There is no legitimate reason for altering the status quo except it would seem to protect or better the position of Pharmacists vis-a-vis their PA colleagues in order to secure more employment opportunities and/or more favourable conditions of employment.

To the best of my knowledge the proposal is not necessitated on foot of Professional Indemnity Insurance requirements and therefore does not seem to have any substantive foundation on the alleged grounds of 'safe pharmacy practice 'and 'patient safety' as referred to in the discussion document.

During my years of practice it obvious, and most Pharmacists will agree with this, that the Pharmacy is a focal point for Customers often at times when Customers are vulnerable and dealing with a serious health issue and because of same the Customers genuinely appreciate the continuity of a familiar face of the PA for advice and reassurance when the Pharmacist is unavailable.

	<p>It is my further submission that the proposal in the absence of any legislative requirement or substantive reason to make the change as outlined in the proposal is completely unfair and is inequitable because of the most harsh consequences that the implementation of same would lead to particularly on Pas and which Pas have provided a very valuable and most necessary service to the Pharmaceutical Profession over the past 126 years.</p> <p>How can one arm of the Pharmaceutical Profession seek to impose a regulation which would be so restrictive in nature that it will make the qualification of another arm of the profession, namely Pas, virtually defunct or is that in fact the real reasoning behind the proposal i.e. to make the position of Pas so restricted in nature that a Pharmacist will have no option but to employ a Pharmacist because -of-the absurdities that would otherwise arise an which would potentially lead to both the PA and the Pharmacist being in breach of the Regulations if the proposal is enacted.</p> <p>In the circumstances I believe that the PSI should withdraw the Proposal herein. I would be obliged if the PSI would consider my submission in the matter. Please furnish written acknowledgement of my submission.</p> <p>Yours faithfully,</p>	
274.	Anna May Daly	
	<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>I am writing to register in the strongest terms, my objection to the proposed changes to the rules governing my terms of employment as a Pharmaceutical Assistant: (REGULATION OF TEMPORARY ABSENCE COVER BY PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANTS) RULES 2016.</p> <p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant, qualified in 1973, with 42 years' work experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I never agreed to the draft Code of Practice 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have been employed on the basis that Pharmaceutical Assistants have the right to cover for the registered pharmacist in his/her temporary absence, as conferred on me in 1973. • I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification, which I have worked to since my conferral and registration in 1973. • I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover, sick leave, unforeseen family circumstances and so on. • I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification, post-conferral, to a course that I undertook in good faith, which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI. • Such a change to my terms of employment, and my employability, would suggest that I have been working illegally for over forty years, and I clearly cannot accept that this is the case. • At this stage of my career, and with my wide experience, I would hope to be in a position to continue providing cover for my pharmacist colleagues should I be called on to do so. • Again, I object to the "draft proposals re temporary 	
275.	Julianne Lawless	
	<p>Submission on draft rules re Temporary Absence cover by a qualified assistant</p> <p>Most of the rules are not in need of comment as they are matter of fact or a definition as stated in the Pharmacy Act 2007. The rules I have a problem with are rules 6 and 7.</p> <p>For a rule to be fair and workable it should be clear and unambiguous. I am unsure of what rule 7 is all about and don't understand why a qualified person needs to be tested every month to ensure they are fit for purpose.</p> <p>The 12 hour rule (rule 6) is clearly a breach of Assistants rights. It is grossly unfair and changes utterly the meaning of what a qualified assistant is. I do not know how anybody could consider this to be fair. It is not</p>	

	<p>workable in the real world of running a retail business to have to watch the clock or to be so afraid of running out of time that an employer would have to make the qualified assistant redundant. If the employer is happy to have the assistant cover his absence why should he have to worry if he runs over the 12 hours per week? Why 12 hours? What happens to the ability of a person to do the same job for 13 hours or 20 hours? Why the need to be so prescriptive? What ever happened to common sense? The Society are happy to use common sense when defining what the whole time charge of a Supervising Pharmacist is. Why the double standards when dealing with assistants?</p> <p>These rules pose many question for me. They make me think the Pharmaceutical Society doubt the qualification that assistants have. If Assistants are on a register of the Society, are given a licence by the society and are not subject to fitness to practice I would regard that as a failing on the part of the Society to regulate properly. Assistants can't regulate themselves. That is the function of the society and the society is failing miserably.</p> <p>So, no I do not regard these rules as fair or workable and they do not give any assurance to the public. I do hope therefore that the Society take heed of what I and many other members of the public have to say and redraft the proposal.</p>	
276.	Patrick Carragher	
	<p>I wish to make a few comments on the proposed defining of "Temporary absence clause" in relation to Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>The P.S.I. examined and validated all Pharmaceutical assistants to get their qualification. Maybe "Fitness to Practice" and "Continuing Professional Development" would be an ideal avenue to upskill them.</p> <p>The Pharmaceutical assistants have been valued co-workers in pharmacy for over 30 years and should be respected and recognised for their contribution to the Profession.</p>	

	<p>If limiting temporary absence to 12 hours a week makes the role of a pharmaceutical Assistant obsolete, we will be doing a disservice to a loyal group of co-workers.</p>	
277.	Liam Farmer	
	<p>In an attempt to define temporary absence I believe the PSI claim to be looking for a fair and workable model that will give assurances to the public regarding health and safety.</p> <p>I have read the draft rules and I cannot understand how reasonable or fair minded people could think the proposed rules are fair or workable in the day to day running of a retail pharmacy business. I do not feel it is assuring to the public to put doubt in the mind of sick people that a person could be allowed to dispense prescriptions on their own only for a defined numbers of hours per week. That implies there is a risk in going beyond this number. It casts doubt as to how qualified these people are. How can someone be competent for only a set number of hours per week then run out of time until the next week and then be competent again. If the Pharmacist is late and the 12 hours expires half way through the assistant dispensing a prescription would they only be able to give two items if there were four items on the prescription.</p> <p>As it would constitute an offence to cover more than 12 hours per week who would be in trouble at one minute after the 12 hours. will the pharmacist or the assistant be guilty of the offence. Will this amount to someone breaking the law of the land? would they then have a criminal record?</p> <p>I have always believed that the only difference between a pharmacist and a qualified assistant was that the latter could not keep open shop on their own account but they could transact the business in the temporary absence of the pharmacist.</p> <p>Is it legal to change the meaning of a qualification many years after granting it? I would think this is a breach of a persons human rights it is certainly a breach of contract. I could see a court action been taken should the PSI insist</p>	

	<p>on implementing these rules as they are</p> <p>I do hope the PSI will reconsider and redraft a more fair set of rules maybe try using the same commonsense used when defining what "whole time charge" means.</p>	
278.	<p>Brian & Fionnuala Lanigan</p>	
	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>Brian and Fionnuala Lanigan, the pharmacist husband and pharmacist wife owners of XXXXXXXXXX Pharmacy employed Qualified Assistant XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXX in 2000 based on the 1994 code of practice.</p> <p>XXXXXXXX is a full time qualified assistant and has worked 40 hours a week in my pharmacy every week for the last 15 years. She is familiar with every nuance of our business. She has allowed us to have a lunch hour and day off and has covered without problem our family holiday. This provides complete continuity of care for our patients with a qualified person they know and trust.</p> <p>Many pharmacists do not get a lunch break. This is dangerous and disadvantages to patient safety. Our full time qualified assistant who attends has helped us avoid this.</p> <p>Not allowing an experienced qualified assistant who knows the business to cover is a retrograde step.</p> <p>Regarding continuing education and fitness to practice, XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXX has attended the IPU academy continuing education lectures for many years now at her own expense and is up to date with continuing professional development.</p> <p>XXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXX has excellent practise experience within our business. In our business, we have 2 pharmacists permanently employed on a full time basis but are a husband and wife team who holiday at the same time. XXXXXXXXXX has worked on a full time basis i.e. 40 hours per week every week for 15 years with our business. Our qualified assistant has provided our holidays cover in spells no longer than 2 weeks for over 15 years. It seems nonsensical to have to change this and to be forced to employ someone for 2 weeks who has never set foot in our business. This seems illogical and dangerous in a clinical environment. Therefore, this illustrates from our point of view,</p>	

	<p>that the retention of the ability to cover standard annual leave as per the 1994 Agreement should remain.</p> <p>In our opinion, a safer restriction of qualified assistants would be to Increase the requirement for permanent regular employment, possibly with a pharmacist to be allowed to do holiday cover, or a caveat i.e. "x" number of hours per week working with a pharmacist to cover "x" number of hours off per week and annual leave.</p> <p>In our opinion, a qualified assistant should have to be employed in the pharmacy concerned on a permanent basis for not less than 18 hours per week every week to be able to provide cover.</p> <p>The new rules should provide for the qualified assistant covering for 14 days of a pharmacist holiday and also for unscheduled short absences.</p> <p>In conclusion, our qualified assistant is a very valuable resource and the current draft guidelines will completely change her working contracts and conditions.</p> <p>The proposed new definition of "temporary absence" is completely changing the remit of all pharmaceutical assistants and we hope that you will take our submission into consideration.</p>	
279.	Doreen Fitzgerald, Eileen McAuliffe, Peigi Ni Ruairc & anonymous person	
	<p>I wish to make a submission on the draft proposals on temporary absence. I read that the PSI are looking for a fair and workable model. I do not see anything fair or workable in these draft proposals. I do not understand how anybody could think it is fair to change completely the meaning of a qualification more than 30 years after the qualification is awarded. I don't know of any other profession that would treat their registrants in this disgraceful way.</p> <p>Qualified Assistants were educated and examined by the very organisation that is now bringing the qualification into question. The fact that qualified assistants are not subject to fitness to practice is not the fault of the assistants rather it shows how the Pharmaceutical Society are not performing their duty of care to the public. It would serve a much better purpose to regulate properly and not act in a callous way that will completely undermine almost 400 people's rights to use their qualification.</p> <p>The word temporary means a period of time with no upper or lower limit. That is what was understood when assistants undertook to do the 4 year course they did. It is unfair to change that understanding now. To go from being able to cover a pharmacist's days</p>	

	<p>off, lunch breaks, holidays, sick leave and any unplanned absence to just 12 hours per week with no exceptions will make most assistants unable to perform the job they were employed to do.</p> <p>I do hope the PSI will come to see sense and see what any fair minded person can see. These draft proposals are far from fair and workable.</p>	
280.	Ann Meerins, J Woolan	
	<p>I am writing to you today in response to the proposed Draft Rules recently announced by the PSI in relation to the regulation of the term Temporary Absence Cover- and my concerns as to the ultimate consequences I believe it has for the role of Pharmaceutical Assistant (PA).</p> <p>It seems to me to be a gross undermining by the PSI of the PA role, certainly if you consider the history and years of service that such individuals across the country who hold PA qualifications, many of who have worked in their respective community pharmacies for several years under the faith and trust of their supervisors, colleagues and customers alike.</p> <p>In my opinion it reads as a form of marginalisation towards this group of people-which to my knowledge is mostly made up of women in their mid-50's. Having taken the time to read through the proposed Draft Rules and background information provided on the PSI website, I believe that if it were to come into effect it would make this group of highly experienced and qualified professionals unemployable for the job that many of them have already been doing very well until now.</p> <p>The service, advice, knowledge and standard of care I have personally received from the Pharmaceutical Assistant in my local pharmacy over the years is excellent. I have trusted them completely with any of my health concerns and ailments, to the extent that it really is the only reason I am a customer of my local pharmacy. And I am certain I am not alone in this opinion, should you ask other customers who are loyal to their own community pharmacies they would most likely offer up the same reason.</p> <p>This rather unique group of qualified professionals – PAs – are a valuable resource to their local pharmacies across the country. They should be rewarded for their years of service and the part they have played in the 126 year history of how Pharmacy has developed in this country. Their level of professionalism at their own jobs I am sure has set the bar for the younger generations of Pharmacists that have followed them, not least in terms</p>	

	<p>of providing support and a readiness to share their experience and knowledge with their younger colleagues. If the PSI are looking to advance on the regulation of Pharmacists in this country, perhaps they should consider upgrading PAs to the same equal footing as Pharmacists? At this stage of their careers with the vast experience they have attained, it would be their right.</p> <p>Defining the term Temporary Absence in the manner proposed, especially after the PSI were happy to allow PAs to join their society and pay their fees-it is an insult. It raises many questions as to the motives and even integrity of such an association why such a proposal would even be considered at such a time when the reality is that the role of PA will be non-existent -10 years from now. However, in an attempt to try and keep this letter brief I will only ask 1 question. Why is it 126 years after the introduction of the term is the PSI now attempting to define Temporary Absence? Why is it that the PSI might believe that someone can be "competent" to cover the absence of a Pharmacist for 12 hours per week, and 1 minute over that time are "incompetent"? To me at least, it makes no sense.</p> <p>I would ask that the PSI please reconsider any actions they are considering regarding Pharmaceutical Assistants in relation to the definition of the term Temporary Absence. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.</p> <p>The above letter was received from: Ann Meerins, and others (not legible)</p>	
281.	Dr Michael O'Connor	
	<p>Response to "Public Consultation on draft Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016"</p> <p>The 2007 Pharmacy Act states that the PSI, with Ministerial approval, may define temporary absence but does not direct that it should or must do so. However, in the notice of 8th Feb, the "draft rules for public consultation" aspire to restrict pharmaceutical assistants (PAs) to working in the absence of the registered pharmacist for no more than 12 hours a week. This suggests that the PA is totally competent to act professionally and autonomously for 12 hours, during which time many discrete instances of exercising judgement, providing advice and dispensing of medications occur, but that this competency then immediately and mysteriously disappears! This attempt to define temporary absence, and to restrict it to 12 hours a week makes PAs virtually unemployable as they</p>	

would be excluded from providing either illness or holiday cover. What happens to the PA after 12 hours to suddenly render them incompetent? In every other profession with which I am familiar, experience and practice improves performance, but the PSI is somehow working on the assumption that the opposite occurs.

It is worth bearing in mind that PAs have always been obliged to be registered with the PSI in order to practice and that inclusion on a professional register is universally understood to confer both obligations and rights. Being registered is an acknowledgement of the possession of knowledge and skills which can be exercised autonomously and independently and in whatever location a registrant is employed. This means that a PA bears a personal responsibility for their own work in both the temporary absence and presence of the registered pharmacist. Since 1890 PAs have acted in the undefined temporary absence of the pharmacist, and to my knowledge have rarely if ever been found to be incompetent, negligent or unprofessional. The youngest PAs have over 30 years' experience of dealing directly face to face with patients (as opposed to managing or owning a pharmacy) and have shown their ability to absorb and incorporate advances in pharmacy and in computerisation. The voluntary attendance of PAs at CPD lectures throughout the years demonstrates their commitment to lifelong learning and refutes the notion that they are unwilling to undertake CPD at this time. It can be argued that attendance at lectures in the lead up to the 2007

Pharmacy Act, where PAs were widely assured that whenever "registered pharmacist" was mentioned in the Act, "registered pharmaceutical assistant" was also included, led to a misplaced sense of trust and inhibited PAs from seeking and obtaining watertight guarantees. In addition, equating registered pharmacist and registered pharmaceutical assistant appears to have been the former view of the PSI itself, as expressed in an early pamphlet providing a brief summary of the 2007 Act (Preliminary Overview-Pharmacy Act 2007 A New Beginning).

In the decades leading up to 1979, when the last PAs entered training, third level education was unavailable to the majority of Irish school-leavers. However, PAs were required to obtain a good Leaving Certificate and/or University matriculation prior to commencing their apprenticeship, so those undertaking the PA course, which included one full-time academic year, had a legitimate expectation of obtaining a respected qualification and a lifelong fulfilling career. Thus, many persons who became PAs were eligible and able to pursue many other satisfying and rewarding career options had they so chosen. However, although the course was organised, taught and examined by the PSI, this body has become increasingly strident and assertive in trying to

undermine PAs and contradict and limit the terms of the certificate awarded by it and signed by its officers. This certificate states that a PA "having passed the required Examination is competent to transact the business of a Pharmaceutical Chemist during his temporary absence." Successful participation in post-graduate pharmacy courses in the UK is a further demonstration of the academic capacities and abilities of PAs.

Attempting to define temporary absence as a rigidly-described prescriptive 12 hours in this public consultation document could be seen as suggesting that the PSI has already decided on the outcome. Seventy three of the 84 submissions to the initial targeted request in Summer 2014 came from PAs, with many of the rest from organisations or individuals supportive of them, and yet the PSI has since then continued unabated in its drive which will make most PAs unemployed, unemployable and languishing on the scrap-heaps of their lives. Why?

As the 1890 Act legislated to introduce PAs because of the dearth of pharmacists (XXXX-XXXXXX, X'XXXXXX and X'XXXXX, 1970), are the attempts to eliminate the remaining PAs now due to an oversupply of pharmacists? To cite safe pharmacy practice and patient safety as a reason to define temporary absence is hardly tenable when pharmaceutical assistants are vastly experienced and widely trusted and the registered pharmacist may be at the very beginning of their career or have limited experience in Irish systems.

The high CAO points required to currently access pharmacy courses in Ireland and the academic nature of such courses have been suggested as reasons for the PSI's current attempt to restrict the practice of PAs, but no one is suggesting that registered pharmacists who qualified in the less demanding and less competitive system of over 30 years ago should be similarly disadvantaged. For comparison, until 1961, both PAs and pharmacists served a three-year apprenticeship combined with an academic course. The above demonstrates that PAs are comparable to pharmacists in terms of ability and experience, leading to suggestions that ageism and sexism are factors in the current Consultation initiative.

The draft SI, in requiring that a PA work alongside a pharmacist for 12 hours in the month before working in a pharmacist's temporary absence, is completely undermining the PA's qualification, questioning the autonomy of that qualification and once again raises the questions of the obligations and rights conferred by being registered.

In conclusion, this submission demands that PAs can continue to work as their qualification directs, allows and protects, and as they expected when embarking on their studies•••nothing more or nothing less. A simple SI to

	either (1) equate registered pharmacist and registered pharmaceutical assistant or (2) to include PAs in the disciplinary and mandatory CPD processes is a possible solution.	
282.	Martina Kelly	
	<p>Having been invited to make a submission, I have taken legal advice and wish to submit the following:</p> <p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant (PA) who qualified in 1983. This means that for the past 32 years, I have worked within the parameters of my qualification as conferred on me by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act, 1890. During this time, I have never sought to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my own account. I have however conducted the business of the pharmacy in the temporary absence of the pharmacist. I currently work 27 hours over 3 days and the hours worked in the temporary absence of a pharmacist vary in accordance with the needs at the time.</p> <p>As a PA I have never agreed to and have never worked in accordance with the draft Code of Practice issued by the PSI which as it turns out is not a legal document. At the time of my conferral, "temporary absence" was not defined and so I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their "temporary absence".</p> <p>Wiley's New World Law Dictionary defines temporary as "meaningless with regard to the duration of the length of time that it will last". In the absence of a definition of temporary absence in the Pharmacy Acts 1890 and 2007, the long accepted interpretation is where the pharmacist is away from the pharmacy on a temporary basis. This interpretation is one which has the weight of 126 years of practice and its significance cannot be overstated.</p> <p>Previously the PSI has stated "A constitutional right to earn livelihood is not absolute and can be subject to legitimate constraints... While this is accepted, it must be noted that the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) requires that any constraint on an individual's human right is in pursuit of a legitimate aim and is necessary in a democratic society. The proposed definition will restrict a PA's right to earn a livelihood. However the PSI has not demonstrated any legitimate reason other than stating that is in the interest of patient safety. In the absence of any evidence of unacceptable practice or misconduct by PAs, this cannot be deemed a legitimate</p>	

reason. Furthermore it is submitted that not only is this change not necessary in a democratic society, it in fact would act to the detriment of the common good and society as a whole. In addition the constraint must be proportionate. The impact on the PAs economic and social rights is not proportionate in that the restriction on the PAs right to work is more than necessary. Finally, Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights explicitly prohibits discrimination. This means that everyone is entitled to the equal enjoyment of all of the rights in the ECHR. Given that PAs are predominantly female and that part-time workers within the profession are predominantly female, any attempt to impose minimum hours of service as part of the qualification of the conditions of exercise of the profession will have a far greater impact on women, violating the equality rights guarantee in the Constitution and under ECHR.

The PSI now seeks to confer a definition of the term "temporary absence" in their draft proposal. This proposed definition is not in line with either the standard legal definition of temporary or the long accepted defined practice of the term temporary

absence. Neither is in accordance with the ECHR as demonstrated above. It is therefore submitted that the proposed definition is theoretically invalid and as such cannot be put into practice.

Furthermore defining temporary absence in concrete terms lacks knowledge and shows a naivety on the part of the PSI of the real working world. It would become an offence if a PA works one minute outside the hours defined. This does not allow for normal life challenges e.g. illness, funerals and a whole myriad of problems which occur on a daily basis. It would in effect necessitate the closure of the pharmacy where a pharmacist does not return following the maximum 12 hours proposed. This is quite plainly nonsense and must be seen as such. It is therefore submitted that the proposed definition is also practically invalid and as such cannot be put into practice.

Notwithstanding the above, the effects of the draft proposal must be examined. The draft proposal affects not only the livelihoods of PAs but also the working practice of those pharmacists currently employing PAs, the pharmacies where PAs are employed and the greater community.

As a PA, the draft proposal and the definition contained therein will affect my rights in the following ways:

- My right not to be discriminated against under the Constitution and the ECHR will be violated by this proposed definition. Given that the vast majority of PAs are women, the restrictions imposed by this proposed

definition affect women significantly more than men. This cannot be allowed in a democratic society.

- My right to earn a livelihood under the Constitution and the ECHR will be violated by this proposed definition. Although this right can be subject to legitimate constraints, the PSI has not demonstrated any legitimate reasons for constraining my right to earn a livelihood.
- The violation of this right has practical effects on my earning capacity. I can and need to work until retirement age, i.e. I have another 15 years to work. Given that the PSI are seeking to restrict my right to earn a livelihood for the next 15 years, I will, in the event that the draft proposal is accepted seek reimbursement from the PSI for all lost future earnings. I will also seek a full reimbursement of my retention fee which I have paid to the PSI for the past 32 years.
 - o The proposed definition will effectively change the nature of my qualification. I (nor my legal representative) is not aware of a body who conferred a qualification, seeking to restrict and alter the terms of that qualification over 30 years later. I am advised that this, along with the restrictions on my basic human rights as outlined above will stand me in good stead for mounting a legal challenge under a number of grounds should the draft proposal be accepted.

The draft proposal and the definition contained therein will affect pharmacists in the following ways:

- If the draft proposal is accepted, a pharmacist employing a PA will be required not to comply with Principle 4 of the Code of Conduct as set out by the PSI. Specifically, the pharmacist will be unable to:
 - o Respect the expertise and care delivery of other healthcare professionals,
 - o Work effectively with other healthcare individuals,
 - o Respect the integrity, skills and expertise of colleagues and,
 - o Not impose conditions on other pharmacists or health professionals which compromise their professional judgement, integrity or quality of service or impinge on the ability to meet professional and legal obligations for patient care and safety.
- o The P.S.I. is in effect asking Pharmacists to work outside of the parameters of the Code of Conduct which the P.S.I itself formulated and which it insists the Pharmacists subscribe to.
- The pharmacist will be forced to employ an additional pharmacist in circumstances where the employed PA has worked more than 12 hours in one week in the absence of a pharmacist. This will lead to an economic loss for the pharmacist which will inevitably result in the redundancy of the PA

	<p>The draft proposal and the definition contained therein will affect pharmacies and the greater community in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The pharmacy, front of shop staff, technicians, pharmacists and customers will lose the expertise, local knowledge and experience of each PA who is made redundant as a result of the proposed definition. Given that the minimum number of years a qualified PA can be practising is 32 years, the combined loss of this expertise, local knowledge and experience is of vast importance and its loss would have far reaching effects in the community. • The enforced redundancies of PAs will create a need for locum pharmacists to cover those temporary absences in the absence of the PA. This in turn will create a culture of "journeyman locuming", a practice which the PSI does not and never has actively encouraged. These locums cannot be expected to be familiar with SOPs and local customers. Therefore the employment of locums on an ongoing basis is not best practice and the PSI has long since recognised this fact. <p>I trust that the foregoing submissions will be considered by the PSI. I am requesting that the PSI reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined above. I am requesting a written acknowledgement of receipt of these submissions.</p>	
283.	Mary T. Burke	
	<p>I am one of the Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants that will be affected by the suggestions in the Public Consultation on Temporary Absence. I qualified in 1972 and it is stated on my certificate that I can work in the temporary absence of the pharmacist but cannot own or manage a pharmacy on my own accord. For the last 40 years I have done just that, together with paying my fees to be registered to enable me to so work in that position-----which is now being eroded. During my academic year I studied the same subjects as the pharmacy students - Pharmaceutics, Pharmacognosy, Pharmacology, Physiology and Forensic Pharmacy, sitting exactly the same examination paper in that subject as the pharmacy students.</p> <p>I don't recognise the 1994 Guidelines, which were just that and I now understand that there never was a signed copy of that document, so the restrictions that the PSI inspectors are currently imposing on us and on our employers are not even legal. The proposal to limit the cover of temporary absence to 12 hours per week makes no sense. How can a person be qualified to cover for 12 hours and then on the 13th hour lose that ability. This</p>	

proposal makes no allowance for holidays, illness or other frequent, small, recurring life events and emergencies and, if adopted, would be career-ending for most Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants. This entire draft rules document calls into question the rationale of PSI registration and its obligations and benefits. Is there any other professional body that collects a registration fee from its members and then tries to curtail their working hours and constantly harasses and victimises them?

Because of the PSI's current inspection policy and actions, colleagues have lost hours, jobs and some have lost their livelihoods. What a disgrace in the 21st century, when Joan Burton, Leo Varadkar and other Ministers are actively encouraging and enabling people to get back to work, the PSI are actively discriminating against and victimising their own paid-up members.

Mary Harney, TD and Minister for Health, in her 2007 speech in the Seanad, when introducing the 2nd Stage of the Pharmacy Bill said "I am also making it clear that it is an offence to hold oneself out to be a registered pharmacist or registered pharmaceutical assistant, or to provide "skilled pharmaceutical assistance" or to allow someone to do so, knowing that he or she is not so registered. However, this will not interfere with the provision for registered pharmaceutical assistants to provide cover for registered pharmacists in their temporary absence."

This very definitely states that this bill will not interfere with Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants providing cover in the temporary absence of the pharmacist. If temporary absence is defined, it is no longer temporary absence but defined absence. The other important statement the Minister made is that pharmacists and Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants should be registered, which pharmaceutical assistants are.

In 2004, two colleagues and I applied to the School of Pharmacy in Trinity College to study for a post-graduate Diploma and were flatly refused entry to the course. However when we applied to the University of Brighton we were accepted on submission of details of our Certificate Course. We subsequently passed all examinations, so now I have a PGDip in Community Pharmacy along with

my Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant Certificate and still I am being harassed by the very body that awarded my primary qualification. I totally object to this victimisation and view this treatment of predominantly female Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants as totally unfair and even sexist.

	<p>This consultation document should be withdrawn to allow us to work again as our Certificate says-----with no limits to temporary absence and we should be included us in CPD and Fitness to Practice.</p> <p>Why not alter our registration status to MPSI? This is the least we are entitled to after the harassment and victimisation we have endured.</p>	
284.	Philomena Fortune	
	<p>I qualified as Assistant to Pharmaceutical Chemist in 1981 and have had my name on the register of Pharmaceutical Assistants with the Pharmaceutical Society since that date. I have worked in this profession for almost 35 years. During this period I have worked fully in accordance with the rules of my qualification. I could legally cover in the temporary absence of the registered pharmacist. A precedent for this working practice has been firmly established. I have always understood "Temporary Absence" to mean just that, temporary not permanent. I have to date legally been able cover for days off, annual leave and unforeseen circumstances such as sickness ,bereavements etc. without question.</p> <p>The P.S.I. now proposes to define "Temporary Absence" in terms of hours per week, namely "Not to exceed 12 hours in any one week".</p> <p>I cannot accept this proposed limit of 12 hours cover to my working week.</p> <p>With the proposed limit of 12 hours per week I will face serious restrictions to my employment status including working hours, rates of pay and flexibility of work. It limits my usefulness to my present and any future employer and therefore my potential o earn a living.</p> <p>Can the P.S.I. justify that they accept that Pharmaceutical Assistants are qualified and competent to cover for 12 hours per week but not one minute over that time?</p> <p>The P.S.I. state that the purpose of these rules is to provide for a fair and workable model for the definition of "Temporary Absence", which also provides public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety. I would argue that the proposed model is not fair to assistants and not workable for the employer. I would also point out</p>	

	<p>that assistants have always worked to safe pharmacy practice and patient safety and object to any inference to the contrary.</p> <p>The very real danger to patient safety will be in the defining of cover from" Temporary" to any specific number of hours, consider this scenario; The registered pharmacist is delayed and the assistant's cover time of 12 hours has expired. A patient presents with a prescription for urgent medication e.g.Ventolin or EpiPen. If the qualified assistant can not legally dispense this prescription because their 12 hour cover time is up this represents a very real patient safety issue which could lead to a fatality. While patients may only occasionally present with a prescription in an emergency, the potential in everyday life for the pharmacist to be delayed is very real. Therefore I would argue that "Temporary Absence" should not be defined as proposed.</p> <p>If safety is a concern to the P.S.I. then perhaps it should consider including assistants under "Fitness to Practice ".</p> <p>I am concerned that the P.S.I. as our regulatory body should seek to downgrade and diminish my professional qualification of 35 years standing and that of my fellow assistants. The body that conferred on me my qualification is now by its proposals deconstructing it and undermining my ability to work as a Pharmaceutical Assistant and earn a living from so doing.</p> <p>Please take the above into consideration.</p>	
285.	T. McAuliffe	
	<p>To Whom It May Concern</p> <p>I am writing to you regarding the Draft Proposal to define Temporary Absence in which Pharmaceutical Assistants may cover for Pharmacists.Reducingthis to twelve hours a week is grossly unfair!</p> <p>Pharmaceutical Assistantsafter leaving schoolchose this occupation based on their perception of what was the norm at that</p>	

time ie they would work for a pharmacist and cover his temporary absence which was not defined. This worked well because the Pharmacist was best placed to know if the Pharmaceutical Assistant was capable of looking after the safety of his customers and indeed his business! As this is the situation since around the 1890 s and present day Pharmaceutical Assistants trained and qualified under the PSI with the expectation that this was the job description and that they could expect to work as long as they wished under these rules. I think the PSI is now legally and morally bound to maintain the status quo until these people retire voluntarily.

Under the proposed rules Pharmaceutica lAssistants will be of little use to Pharmacists and some Pharmaceutical Assistants have already lost their jobs under the imposition of the fifteen hour *rule*.

Primary teachers and nurses have seen their qualifications upgraded in recent decades. However this did not see the earlier "trainees» being discriminated against. In fact they held senior posts in schools and hospitals over the newer graduates until they retired. In my opinion this is discrimination of a minority which stinks of ageism and sexism.

The PSI have picked an opportune time to rush this through as our public representatives and legislators are preoccupied with the formation of a new government. However it is ironic that the PSI should choose this the Centenary Year as we contemplate on 1916. I ask myself did the people of

1916 die for a country in which some of its institutions practise minority discrimination? -albeit of the home grown variety now! What would they think if they could now see 400 middle aged women-who may yet become known as "The Fenian Street 400"- left with no choice but to go to The European Court to seek justice denied them in their own country!

In my opinion this proposal is unprecedented in its discrimination of a minority in present day Ireland. The Pharmaceutical Assistant was awarded a qualification after four years of practical work and study to work in undefined temporary absence of a Pharmacist. This is the first time in this country that an attempt to rescind a qualification has taken place. Enlightened Societies promote further education and encourage people to enhance their qualification!

If this proposal is enacted it will lead to redundancies and therefore problems with mortgages, college fees, other life commitments and indeed single women who have to work, women with the loss of a husband or with a husband who has

	lost his job! The list is endless with the age group of women this all affects! And a lot of heartache and mental anguish as people of this age are never again employed!	
286.	Marie Jordan	
	<p>Submission on Temporary Absence</p> <p>Having read the draft proposed rules on temporary absence I am completely puzzled as to how any person could consider rules 6 and 7 fair or workable.</p> <p>To make people redundant having worked for over 35 years in a profession is a sad state of affairs. That is exactly what these rules will achieve. It has been common practice for qualified assistants to cover holidays for the Pharmacist but I see no mention of this. I do not understand Rule 7. A person is either qualified or they are not there should be no grey area here. Once a person is qualified and has a licence to do a job putting a time limit on how long they can use their qualification in hours per week seems a bit ridiculous to me. The function of a qualified assistant is to operate the business of the Pharmacist in their temporary absence. Should this suggested 12 hour time limit be exceeded who would be responsible, who would be called to account?</p> <p>As for giving the public assurance of best pharmacy practice for health and safety. From my point of view it only leads to confusion with the public. It would not inspire confidence if a pharmacy had to be closed because an assistant ran out of time yet that same assistant was ok to dispense a few minutes earlier.</p> <p>Maybe you could explain on your website the reason the Pharmaceutical Society feel the need to be so restrictive. If there is good reason then the public have a right to know. If not then the Society need to rethink these rules and come up with a common sense, fair and workable approach.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the Supervising Pharmacist to ensure that all staff are competent to do the job they were employed to do. This is not the remit of the Society.</p> <p>So, no I do not see the proposed draft as either fair or workable</p>	
287.	Martina Geraghty	

	<p>Submission by Molloy's Lifestyle Pharmacies to the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland on the draft PSI (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016</p> <p>On the face of it, these new rules do seem to allow more flexibility in that the pharmaceutical assistant is only required to provide 12 hours of skilled assistance in the previous month to allow them to provide 12 hours per week temporary absence cover. It would be useful to clarify whether this 12 hours per week requirement is inclusive or exclusive of any lunchtime cover that the pharmaceutical assistant may provide during the days that they are working under the supervision of a pharmacist.</p> <p>The rules do not appear to provide for the pharmaceutical assistant covering for 14 days of a pharmacist's holiday or unscheduled short absences such as illness or funerals. It makes no sense that a pharmaceutical assistant, who is trusted to work 12 hours a week for 52 weeks in the temporary absence of a pharmacist, can't cover a 2 week holiday or an unscheduled absence. We propose that this provision be urgently reinstated in the rules.</p>	
288.	Helen R	
	I have worked full time as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in the same Pharmacy for over 38 years, working alongside the Pharmacist. I cover temporary absence and feel that with my years of practice and experience I am qualified to provide this cover. As I am one of the youngest Pharmaceutical Assistants this proposal impact greatly on the remainder of my working live. Please give this matter its due consideration.	
289.	Pharmaceutical Assistants Association (PAA)	
	<p>6th March 2016</p> <p>Public Consultation on draft Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016</p>	

1. Introduction and overview of Pharmaceutical Assistants

Pharmaceutical assistants are persons who have passed the examination prescribed for that purpose by the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. Pharmaceutical assistants are competent pursuant to section 19 of the Pharmacy (Ireland) 1875 (Amendment) Act, 1890 (as amended by section 7(5) of the Pharmacy Act, 1951 and repealed by the Pharmacy Act, 2007) to transact the business of a pharmacist in his “temporary absence” but not “to keep open a shop on their own account”.

Once the qualification was obtained, the qualified pharmaceutical assistant had a statutory entitlement under section 19 of the 1875 Act to transact the business of a registered pharmacist in their absence. Although, the provision enabling the qualification has now been repealed, the right of existing pharmaceutical assistants to continue to practice their profession subsists and is acknowledged by different provisions of the Pharmacy Act, 2007 (not least section 30(1) and section 13 which provide for the maintenance of a Register of Pharmaceutical Assistants).

The last training course offered by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland was commenced in 1982 and no new pharmaceutical assistants have qualified in the State since 1985 when the last course ended. Thus, the class of person who holds this qualification are older workers (the youngest pharmaceutical assistants on the Register are now in their fifties) with the numbers declining as there have been no new entrants to the profession since 1985.

The profession of pharmaceutical assistant has long been predominantly female, currently 98% are women, a reflection of the socially unequal society women in the 60s and 70s experienced in Ireland. By its nature, the qualification of pharmaceutical was a qualification which was attractive to women who wished to pursue part-time or flexible work practices due to changing family responsibilities. It reflects the fact that historically, women, as a result of social and cultural norms and educational opportunity, were less well represented in the profession of pharmacists. Young women who had academic ability and an interest in the practice of pharmacy were steered in the direction of training as a pharmaceutical assistant. The profession attracted highly competent young women with the course limited to 50 places annually.

The predominance of women in the profession is relevant because the consequence of the introduction of restrictive measures such as those now proposed impacts to the significant detriment of female professionals which means that, in addition to their other legal infirmities, they are also discriminatory against women.

2. Understanding of 'Temporary Absence'

When the qualification of pharmaceutical assistant was available (up until the mid-1980s), the only real check on persons who held that qualification in the practice of pharmacy was that they could not keep open a shop on their own account. There has never been a statutory definition of "temporary absence" and hence a wide approach has been taken to that term with pharmaceutical assistants carrying on the business in the temporary absence of the pharmacist for days and weeks at a time in the case of illness. On presentation of their certificates, graduates were not only told to enjoy the Summer doing locums but to look at the notice board in the hall of the Pharmacy building in Shrewsbury Road and see a list of 'Chemist' shops that were looking for holiday cover. There was no impediment to the pharmaceutical assistant acting as a pharmacist in the employment of a pharmacy as long as the pharmacy business was being run by a pharmacist. The concept of "temporary absence" has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice since 1890. From that time, pharmaceutical assistants worked as chemists when, as a matter of fact, there was a pharmacist responsible for the pharmacy but he was temporarily absent. This was the basis upon which members of the PAA embarked upon training for a career as Pharmaceutical Assistant and have worked in that career since then.

Section 30(2) of the 2007 Act vests the PSI with a power to introduce rules defining what is meant by "temporary absence" and otherwise prescribing work which may be done by a PA. Until now reliance has been placed by the PSI on an "agreement" which has purportedly been in place since December 1994, between the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland and the Pharmaceutical Assistants' Association, which includes a draft code of practice relating to temporary absence. In this document an assistant who is performing professional duties of the pharmacist in his/her temporary absence must be employed in the pharmacy concerned on a permanent basis for not less than 15 hours per week. However, following a Freedom of Information request, the PSI acknowledges that a signed copy of this 'agreement' does not exist. Legal opinion is that the old PSI had no statutory authority to define what was meant by 'temporary absence' and that the draft Code of Conduct has no lawful basis. Hence the PAA has argued that it is beyond the powers of the authorized officers to include compliance with the 1994 Code in its inspections in the manner in which it has sought to do in recent times.

It has become a feature of PSI Inspection Reports that they require pharmacist to comply with the aforementioned "draft" Code of Practice notwithstanding that there is no legal basis for this requirement. These actions by the PSI Inspection and Enforcement unit directly affect the employment status of PAs. In 2014, the PAA carried out a survey of 200 Pharmaceutical Assistants.

The findings indicated that a very significant percentage of an already declining number have been affected by enforced compliance with this draft Code of Practice.

As pharmacists are required to take remedial action post inspection to bring them into compliance with the requirements of the PSI, over half of the pharmaceutical assistants surveyed experienced change in their work practices, including job loss, reduction in hours and pay cuts;

Almost 50% of those surveyed have experienced loss of earnings due to hours being cut to comply with this draft Code of Practice post inspection by the PSI;

15% of those surveyed have been made redundant over the last 5 years and whilst a number have gone on to secure some hours (mainly Saturday work), a third of those who lost their jobs remain unemployed.

These jobs losses are reflected in the dramatic fall in the number of pharmaceutical assistants registered with the PSI, particularly in the last 3 years, which correlates with an increased inspection rate. The number of pharmaceutical assistants registered with the PSI has dropped dramatically since 2013 (Table 1) correlating with increased PSI Inspections (Table 2)

Table 1 The number of pharmaceutical assistants on the PSI register by year

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
535	535	537	515	510	499	483	452	393

Table 2 Routine inspections by PSI1

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Routine							
Inspections	224	280	170	75	388	525	500 approx ²

1 PSI, 2014 'Report of the Project Expert Group on A Strategic Review of the Current Policy for Routine Pharmacy Inspections 10 October 2014, page 22

3. The proposed Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016

The current proposal by the Council of the PSI to invoke powers under section 30(2) of the Pharmacy Act, 2007, to introduce rules governing what is meant by "temporary absence" some nine years after that Act was introduced, is a reaction to objections properly articulated on behalf of the PAA and its members that the 1994 draft Code of Practice has no legal basis and the PSI have no power to require compliance with its provisions during inspections. While a power has been provided under section 30(2) to introduce rules regulating what is meant by "temporary absence", the power is not a carte blanche or unlimited power and is one which requires to be exercised having proper and due regard to the established work practices and rights, including constitutional and convention rights, of pharmaceutical assistants. The proposed rules, however, fail to respect and vindicate the rights of pharmaceutical assistants in the exercise of their profession and their right to earn a livelihood (protected both as a personal and a property right), the right to personal identity and integrity (encompassed within the person

rights guarantees at Article 40.3 of the Constitution) and represents an apparent ex post facto attempt to legitimize the restrictive practices sought to be introduced under 1994 draft Code of Practice and further reduce the terms of the qualification of pharmaceutical assistant, by excluding the entitlement to cover for holidays and other short absences in a manner which exceeds even that contemplated under the 1994 draft Code of Conduct. In essence, the proposed rules constitute an unjust attack on a profession, the members of which are almost exclusively women.

The PSI Council states that the purpose of the proposed rules is to provide for a fair and workable model for the definition of “temporary absence”, which also provides public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety. This purpose or objective is ostensibly laudable and the PAA does not argue against taking proper measures to provide public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety. However, the stated objective or purpose does not withstand scrutiny. To be lawful, measures which restrict the personal and property rights of individuals require not only to be for a legitimate or lawful purpose but also to be necessary for the achievement of that purpose, effective in achieving that purpose and proportionate. The

measures fail both in terms of necessity and proportionality.

2 PSI, 2015 Service Plan

The Pharmaceutical Assistants Association is totally opposed to the introduction of these rules and do not believe they are necessary, fair or workable nor will they enhance public assurance of a safe pharmacy practice and patient safety. We come to this conclusion by examining the proposed rule changes not just within the narrow context of pharmacy practice but also within the wider context of Guiding Principles of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Our contention is that these proposed rules are unnecessary, unjust and unworkable and will not enhance the safe practice of pharmacy because:

3.1 The proposed rules are unnecessary

The concept of 'Temporary Absence' has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice since 1890. From that time, pharmaceutical assistants acted on behalf of the pharmacist and carried out the functions of the pharmacist, when there was a pharmacist responsible for the pharmacy but he/she was temporarily absent.

The Pharmacy Act 2007 ensures that any absence is 'temporary' by placing onerous statutory responsibilities on supervising and superintending pharmacists making it wholly unnecessary to define "temporary absence".

Under the 2007 Act, the role of the supervising and superintendent pharmacist is prescribed in statute in a manner which clearly provides for close and personal control of the business of the pharmacy by the supervising pharmacist. The 2007 Act establishes the roles of 'superintendent' and 'supervising' pharmacists, and places the clinical and professional management and accountability of a retail pharmacy business within these two key-roles, in co-operation with the pharmacy owner. The requirement for pharmacist operation of a pharmacy practice is contained in sections 27(d), 28(c) and 29(d), which state that:

"the sale and supply of medicinal products in the premises in which the business is carried on is conducted in those premises ... by or under the personal supervision of a registered pharmacist".

The requirement for a Supervising Pharmacist is contained in sections 27(c), 28(b) and 29(c) which state that at the premises where a retail pharmacy business is carried on, there must be:

"a registered pharmacist who has a 3 year minimum post-registration experience in whole time charge of the carrying on of the

business there”.

The requirement for a Superintendent Pharmacist is contained in sections 27(b), 28(a) and 29(b)

which states that in the carrying on of a retail pharmacy business:

“the part of the business that consists of the management and administration of the sale and supply of medicinal products is under the personal control of a registered pharmacist who has a 3 year minimum post-registration experience”.

The Regulation of Retail Pharmacy Business Regulations 2008 (Section 18 regulations) and the Retail Pharmacy Business Registration Rules 2008 further set out requirements in respect of the roles, and have implications in practice, as does the statutory Code of Conduct all of which combine to ensure that no pharmacy is operated unless there is a registered pharmacist in whole time charge and personal supervision by a pharmacist of the sale and supply of medicinal products.

The PAA contend that as the supervising pharmacist must be sufficiently present in the pharmacy to discharge his or her statutory obligations under the Act, this in turn ensures that any absence is “temporary”, thereby obviating the necessity for any restriction on the pharmaceutical assistant..

3.2 The proposed rules are unjust

The proposed rules interfere with pharmaceutical assistants’ right to work

The Government, and through it, Civil and Public bodies, has the primary responsibility to uphold human rights. The

Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) is an independent statutory body, established by the Pharmacy Act 2007 and is one such public body. Hence the PSI and its committees are obliged to carry out their functions in a way that is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. Human rights are universally agreed basic standards which belong to everyone and which aim to ensure that every person is treated with dignity and respect. They include rights protected under the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, such as the right to work. We know of no other profession in which special measures prescribing terms of employment in such restrictive manner has occurred. We have recently conducted a survey (February, 2016) to establish what the actual impact of the measures is likely to be on current work practices of our

members. The statistical assessment of responses confirms that the measures, if introduced, will result in further job losses for pharmaceutical assistants. Whilst clearly the proposed measures restrict future employment prospects of members very significantly, in our questionnaire we asked members specifically as to whether Rules 6 and 7 would have an impact on their current employment. In a recent survey (Feb 2016) carried out by the PAA, the following emerges:

Rule 6 – A pharmacy owner or superintendent pharmacist shall not operate a retail pharmacy business in the temporary absence of a registered pharmacist unless:

a. the period of temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week, and b. the conditions in Rule 7 and Rule 8 are met.

45% cover more than 12 hours per week, with 32% of these covering 13 to 20 hours

100% cover emergency hours, 92% cover holidays, 5% are no longer asked to cover holidays as in Inspection reports this clause was omitted in draft Code of Practice sent to pharmacies

Rule 7 – A pharmacy owner or superintendent pharmacist of a registered retail pharmacy business where a registered pharmaceutical assistant acts in the temporary absence of a registered pharmacist, shall not permit the pharmaceutical assistant to act during any period of temporary absence unless the pharmaceutical assistant has provided 12 hours of skilled assistance in

the previous month at the same registered retail pharmacy business.

39% do not work or work less than 3 hours per week with pharmacist.

10% of total respondents cover one day a week so these people do not work with pharmacist

What is manifest from the above is that a very significant number of Pharmaceutical Assistants will either lose their jobs or be required to suffer loss of earnings and/or changes terms and conditions of employment if the proposed measures are introduced.

In determining if new provisions, such as the proposed rules, are compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, these rules are subject to a test of proportionality. Proportionality requires that where a decision is taken to restrict a right, the restriction must not be more than is necessary. Hence the objective of what is proposed must be of sufficient importance to warrant over-riding a constitutionally protected right and must relate to concerns pressing and

substantial. The means chosen must be rationally connected to the objective and not be based on irrational considerations, must impair the right as little as possible and the effects on rights must be proportionate to the objective.

The objective of these proposed rules on 'temporary absence' is to address public assurance of a safe pharmacy practice and patient safety. The means chosen, defining 'temporary absence' to 12 hours per week, is not rationally connected to these objectives and is not based on evidence of any kind. The rule begs the question as to how a person may be competent to act on

behalf of a pharmacist for 12 hours and become incompetent on the 13th hour.

If adopted these rule will interfere with the right of pharmaceutical assistants to earn a livelihood and practice their profession. This observation is based on evidence from the findings of our 2016 survey, where

60% of PAs work 12 to 29 hours per week (over half of these cover in excess of 12 hours per week), 30% work between 30 and 40 hours (half of these cover in excess of 12 hours per week) and 10% work less than 12 hours per week, usually one day a week in a pharmacy they have worked in for years. The proposed rules therefore have the potential to impact negatively on the work practices of these 220 pharmaceutical assistants.

100% cover emergency hours, 92% cover holidays. The proposed rules will mean that approximately 360 pharmaceutical assistants will no longer be able to provide holiday cover in the pharmacy they have worked in for many years, once again negatively impacting on their earnings and work practices.

The majority have worked in the same pharmacy for over 18 years, with 22% working in the same pharmacy for 30 years or more. This gives an indication of their depth of knowledge of their customers and experience of pharmacy practice, surely an indicator for safe pharmacy practice

97% are permanently employed in the pharmacies they work in.

To address the objective of public assurance of a safe pharmacy practice and patient safety, the PAA contend that a rational approach would be to ensure pharmaceutical assistants registered with the PSI are subject to mandatory CPD and Fitness to Practice requirements rather than through the draconian imposition of arbitrary time constraints and the abdication of responsibility for ensuring pharmaceutical assistants have the requisite skills to the supervising pharmacists. The

PSI, as the statutory regulator and keeper of the register of pharmaceutical assistants, is failing in its duty to the public and the practice of safe pharmacy by not ensuring pharmaceutical assistants were included in the PSI (CPD) Rules 2015, which make CPD mandatory for pharmacists. Nor have the PSI sought to have pharmaceutical assistants included in the new Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill to amend the Medical Practitioners Act 2007, the Dental Act 1985, the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005, the Pharmacy Act 2007 and the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011 to update Fitness to Practice regulations for all such healthcare professionals.

3.3 The proposed rules are unworkable

The proposed rules do not take into account the challenges any business or service faces in day to day life such as illness, death, family responsibilities etc. If imposed, it will become an offence for a pharmacist to allow their 'temporary absence' be covered by a pharmaceutical assistant, 5 minutes over 12 hours. In the 'real' world how is this understanding of 'temporary absence' workable. Should the pharmacy close their door at 5 minutes past the 12th hour and leave patients without their medicines, even though if these same patients had come for their medication at 5 minutes before the 12th hour, the pharmaceutical assistant is legally entitled to dispense their medication.

4. Conclusion

Section 30(2) of the 2007 Act vests the Council of the PSI with a power to introduce rules defining what is meant by "temporary absence". The said provision creates a power which must be exercised for a purpose contemplated by the legislation, in a manner which complies with the requirements of constitutional justice and in a manner which has due regard to the vindication of the rights of persons affected by the measure. There is a presumption when exercising any statutory power that it will not be exercised so as to deprive persons of an otherwise lawful right. The PAA contend that imposing the draft rules outlined in the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016 restrict the legal right of pharmaceutical assistants. The proposed measures are excessively restrictive and will result in job losses and loss of earnings for our members. If adopted in their current form they will give rise to a disproportionate interference with the practice of the profession in a manner which constitutes an unjust attack on the right of the PA to earn a living and/or the PA's property right in their educational qualification and professional training. No adequate justification for measures of this nature have been identified.

Having achieved a qualification under the 'old PSI' that set out the parameters and expectations for a career pathway and associated earnings, pharmaceutical assistants have a legitimate expectation that the parameters will not be altered in a way that is unreasonable and adversely affects them, particularly without compensation. No proposals have been made to compensate pharmaceutical assistants for loss of employment, loss of earnings, loss of employment opportunity and damage to personal rights. Any measure which has the effect of expropriating a pharmaceutical assistant by restricting their ability to work could only be compatible with the requirements of the Irish Constitution or the Convention, where it was shown to be absolutely

	<p>necessary in the interests of the common good (which these measures have not) and provision is also made to compensate pharmaceutical assistants for inevitable damage and losses which would ensue.</p> <p>Finally, we respectfully suggest that as these measures which clearly operate as a restraint of trade, the PSI should seek advice from the Competition Authority as to the competition law implications of a measure which restricts the ability of pharmaceutical assistants to compete for work to the benefit of registered pharmacists noting that in introducing these regulations the PSI has a dual role both as representative body comprised of members of the pharmacy profession, many of whom are individual undertakings in their own right, and as regulator.</p>	
290.	Carmel O'Connor	
	<p>As a Pharmaceutical Assistant by examination with over 30 yrs retail experience in a caring profession dealing with patients and the public, helping them in understanding their medication both prescribed or in selecting over the counter preparations best suited to there needs, helping other health professional with queries regarding patients, drugs, interactions, appliances, etc.I find it very demeaning that our qualification is being degraded time and time again by regulators who have qualified in a similar profession at a higher level.</p> <p>In times past a lot of Pharmacist received some of there best training from Pharmaceutical Ass. when doing there pre-reg year and when gaining experience doing locum work. This I have being told from young pharmacists that have done locum work with me where I am currently employed.</p> <p>As a Pharmaceutical Assistant my aim at work is to deliver a service in a competent, professional, and an ethical manner of the highest standard to each individual I deal with daily.</p> <p>I fail to understand what treat we pose?</p> <p>And why 'temporary absence ' in terms of hours needs to be defined.</p> <p>Other Professional bodies have sought to improve the quality of their product/service by means of Continuous Professional Development stipulating both the Quantity and Quality of the CPD. This educated approach would be more beneficial to both the Customer and all who serve.</p>	
291.	Bernard Grogan	

	<p>We have employed a pharmaceutical qualified assistant, XXXXXXXX, in our pharmacy for over 12 years. XXXX has demonstrated exemplary professional performance and conduct in carrying out her duties as a pharmaceutical qualified assistant and utilises her skills in a competent manner. I am always confident in allowing XXXX to deputise for me in my temporary absence as outlined in the current guidelines. These guidelines worked particularly well when I was absent for my two week annual holiday and XXXX deputised in a confident and safe manner each year. This arrangement works especially well in smaller pharmacies that for economic reasons don't have many dispensary staff and the pharmaceutical qualified assistant, who works each week, enables the pharmacy to work seamlessly in the absence of the supervising pharmacist and ensures a continuity of pharmaceutical care.</p> <p>Therefore, the removal of their right to cover the absence of 14 days holidays would be very detrimental to smaller pharmacies that employ a pharmaceutical qualified assistant and may make their employment unsustainable. In addition, their employment viability will be further reduced if pharmaceutical qualified assistants are not allowed to cover for unscheduled short absences such as illness or funerals.</p> <p>To date, I am unaware of any public health safety concerns arising from the current arrangements governing the code of practice for pharmaceutical qualified assistants. Is there an evidential basis with statistical validity to demonstrate that pharmaceutical qualified assistants exhibit poorer professional performance in their dispensing and advice roles in comparison to pharmacists? The rationale of permitting pharmaceutical qualified assistants to have full professional control of a pharmacy for 12 hours a week for 52 weeks in the year in the temporary absence of a pharmacist but not to be trusted to cover a two week holiday or unscheduled absence would seem unjustified and illogical.</p> <p>The new rules failed to include pharmaceutical qualified assistants in mandatory C.P.D. and Fitness to Practice. This should be rectified to ensure ongoing professional competency for pharmaceutical qualified assistants and would lend to no compromise in patient care.</p> <p>I believe it is unfair to diminish and alter the current status of pharmaceutical qualified assistants. To this end, I hope that the P. S. I. reinstate the provision for pharmaceutical qualified assistants to cover 14 days of a pharmacist's holidays or unscheduled short absences and also subject pharmaceutical qualified assistants to mandatory C.P.D. and Fitness to Practice.</p>	
292.	Carole O'Connor	

	<p>I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in 1977, and now, after almost forty years uninterrupted experience, I am deeply offended that the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland has recommended downgrading my role to the extent that an assistant would, in the future, be permitted to cover the absence of a pharmacist for a mere twelve hours per week.</p> <p>I believe that after my years working in XXXXXXXX I have built up a strong and trusting relationship with customers, wholesalers and members of the medical profession and have gained much knowledge and understanding of dispensing that can only be achieved over time.</p> <p>To date, I have been permitted to carry out my various duties as a P.A. by the P.S.I. for forty years and now the status quo is no longer to be regarded as "legal". When I decided to undertake this course of studies it was under a totally different situation to what is now being proposed. I do not comprehend the logic or the reasons for reducing the time element of my "covering duties" at this stage. I realise that a P.A. does not have the right to cover a pharmacy outright, but if this new recommendation comes to pass I cannot understand how it will be henceforth illegal for me to do in the future the same job as I have been carrying out up to now. It will immediately endanger my own position and that of other P.As throughout Ireland. I currently work 39 hours on a weekly basis and my terms of employment dictate that I be available to cover for the resident pharmacist for <u>more</u> than the 12 hours per week suggested, to cover holidays, sick leave, lunch breaks, late openings etc. Consequentially, I now fear for my position with my current employer.</p> <p>I believe this proposal is totally unjust. Personally I have attended over 90% of courses and further education programmes organised by the I.P.U. Academy, and, as can be verified by my present, or any of my previous employers, I have remained up to date and au fait with recent developments and advances in the pharmaceutical sphere.</p> <p>I strongly urge the P.S.I. to reconsider their stance on this issue. It will cause pay reductions and redundancy in many instances and will result in unnecessary disruption to pharmacists and business owners and result in many owners having to reorganise their entire organisation.</p> <p>Carole O'Connor</p>	
293.	Margo Ryan	

	<p>to whom it concerns,my name is Margaret assumpta Ryan. i qualified as a pharmacy assistant in may 1972 req. no XXXXX.i wish to have temporary absence unchanged and undefined,i always understood that having passed my exams including forensic pharmacy that I could cover for my boss at anytime when she was ill or on away from her shop for any unforeseen event.i hope and trust that ye wont make any rash decision on changing temporary absence.yours sincerely Margaret(margo)ryan</p>	
294.	Ruth Halliday	
	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing in response to the draft / proposed changes in the definition of the Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants Rules 2016.</p> <p>My mother has worked as a Pharmaceutical Assistant for 40+ years and throughout this time she has provided a professional, safe service and advice to her customers and has become a trusted member of the local community.</p> <p>My mother, XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX, is hard-working, professional, responsible and extremely diligent in her job. To her customers, she is a trusted professional and someone they can rely on in times of need. I have heard from customers and colleagues alike, over many many years how her advice and service is invaluable to them and they rely on her for private consolation with very important and private health matters.</p> <p>Working full time as a single parent, she has raised and supported x children, putting us all through 3rd level education and instilling in us a strong work ethic and high regard for education.</p> <p>With all of this in mind , I believe she deserves to feel proud of the career she has had and the service she has / still does provide to her local community.</p> <p>However, now, at the 11th hour of her career , at a time when she should be reflecting on a lifetime of hard work and great service to her community and preparing to retire with dignity, she is faced with the indignity of having to cut back work hours and deal with the prospect of no longer doing the job she has been doing for 40 years.</p> <p>We would ask you to not go ahead with the proposed changes in the definition of the Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by</p>	

	<p>Pharmaceutical Assistants Rules 2016.</p> <p>In my personal opinion, the benefits would not equal the hardship caused to the small number of effected Pharmaceutical Assistants that are working in Ireland today.</p>	
295.	Sean Hillery/Nora White	
	<p>we believe that the proposed change in the interpretation of the 'temporary absence' clause is unnecessary if one takes consideration of the age profile of Qualified Assistants,who within a period of six or seven years will no longer be in a position to discharge professional duties;the clause thus falls redundant.</p>	
296.	Patrick Staunton	
	Nothing attached	
297.	Seana Hogan	
	<p>I believe the proposed regulations on defining the Temporary Absence are limiting the practice of Pharmaceutical Assistants and could have a direct effect on their employment. I understand that The PSI feel they are not the employers of the Pharmaceutical Assistants however if the proposed regulations are introduced they cannot ignore the fact they could be creating a scenario which ultimately leads to a reduction in a persons working hours, change of job role or even loss of employment. Before any action like this be enforced I feel it would only be prudent to establish if this would be the case and if so how many Pharmaceutical Assistants would be affected. The register for Pharmaceutical Assistants is closed and the qualification is no longer being awarded, should the remaining Pharmaceutical Assistants not be accommodated in a more inclusive way? I do not get the impression that the Pharmaceutical Assistants have been included in a significant or positive way in the drafting of these regulations. At the time in which they gained their qualification this situation of covering a Temporary Absence was legal and not specifically defined as it possibly should have been. Has the option of bridging been discussed for the Assistants so that they move forward should they wish particularly if restrictions are being put on the qualifications they currently hold.</p>	

	<p>These are just some of my personal views.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p>	
298.	Karen O'Brien	
	<p>To Whom it May Concern</p> <p>Please see the below comments on the proposed definition of the temporary absence of a pharmacist;</p> <p>1. The attempt to impose a restriction on the number of hours a pharmaceutical assistant can work unsupervised is most likely a breach of the implied terms of employment between each individual pharmaceutical assistant and their employing pharmacist. In many instances the pharmaceutical assistants affected by the proposed regulations have been employed in role for 20-30 years. During this time many pharmaceutical assistants have worked a number of days without a supervising pharmacist present. This has been done in compliance with the existing legislation which does not define the words 'temporary absence'. To now force changes to the terms of employment that have been established for such a long period of time is clearly not fair to the pharmaceutical assistants or their employers. In circumstances where the employer does not have to resources to employ a supervising pharmacist to comply with the proposed definition of temporary absence, it would seem inevitable that the employer can no longer continue to employ the pharmaceutical assistant on the terms of their employment contract. The proposed action by the PSI will in effect result in the constructive dismissal of the pharmaceutical assistant.</p> <p>2. While in theory there is an argument that there is a real need to define 'temporary absence', the actual effect of this is the restriction of the rights of pharmaceutical assistants to continue to work in the role in which they are qualified in and is a clear discrimination of the (majority) female part time workers that it affects. The is in breach of established EU principals.</p>	
299.	Danny Kelly	
	<p>I wish to add my voice to the list of of people expressing our dissatisfaction with your proposed changes to the role of the assistant pharmacists. To demean their role and devalue it after all these years is , simply shortsighted and unacceptable. I would respectfully ask you the psi to reconsider your intentions , and instead better support these hard working and dedicated professionals.</p>	
300.	Margaret Murphy	
	<p>I am a qualified pharmaceutical assistant. I have been qualified for the last 38 years. During that time I have worked full time and part time. For the past few years I have been working 16 hours per week . I have always covered the shop in the temporary</p>	

	absence of the pharmacist when needed; this included days off, sick days, holidays etc. I have always been legally entitled to do this but with the new proposed draft rules I would be less employable and this would impact on my earnings.	
301.	Celia McGee	
	I would like to support the pharmaceutical assistants in this consultation process. I feel that the hours proposed as temporary absence is an insult to those assistants who have worked with their employers for years and have accumulated a wealth of knowledge and experience which is unequalled. In my opinion the patient could not be in safer hands. I propose that at least 30 hours a week be allowed for exceptional circumstances in the pharmacy, such as a death etc and that the lower limit should not be below 20 hours. The pharmaceutical assistants have served pharmacy well over the years and it is an injustice to deny them their rights. They served their apprenticeships in the practice of community pharmacy and are more than well trained. thank you for your attention, sincerely	
302.	Audrey Curtin	
	<p>As a member of the public i wish to make a submission on the above draft rules..</p> <p>I have a problem with rule 6 and 7.</p> <p>Rule 6 i understand the psi feels that there is a health risk that after 12 hours a week that the pharmacy assistant is no longer considered competent.i do not understand how a person can be competent on the 12th hour but not on the 13th hour or how they can be competent again the following week for another 12 hours.</p> <p>Pharmacy assistant s have for many years worked in the temporary absence of a pharmacist how now all of a sudden does it make sense to reduce the number of hours they are allowed to cover suggestion that they are not capable on the 13 th hour ..i'm concerned that the psi are sending mixed messages to the public about the people they educated and trusted all these years to work in the temporary absence of the pharmacist and now I feel the psi are saying PA aren't qualified after the 12 th hour.who the psi educated!</p> <p>If this rule does follow through i feel the psi will be denying the public and the customers of the pharmacy of where they work the advantage of the years experience and knowledge that pharmacy assistant s have .</p> <p>Also most pharmacy assistant s have worked in the same work place for many years and have built up trust and good relationship with the customers. Temporary locums lack the knowledge of regular customers and don't have the same relationship .this is a valuable skill and unfortunately is dying out as more and more temporary cover is required.</p>	

	<p>Rule 7</p> <p>I do not understand the need for the pharmacy assistant to perform "skilled assistance "for a specified time on an ongoing basis . Once the supervising pharmacist is confident that a person is capable and competent that should be enough. The qualification that assistants have has stood the test of time for many years it .I don't feel its fair to change someone s qualifications after all these years.I feel the psi will bring about the demise of an entire register of people they themselves qualified thats what will happen if these rules become law. I do not feel these rules are fair please do not this on my behalf.</p>	
303.	Eileen O'Donovan	
	<p>I have worked consistently as a pharmaceutical assistant since I qualified in April 1980 I returned to XXXXXXXXXXXX to work full time with X X XXXXXXXX MPSI .During that time I was fully responsible for all prescriptions dispensed. Following his death I worked in a similar capacity with his wife XXXX XXXXXXXX MPSI .After her death the shop has become part of the XXXXXX XXXXX. I now work 19 hours per week .I normally provide at least one day cover.</p> <p>Regarding temporary absence it was not defined when I enrolled for my course ,or when I qualified I feel Qualified Assistants provide a vital role in pharmacies. Due to our age profile now I feel it would constitute Age Discrimination and would also be sexist if any negative definition of temporary absence were introduced It has never been a problem for me, thus I feel it cannot become one now. ..</p>	
304.	<p>Theresa Downing, Siobhain Downing,</p> <p>Lynda Downing</p> <p>Christine Matthews Lisa Downing H.C.A.</p>	
	<p>We the undersigned object to the motion of demoting those who qualified under the auspices of The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. It is we feel contrary to women,s social and economic rights. The European Convention of human Rights affirms certain members of society cannot be discriminated against, i.e. women of a certain age. These women took their exams under the rules of the Pharmaceutical Society and qualified. Their abundance of knowledge and years of experience cannot be ignored and cast aside in favour of those who qualified since the degree came into being</p>	
305.	Niamh Ryan	
	<p>I write to you as a concerned member of the Public regarding, The Draft Proposals re Temporary Absence. I know and have used a lot of Qualified Pharmacy Assistants over the years as they cover Chemists time and days off.</p>	

	<p>I cannot not agree with the new proposals which are not “Fair and Workable” regarding breaking the law should the suggested 12 hours run out.</p> <p>The Qualified Assistant position has stood for 50 years now and I don’t see any need to change it now.</p> <p>In summary, I do not consider the draft proposal to be either Fair or Workable.</p>	
306.	Dervla Browne	
	<p>I believe that there are real legal issues and difficulties in the Society enacting these rules. I have not had the opportunity to completely review the relevant legislation , and my comments herein are necessarily broad, and arise out of my review of the information available on the Pharmaceutical Society’s website.</p> <p>(1) I would question the power or <i>vires</i> of the Council to legislate in this manner. The 2007 Act appears to be the first piece of legislation to enable the Council to define the meaning of “temporary absence”. The pre-existing legislation did not include a definition and did not enable the old Council to carry out this function. Therefore the old Council’s purported regulation in 1994 was always ultra vires the Council.</p> <p>(2) Further it now seems the 2007 Act allows the Council to amend previous legislation. Surely this is a matter for the Dail only? I would think that any attempt so to do could be subject to legal challenge.</p> <p>(3) Surely only a court can determine what is meant by “temporary absence.” Applying the general principles of statutory interpretation, this must bear its ordinary and natural meaning. Plus it must be defined in the context of the rest of the wording – on the basis that the other restriction is not being able to open one’s own shop, this would lead me to assume that temporary absence means just that – the chemist is not permanently absent, but would include filling in for holidays etc. The imposition of artificial times etc is in my opinion entirely corrupting the meaning of the legislation. (in this regard see Riordan –v- An Tanaiste 1995)</p> <p>(4) It appears that all PAs qualified and both pharmacists and PAs contracted under the old legislation. If this is so then how</p>	

	<p>can their work practices and contracts be changed by either the 1994 regulation, and more pertinently the present purported regulations?</p> <p>(5) I think the proposed regulation in restricting and changing such practice could give rise to litigation by PAs and pharmacists relying on “legitimate expectation”; constitutional rights and rights protected under the Convention on Human Rights</p> <p>(6) Further there is a real risk of class action arising from the gender make up of PAs. It appears that a large majority of same are older women who have worked for years without incidence.</p> <p>(7) The responsibility of the Society in the sector appears to be general and I do not think it mandates such specific interference. Is it not the Superintendent pharmacist that has legislative and professional obligations to ensure that all staff under his /her management have the requisite knowledge , skills, including language skills and fitness to perform the work for which they are, or are to be responsible ? (ref. regulation 5(1)(h) of The Regulation of Retail Pharmacy Businesses Regulations 2008).</p> <p>If this is so, any attempt by the Society to take on that role may have unintended consequences, leading to the imposition of liability where none could be imposed if no regulatory steps were taken</p> <p>(8) There is no evidence that public safety or health has been endangered up until now. There is no proportionate or rational basis for the imposition of rules which interfere with the right to work.</p> <p>In these circumstances, in my considered view, subject to the provisos set out above, I think these proposals will most likely give rise to litigation. They appear to be unnecessary and disproportionate and are very possibly an unlawful exercise of the Council’s powers.</p> <p>I am happy to comment further, and apologize for the lack of detail herein, due to lack of time.</p>	
307.	Brendan Dunne	

	<p>My wife is a Pharmaceutical Assistant and has worked as such for 38 years since qualifying. I understand that a process is underway within the PSI that will undermine her qualifications and life's work and may result in her been made redundant. I also understand that she is among approx 400 people working as Pharmaceutical Assistants who also happen to be mostly women. I do not understand the unfairness been shown to these people. They are many years qualified and their qualifications have not been a problem heretofore. To threaten so many jobs seem to me complete madness. These people are nearing the end of their careers. Many of the employers are also angry at what they are seeing from the PSI but may not say so directly to the PSI. Some of their business will be adversely effected and may have to close.</p> <p>My wife is the main bread winner in our house. We still have a mortgage to pay and a daughter to get through college and your decisions against the Assistants will jeopardize all of this. The Pharmaceutical Assistants work in a professional manner and have the respect of the public and employers throughout the country. In these times of continuing economic uncertainty the PSI appears to be acting in a manner that says " we hear you but we are not listening" I would say 400 people suddenly made unemployed will make a lot of noise to hear and definitely be listened to.</p>	
308.	Deborah Carolan	
	<p>I am a registered pharmacist since 1997. During the course of my career I have worked with 4 registered pharmaceutical assistants, although i no longer do so in my current role.</p> <p>I found each of these former colleagues to be a credit to the profession of pharmacy, and observed that they took their role and responsibility for patient care very seriously.</p> <p>I also learned a lot from the experience of my pharmacist assistant colleagues, especially in the early years of my career. I found that working with these colleagues contributed to my own professional development, particularly in the core competency areas of decision making, team working and communications skills, and and those involved in the "safe and rational use of medicines" i.e. those skills that only develop over time, and with experience.</p> <p>I feel that our registered pharmaceutical assistant colleagues are a valuable resource to the profession, and should be allowed to continue to contribute their skills, knowlege and experience to the future of our profession, as was their expectation when they trained and registered as pharmaceutical assistants.</p> <p>In my opinion, the proposed regulations to limit the number of hours a registered pharmaceutical assistant can work in the temporary absence of a pharmacist to 12 hours per week is unnecessarily rigid, and proposes a real risk to the future employment</p>	

	<p>prospects of registered pharmaceutical assistants.</p> <p>If I were the owner of a retail pharmacy business, I would question the usefulness of employing a pharmaceutical assistant when, in all likelihood, I would still have to employ a pharmacist or engage a locum pharmacist to cover annual leave, and other scheduled and unscheduled absences such as sick leave, medical appointments, force majeure and leave to attend funerals, courses etc.</p> <p>In order for pharmaceutical assistants to have a future in the profession of pharmacy, there needs to be a more flexible approach to the concept of "temporary absence", as there has been since the inception of the qualification.</p> <p>Those of our colleagues who registered as pharmaceutical assistants began their professional careers with the expectation of being able to work in a far more flexible manner than the proposed regulations will allow. I feel that that to enact the regulations would be unfair to this group of professionals at such a late stage in their careers. It is my understanding that all of those pharmaceutical assistants currently registered will reach retirement age within the next ten years.</p> <p>It is the nature of any profession to be subject to continuous change and development, and it is necessary for the regulation of professions to be updated accordingly. However, how would those of us pharmacists who qualified with a BScPharm react if, late in our careers, we were no longer allowed to work in the same manner as we had done throughout our professional lives because an MPharm, held by newly qualified pharmacists, was deemed necessary?</p> <p>I feel that pharmaceutical assistants, with their long service and experience, continue to have a lot to offer to the public and to the profession of pharmacy. If these colleagues are allowed to continue to work as they have done for many years, especially, as in recent times, under the guidance of a supervising and superintendent pharmacist, it would pose no risk to the public.</p>	
309.	Marjorie Christina Corcoran	
	<p>I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in 1967 (49 years ago) and have covered Temporary Absence including sick leave, holidays and pharmacists days off throughout my working life. Since my conferral by the PSI I was legally entitled to cover. Temporary Absence has never been defined.</p> <p>The proposed regulations seem totally illogical. How can one be qualified for 12 hours and not qualified on the 13th hour.</p>	

	<p>Also in my many years of experience Pharmaceutical Assistants provided valuable service to the profession of pharmacy and were very much respected and appreciated by Employer Pharmacists. They particularly provided a valuable service at a time when there was a severe shortage of Pharmacists.</p> <p>PAs cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of their qualification which was formulated and validated by the PSI. It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for 49 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.</p>	
310.	Ian Ryan	
	<p>I write to you as a concerned member of the Public regarding, The Draft Proposals re Temporary Absence. I know and have used a lot of Qualified Pharmacy Assistants over the years as they cover Chemists time and days off.</p> <p>I cannot not agree with the new proposals which are not "Fair and Workable" regarding braking the law should the suggested 12 hours run out.</p> <p>The Qualified Assistant position has stood for 50 years now and I don't see any need to change it now.</p> <p>In summary, I do not consider the draft proposal to be either Fair or Workable.</p>	
311.	Marcus Breslin	
	<p>To whom it may concern</p> <p>I would like to make a few points about pharmaceutical assistants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They have been very useful, efficient and professional in their duties over all of the years I have been in pharmacy - As they are no longer being trained i think that the ambiguity over their qualification should be just let run out as they naturally retire from service over the coming decade. - If the society wishes to clarify their situation legally they should just convert their qualification into ordinary pharmacists as they have effectively been practising as such all of their long woking lives. I think that there is a precedent in relation to druggists. - I am not aware of there being any significant malpractice issues surrounding their work. - I do not believe that the public or the pharmacy community have a strong interest in effectively downgrading their qualification. - An attempt to crystallise the exact meaning of the very loose concept of temporary absence is bound to be subjective and prejudicial. - They have a right under the constitution to freely carry out their business under the law. - For goodness sake leave them alone 	
312.	Michael Quinn	

	<p>My name is Michael Quinn and I am the owner of XXXXXXXX Pharmacy, for the last 34 years.</p> <p>When I bought the pharmacy all those years ago XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX, who is a qualified pharmaceutical assistant, had already been working at XXXXXXXX for the previous 3 years. XXXXXXXX is now 37 years at XXXXXXXX. XXXX XXXXX, also a qualified pharmaceutical assistant, joined us a few years later.</p> <p>I am now being informed that the maximum these two staff can work at XXXXXXXX is 12 hours per week. How is this fair on these two members of staff who have given their lives to serve the community of XXXXXXXX/XXXXXX and the greater XXXXX XXXXXX area for all these years? XXXXXXXX Pharmacy has remained open for the last 34 years, seven days a week, 365 days a year and these two staff members never missed a day yet of their rosters in helping and listening and advising all the people that passed through our doors.</p> <p>The IPU continually stress to us the members ' the importance of community pharmacy' and now I, as the owner, am being asked by the PSI to limit to a few hours a week the involvement of these two professional and dedicated team players .To these two staff members working at XXXXXXXX, has been a vocation and commitment to the people of XXXXX XXXXXX who have always needed and appreciated them. It defies logic and sense why the PSI would want to stop these staff members continuing their commitment to helping and caring for the community in which they both live themselves. If the PSI have any concerns about these two dedicated peoples ability to continue in their profession then surely the answer is to request them to take part in mandatory continuing preoffesional development. Surely that is what community pharmacy is all about .</p>	
313.	Maria Ryan	

	<p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant No. XXXX. I wish to make the following submission.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I never agreed to the Draft Code Of Practice. 2. I have not been working in accordance with the Draft Code Of Practice. I have always been employed on a different understanding of “Temporary Absence” <p>I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferral and registration nearly thirty years ago now.</p> <p>I cannot accept any diminution of this qualification post conferral to a post that I undertook in good faith which we formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI.</p> <p>I have always been legally entitles to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for their entitlement to days off, holiday cover and for sick leave etc.</p> <p>I cannot not agree with the new proposals which are not “Fair and Workable” regarding braking the lawshould the suggested 12 hours run out.</p> <p>The Qualified Assistant position has stood for 50 years now and I don’t see any need to change it now.</p> <p>In summary, I do not consider the draft proposal to be either Fair or Workable.</p>	
314.	Caroline McGrath Boots	
	<p>Boots Ireland (Boots.ie) is a leading pharmacy-led health and beauty retailer and a part of the Retail Pharmacy International Division of Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc. (Nasdaq: WBA), the first global pharmacy-led, health and wellbeing enterprise. With 80 pharmacy stores in the Republic of Ireland, Boots Ireland’s purpose is to help customers look and feel better than they ever thought possible. Customers are at the heart of the Boots Ireland business which is committed to providing exceptional customer and patient care, be the first choice for pharmacy and healthcare, offer innovative products, all delivered with the great value our customers love. Established in Ireland since 1996, the Boots brand is at the heart of the communities it serves.</p> <p>Boots welcomes the proposed clarification of the meaning of the term “temporary absence” within the terms of the Pharmacy Act 2007, as amended. The proposed definition allowing a pharmaceutical assistant to provide skilled assistance in a retail pharmacy business for up to 12 hours per week in the absence of a pharmacist provided they have worked with a pharmacist in the same retail pharmacy business for 12 hours in the previous month seems reasonable, and removes any ambiguity concerning the operation of the Temporary Absence Agreement of 1994 for pharmacists, pharmacy owners and pharmaceutical assistants alike.</p>	

	<p>It is noted that the Pharmacy Act 2007 does not provide any mechanism for the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland to regulate the completion of any continuing professional development activities by pharmaceutical assistants or to subject pharmaceutical assistants to any disciplinary proceedings in the investigation of any complaints. It is submitted that introduction of such measures would facilitate pharmacy owners and Superintendent and Supervising Pharmacists to discharge their responsibility to assure patient safety in their practice settings. In this regard, the PSI should seek to influence the Minister for Health to address this lacuna with the introduction of amendments to the Pharmacy Act 2007 to facilitate such measures.</p>	
315.	<p>Luke Baxter</p>	
	<p>First of all it is not explained in your email why this "Temporary Absence" saga has arisen again - is there a problem that we don't know about - I don't know or have not heard.</p> <p>2. Your email fails to mention part of the 1994 agreement with the PAA in regard to "standard holidays".</p> <p>3. I would imagine that failing agreement with the PAA, only the Courts can offer a solution and who wants to go to Court?</p> <p>4. I recall some district court case about 30 years ago where the judge found in favour of the PAA - I think that the Courts would not look favourably on taking away a right that the Assistants have enjoyed for over 100 years - if a PA can do the job today, why can they not do it tomorrow? I just cannot see the PSI winning in the Courts - furthermore there might also be a huge costs element involved here as well. An imposed decision on the part of the PSI will almost certainly I would imagine be challenged in the Courts.</p> <p>5. If it is a case that the new Supervising / Superintendant pharmacist Regulations fail to cope with the PA, then I would think that the Courts might find the PSI negligent in not ensuring that the rights of Assistants were enshrined in some way to protect them in the new Regulation at that time.</p> <p>6, If I understand it correctly, according to the 2007 Act, the PSI can only attempt to define Temporary Absence with the permission of the Minister for Health - well in the current climate I do not think that any Minister for Health will be responsible for curbing 120 year old Rights overnight and upsetting over 400 Assistants.</p> <p>I genuinely feel that this is an unnecessary step by the PSI - the Assistants, unfortunately are a dying breed in any event and the problem will cease to exist (but create more problems as regards manpower down the country), in a few years time. Let sleeping</p>	

	<p>dogs lie!</p> <p>There are plenty of more urgent items that the PSI might attend to - one of these, an old chestnut of mine, is the almost non existence of a relationship between pharmacists and GPs, particularly the younger ones - with the odd exception. In 30 years I have met my GPs at official level only once and that was about 25 years ago and only under HSE pressure at that time did they meet us - some of them do not welcome any counselling on our part or putting into practice what the PSI and IPU advise - they don't see a role for us here.</p>	
316.	Caroline Moynan	
	<p>I am writing in support of the current arrangements in place for "Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants", which have been in place before the Pharmacy Act 2007 came into effect.</p> <p>I work as a Pharmacist at XXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXX. Mrs XXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXX has acted as a Pharmaceutical Assistant at this pharmacy for at least 25 years.Two full time pharmacists also work at this pharmacy and would only require "temporary absence cover" for days off, illness, lunchtime cover and holidays.</p> <p>Any changes that occur to the definition of temporary absence and the role of Pharmaceutical Assistants would therefore undermine their existing employment contractual arrangements. Their responsibility and qualification would therefore be diminished by the implementation of the proposed changes.</p> <p>As outlined on the PSI website the current position regarding the concept of "temporary absence" has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice under the Pharmacy Act since 1890. It is synonymous with "not permanent", i.e. to conduct business on own accord as agreed with the PPA in 1994.It is related to context and depends on the facts of a particular situation.</p> <p>I trust our Pharmaceutical Assistant with the care of our patients and customers as she has done so over the past 25 years. I could not say that for an unknown locum Pharmacist who may or may not have the correct attitude,empathy or dedication to customer service. The PSI are committed to the safety of patients and the public as their highest priority. I do not believe this amendment to the Pharmacy Act is in the best interest of patients and the public who benefit from the skills ,experience and common sense of these members of the pharmacy profession.</p>	

	Please consider these points before passing judgement on the proposed amendment. It would be a retrograde step to diminish the qualification of Pharmaceutical Assistants who have already operated under the existing Pharmacy Act 2007 for almost ten years. If this issue was of high importance to the safety of the public it should have been highlighted during the drafting of the Act.	
317.	Marion Kennedy	
	<p>My name is Marion Kennedy and i am proud of my qualification as a pharmaceutical assistant. I work part time and would like this situation to continue. My boss is happy to leave her business and patients in my care.She feels they are familiar and comfortable with me and relax.In a rural community familiarity is all important. I would like temporary absence to be undefined,,,,,That is i can cover for my employer in her absence be it a day or a week or if she is ill. please contact me at XXX. Tempory absence in my book should continue to be undefined.If it is defined i will not have employment</p>	
318.	Catherine Cahill	
	<p>My name is Catherine Cahill and i am a qualified pharmaceutical assistant working 25 hours per week. I would wish temporary absence to remain undefined as it was when I qualified.I would like to continue cover in the absence of my boss if he is ill or on holiday or on a day off.I accept i cannot open my own shop but as we are a dying breed i feel that temporary absence should be undefined to enable those of us willing to work to continue.I hope to work for ten more years God willing and as i have two children in college i need to be able to continue to work. If temporary absence is defined i may be out of work. My brother XXXXXX XXXXXX T.D. will also be fighting this issue on our behalf.</p> <p>I feel that as there are so few of us left temporary absence should be undefined as it was when i received my qualification</p>	
319.	Howard Coburn	
	<p>I am writing in support of the current arrangements in place for "Temporary Absence Cover by PharmaceuticalAssistants", which have been in place before the Pharmacy Act 2007 came into effect.</p> <p>I act as the Superintendent and Supervising Pharmacist at x. XXXXX XXXXX has acted as a Pharmaceutical Assistant at this pharmacy for at least 25 years. Two full time pharmacists also work at this pharmacy and would only require "temporary absence cover" for days off, illness, lunchtime cover and holidays(never any longer than two weeks if at all).</p>	

	<p>Any changes that occur to the definition of temporary absence and the role of Pharmaceutical Assistants would therefore undermine their existing employment contractual arrangements. Their responsibility and qualification would therefore be diminished by the implementation of the proposed changes.</p> <p>As outlined on the PSI website the current position regarding the concept of "temporary absence" has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice under the Pharmacy Act since 1890. It is synonymous with "not permanent", i.e. to conduct business on own accord as agreed with the PPA in 1994. It is related to context and depends on the facts of a particular situation.</p> <p>I trust our Pharmaceutical Assistant with the care of our patients and customers as she has done so over the past 25 years. I could not say that for an unknown locum Pharmacist who may or may not have the correct attitude, empathy or dedication to customer service. The PSI are committed to the safety of patients and the public as their highest priority. I do not believe this amendment to the Pharmacy Act is in the best interest of patients and the public who benefit from the skills, experience and common sense of these members of the pharmacy profession.</p> <p>Please consider these points before passing judgement on the proposed amendment. It would be a retrograde step to diminish the qualification of Pharmaceutical Assistants who have already operated under the existing Pharmacy Act 2007 for almost ten years. If this issue was of high importance to the safety of the public it should have been highlighted during the drafting of the Act.</p> <p>Also has the Pharmaceutical Society considered the possibility of legal challenges to this proposed amendment?</p>	
320.	Margaret Deane	
	<p>I am registered since may 1974 as a qualified assisant and have worked in that capacity since then. I pay my registration fee every year without fail and have worked in several pharmacies over the years and needless to say have gained in-valuable experience of the job.</p> <p>I have also continued up dating my knowledge to the best of my ability by attending almost all the CPD course and presently the IPU academy courses.</p> <p>I do not agree with the proposal to limit temporary absence hours or to define the time of hours of absence, which would reduce the terms of my qualification and affect greatly my work prospects for the next three years until i retire.</p>	

	<p>I have always been able to cover for pharmacists when required for holidays and days off or in emergency situations in various local pharmacies in my surrounding area and have struck up a great rapport with all of them who have been very grateful of my help over the years.</p> <p>Therefore I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification which I was examined in and was privately run by the PSI.</p> <p>I have never agreed to the draft code of practice at present my hours have been reduced to eight per week from almost forty per week ,mainly because of this temporary absence issue .</p> <p>Surely all my years experience should be rewarded rather than demoting me .</p> <p>I urge you to give fair consideration to the valued experience assistants have to offer and that in less than ten years they will all have retired anyway so what is the point of all this hassle?.</p>	
321.	Elizabeth Lang	
	<p>Since 1994 the PSI have operated under the unsigned PSI Code of Practice Governing the Temporary Absence Clause of the Pharmacy Act 1890. This has allowed Pharmaceutical assistants to provide cover for lunch hours, two half days or one full day off per week and short unscheduled absences as well as two weeks annual leave.</p> <p>One aspect of the proposed new rules suggests the maximum allowable cover to be as little as 12 hours per week. This seems unduly severe. It will no longer allow the cover for lunch hours and a one full day off in any given week it will become a case of either or. This will impact on both the pharmaceutical assistant and the pharmacist they currently cover.</p> <p>As the PSI does have a duty to ensure public safety is foremost in all aspects of pharmacy service then surely it would be better to ensure pharmaceutical assistants as subject to mandatory CPD and Fitness to Practice laws similar to all practicing Pharmacists than impose restrictive and possibly unworkable constraints on them. There are only about 400 Pharmaceutical Assistants left working, all of whom have at least 30 years of service, and most are close to the age of retirement. This makes this a self-limiting issue for the PSI.</p>	

322.	Siobhan O'Neill	
	I am writing to you to confirm that I am not in favour of the proposed changes to the above.	
323.	Vyra Nayar	
	<p>I am a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant This year marks my 40th year working in pharmacy. I started my apprenticeship in 1976. Before I even got to college, the PSI were trying to limit Temporary Absence to mean four hours. I remember at the time, no one knew whether that meant per day, per week or per month? This was eventually resolved in the high Court, in a case heard by Judge Costello, resulting in the PSI having to withdraw the guideline that limited Temporary Absence to four hours. The outcome led to the old PSI having to withdraw guidelines that had interpreted temporary absence to mean four hours . The judgement reiterated that temporary absence was a matter for interpretation by a competent court to decide, in a particular case, having regard for all the surrounding circumstances. This position was confirmed once again by the then Minister for Health, Barry Desmond, in 1986, when he stated in a written answer to the Dail : “ It will be appreciated that interpretation of statutes is a matter for the courts alone to decide”.</p> <p>Despite this, a second attempt to define Temporary Absence was made in 1994. However, as discovered recently unedr the Freedom Of Information Act, this 1994 draft code has NO signed agreement underpinning it nor does it have the signature of a minister, as set out by Minister Desmond (1986) and High Court Judge Costello(1983)</p> <p>So why now, in 2016? There are less than 400 assistants left on the register. All are over 50 years old , each one with over 30 years pharmacy experience. Over 99.5% are women and the majority are working part time in same pharmacy for many years. Many are close to retirement, with little or no pension provisions.</p> <p>In times of shortages of pharmacists, we have covered shops from lunch hours to annual holidays to sudden emergencies. I have , in the past, worked outside the “94 draft code”. I spent a few years working in two shops of the one chain: covering a Monday and Friday morning in one whilst working every Saturday in another. I have also stood in at the last minute to cover late night openings and Sunday morning openings, invariably where the locum failed to appear.</p> <p>What is it about a group of older women that has the PSI so obsessed with obliterating our livelihoods at this late stage in our</p>	

careers? We have been persecuted by this threat of defining Temporary Absence for most of our working lives. One might be forgiven for thinking that it appears almost like a vendetta, as the society have insisted in pursuing the matter with such passion? To think that one of your learned colleagues was heard to remark at a public meeting of the PSI Council, that Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants were introduced to allow the pharmacist attend Mass?! This unfortunate remark could be dismissed as simply ludicrous, if it wasn't so condescending and historically incorrect.

It is incredible, in the true sense of the word, that the PSI insist on pursuing this matter, given as XXXXX (PSI executive council member) said that it is the Supervising/ Superintendent pharmacist who is responsible for the pharmacy at all times. This will cause more redundancies , as employers would not want to pay for a downgraded "skilled assistant", rather than the autonomous and qualified professional, as the law has viewed us for the last 126 years! It is important to state that we can work independently, as distinct from technicians, whose work must be supervised by a pharmacist at all times.

The proposed draft rules are unworkable. The net result will be that we will lose our jobs or have our hours reduced to the point where we will not be able to sustain ourselves and our families.

As far back as 2011,the I.P.U. has attempted to make of the PSI's stance on the matter :

"At our meeting of 24 October 2011, we discussed the issue of Pharmaceutical Assistants providing cover in the temporary absence of a pharmacist. When the Pharmacy Act was being drafted, we understood that the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) was not minded to be too prescriptive about the definition of temporary absence, as the cohort of Pharmaceutical Assistants was finite and had not given the PSI any cause for concern....."

(Mr Seamus Feeley, Secretary General I.P.U.)

The response to the I.P.U. appears to have become the mantra of the Council:

"It should also be noted that a PA is not personally accountable under the Pharmacy Act 2007, in that they are not amenable to the provisions of Part 6 of the Act nor are they required under the Act to undertake continuing professional development.....
I would point out that it is not the intention of the PSI to impact on the proper, appropriate and ongoing employment of Pas

(pharmaceutical assistants) as employees. However, you will appreciate that the PSI must act in the interest of patient safety and public protection at all times.”

(Mr. Ambrose Mcloughlin, Registrar PSI.)

Why the PSI chose to exclude Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants from Part 6 of the 2007 Pharmacy act, has never been alluded to or understood. Indeed, in my meeting with Dr Leo Varadkar, Minister for Health, he too expressed puzzlement as to why we are excluded from Fitness to Practise and Commitment to CPD, whilst the majority of healthcare professionals are not. Nor could he understand why our practise was being restricted ,rather than expanded, as is the case in other healthcare professions?

Please note that though we are not “officially” required to do CPD, we are not permitted to re-register each year, unless we confirm to the PSI, that we are remaining up to date with CPD. We are members of the I.I.O.P and many are also members of the IPU Academy.

The PSI decided, in their wisdom, to exclude us and yet this is the very stick that’s used to beat us with! And the carrot? That would be the hope that the PSI would fulfill its duty and apply to the QQI, in order to have our qualification placed on the National Qualification Framework. This would ascertain our status in academia and allow us to further our education. The chairperson of the PAA has been working on this matter since 2009...yet still we wait for the PSI to act as only they can, being the authority who both set up the training course, set out the examinations and awarded this qualification!

Does the PSI understand the vocational nature of pharmacy business at all? The beginning and end of it is the customer or client... yes, that human being who is either personally in need of our expertise or is acting on behalf of someone who does. Our certificate of qualification merely reconfirms our commitment to the responsibility we have towards our customer and to the highest standards in the delivery of care to them.

This is not just an esoteric entity such as “in the interest of public health and safety”, that the PSI spout as justification.

It strikes me that it would do no harm if some of the council members got out from behind their desks and tried working at the coal face....in a pharmacy..to experience first hand the reality of life in pharmacies all around the country.

What do you do when your boss rings you at 7.30 am to say he's at the local hospital, where his father has been taken in as critically ill and not expected to survive? DO you say...of course you will cover, don't worry about the shop, I will take care of it. Or do you hide behind some daft illogical red tape?

What do you do, when a hospital doctor writes a script for MDA drugs, on a Friday night, then disappears into the ether, leaving your terminally ill patient with a script that cant be dispensed?

There are so many situations and decisions that pharmacy staff face on a daily basis. In an ideal world, a pharmacy team could take advantage of the wisdom of the more experienced staff ,coupled with the latest expertise of the newly qualified staff , along with the regulations, to come to some decision about a crisis situation. But it seems , from your standpoint, the regulations are paramount and the patient can go to hell. Experience counts for nothing?

I fear for the future of pharmacy. Liability is now THE priority. Sadly, it used to be the patient. And the evidence is all around. The young pharmacist newly graduated are terrified of their own liability and so their decisions are based on criteria that, in many cases, will cover them but do nothing for the patient. Is it any wonder that so many young graduates are leaving pharmacy and retraining into other professions?

As for me, I know my customers appreciate my dedication to their needs. My employers have always appreciated my empathy and diligence. I know that i have worked always to the highest standard and to the best of my ability.

I will leave you with the words of one more qualified than myself:

"We require the PSI to honour the terms of the qualification it formulated, validated and examined as granted on its Certificate, which only disentitles pharmaceutical assistants from conducting or managing a business or to keep open shop on his own account. These are the terms that PAs have been working under since they graduated. We cannot accept any diminution in terms of our qualifications post conferral. No other profession would. We remind you that the majority of our member are older females with little pension entitlements and enjoy rights not to be discriminated against in employment and by our professional body pursuant to the Employment Equality Acts and the Gender Employment Directives and also the Framework Employment Directive.

We also require you to ensure that the definition of 'temporary absence' accords with how the profession of Pharmaceutical

	Assistant has been carried on since graduation, and which does not result in a diminution in our status, professional qualification and employment conditions and right to carry on a profession and earn a livelihood."	
324.	Catherine O'Reilly	
	<p>I am pharmaceutical assistant with over 40 years' experience of working in a number of community pharmacies. I am 64 years old and this has been my life's work. I worked for this qualification, with the full understanding of a specific career pathway when I started out. I have been a highly valued member of the Pharmacy community over these years providing an important service on behalf of my employers to the public. I liaise with colleagues, doctors and hospitals to provide the best possible community service to clients. My expertise, experience and work ethic have combined to deliver a dedicated service to the high standards expected of any professional. I have attended training and information days to keep abreast of new developments and medications so I can continue to provide this valuable service to the public. I receive affirmative feedback on the professionalism and beneficial service provided to clients, on a regular basis.</p> <p>It is important to state that we (Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants) can work independently, as distinct from pharmaceutical technicians, whose work must be supervised by a pharmacist at all times.</p> <p>The mission statement on the PSI Website is that they wish to "provide a fair and workable model of temporary absence and also provide public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and public safety".</p> <p>The proposed changes to our professional status suggest that there are public safety issues with the longstanding work practice of independent working arrangements with Pharmaceutical Assistants. However, the PSI has not presented any research or other evidence that shows that the current or indeed historic work practice of pharmaceutical assistants, has led to unsafe practice or patient safety issues. Pharmaceutical Assistants do not fall under Fitness to Practice regulations under the 2007 Act, whereas pharmacists do. If this is the yardstick to measure competence, then Pharmaceutical Assistants have always maintained that this should be introduced for all – pharmacists and pharmaceutical assistants. It would be both fairer and more reasonable on the regulator's part to work to introduce Fitness to Practice and CPD rules rather than to limit the hours of practice of highly experienced and responsible Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>How can it be justified that a person is fit to practice for a specified number of hours and if they work one minute above that specification they would be committing an offence? If a person is trained, qualified, and maintains competence through</p>	

	<p>compliance with Continuing Professional Development requirements, and are considered competent for twelve hours, can they be incompetent if they take responsibility for the pharmacy for more than twelve hours? Surely additional (normal) hours beyond that arbitrary twelve hour period can only add to competence and fitness to practice?</p> <p>There are approximately 400 Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants left on the register. All are over 50 years old, each one has over 30 years pharmacy experience. Over 99.5% are women and the majority are working part time in the same pharmacy for many years. Many are close to retirement, with limited pension provisions. This is a diminishing number of people with extensive experience who have given, and continue to give, valued service over the years. Pharmaceutical Assistants have been seen as a group of very professional healthcare professionals who had worked alongside pharmacists for a long time.</p> <p>Having achieved a qualification under the old PSI regulations that set out the parameters and expectations for a career pathway and associated earnings for pharmaceutical assistants, Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants have a legitimate expectation that the parameters will not be altered in a way that is unreasonable and adversely affects their capacity to continue their professional careers.</p> <p>My life's work and extensive experience should not now be devalued to only allow me work for 12 hours. I appeal for fair play on behalf of myself and my Pharmaceutical Assistant colleagues.</p>	
325.	Marion Kiely	
	<p>I wish to express my deep concern about the proposed 'Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover of Pharmaceutical Assistants' and the detrimental effect it will have on the future employment status of Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>While many weeks I do not provide more than 12 hours of cover, I would on occasions exceed this time frame. I have worked in the same pharmacy for 36 years and have built a good relationship with many of our customers and feel I am au fait with their needs. Surely it would be far more practical that I should be able to provide cover for the pharmacist's holidays and other occasional absences that exceed the 12 hour limit, rather than employing a locum pharmacist who has no knowledge of our customers or business. By it's very nature it would also prove very difficult to get locum cover for periods of one to two hours.</p> <p>I entreat the PSI Council to reconsider the implementation of the proposed 12 hour rule as it will have devastating consequences</p>	

	<p>for the majority of working Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>Mandatory CPD or Fitness to Practice would be a far better way to ensure safe pharmacy practice.</p>	
326.	Hazel Mansfield	
	<p>As a Pharmaceutical Assistant with over 30 years experience working in retail pharmacy, I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification. In 1983, when I qualified, temporary absence was not defined. I have always being legally able to cover for a pharmacist, should the need arise in their temporary absence due to a day off work, holidays, a meeting, attending a course or illness. Having worked under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890, I have no intention of either managing or owning my own pharmacy business. It makes no sense being able to cover for 12 hours and any longer not being able to carry on the same work. An assistant, will know the full routine of the pharmacy, the customers and any ordering of drugs which might be required. Locums do not have this knowledge. Defining temporary absence in terms of hours will do nothing to aid safe pharmacy practice.</p>	
327.	Patricia Whelan	
	<p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant, conferred with my qualification in 1982. I have worked continuously since then in community Pharmacy. I am extremely concerned about the draft proposal to limit our temporary absence cover to 12 hours in the working week. It is a total desecration of my profession. I have 34 years experience as a qualified Assistant plus my apprenticeship years, for your committee to now tell me that it is only useful for 12 hours per week. I primarily work with the supervising Pharmacist dispensing and dealing with the patients and the public who present to the Pharmacy. In my normal week, of 23 hours I cover up to 5 hours unsupervised. Also in this Pharmacy there is a second qualified Assistant and our superintendent/owner Pharmacist (who works between two shops).</p> <p>My employer is extremely careful about having adequate cover at all times to facilitate checking and counter checking all business transactions. Therefore in the event of a Pharmacist being unavailable to work due to some unforeseen circumstance (medical, funeral, family emergency) both I and my QA colleague are well placed to carry on the day to day running of the Pharmacy. Our Superintendent Pharmacist is confident in the level of skilled experience we possess after both working in the same Pharmacy for over 20 years.</p>	

	<p>I personally am paying a mortgage on the strength of my projected earnings for the next ten years. I am extremely worried that I will lose my job or lose working hours as I may become surplus to requirements if this proposal is passed. This effectively rules me out to cover holiday time or time off for the Pharmacists in the event of emergencies. It is not practical for a Pharmacy to employ a locum at short notice for crisis such as funerals, family medical emergencies or such like, if the QA has reached the 12 hour cover time.</p> <p>Also the PSI do not recognise further CPD for Qualified Assistants which is against all best practice in any work environment. This is an infringement of a human right to fair recognition in a profession and the right to use and further that qualification and experience for the better service to the public whom we serve. The PSI conferred us with this qualification and now you want to all but deny it's existence and yet accept our mandatory annual subscriptions!!</p> <p>Please, please consult the Pharmacists who own and run Pharmacy's before going ahead with this draft proposal.</p>	
328.	Nuala Daly	
	<p>I want to officially document my objection to the proposed definition by the PSI on the historic term Temporary Absence which is enshrined in law since 1890.</p> <p>The PSI has decided to define the term based on a "fair and workable model which also provides public assurance of safe pharmacy practice"</p> <p>This proposed definition will alter the terms of my qualification post conferral. This qualification was formulated, validated and examined by the PSI. I entered in to a contract with the PSI under the terms of "The Articles of Pupillage"to study for 3 years with a PSI approved tutor pharmacist followed by an academic year at the PSI supervised College of Pharmacy. I passed all the examinations required in Pharmaceutics, Pharmacology ,Physiology, Pharmacognosy and Forensic Pharmacy. I was then certified by the PSI to be qualified to perform all the functions of a pharmacist in the latter's temporary absence. This certification did limit my scope of practice to a non managerial role stating I could not "manage or keep open shop in my own right"</p> <p>I have adhered to the terms of my certification. My role was to deputise for a pharmacist. This I did for weeks, days, holidays, sick leave and unscheduled short absences as the need arose.</p>	

Under these PSI proposed conditions I can now only cover for 12 hours per week if I have provided 12 hours of skilled assistance in the previous month. How can this new conditionality on my qualification be deemed fair or workable. This new condition would mean I provide 12 hours of skilled assistance each month for the rest of my working life. It would also mean I am a qualified professional for 12 hours and become a criminal one minute after the 12th hour. Explain to me the logic of this, when we all realise that unexpected situations arise in any person's working environment.

Addressing the second element of providing public assurance of safe pharmacy practice what steps have the PSI taken to document that pharmaceutical assistants are or historically ever were a danger to the public? What steps have the PSI taken to improve public safety by the introduction of this definition of temporary absence. It would be better to ensure safety to the public to introduce "Fitness to practice" regulations and CPD for all professionals who dispense medication.

The PSI have made other attempts in the past to define temporary absence. One attempt resulted in Judge Costelloe stating that temporary absence could only be defined in a court of law and on a case by case basis. The 1994 code, so heavily relied on by the PSI inspectorate, is an unsigned code that is not legal as the old PSI were not vested with powers to define a clause of an Act of law.

I have always stated that the 1994 code was not legal for the following reasons

- 1) The terms of my qualification state I am qualified to perform all the functions of a pharmacist in temporary absence stated in the Pharmacy Act 1890 and updated in the 2007 Act section 30.
- 2) Barristers opinion states that the old PSI acted ultra vires in implementing this code
- 3) At the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association 's AGM in 2008 the PSI expert on the 2007 Act Ms Marita Kinsella addressed the meeting . She spoke of the contents of the Act with reference to Pharmaceutical Assistants and section 30 and never included any reference to the code. I was reassured that the terms of the Act were the most up to date legal situation. When asked about the temporary absence clause she assured us that the PSI did not intend defining it.
- 4) Reassurance has been given by various Ministers of Health that the legal rights of assistant pharmacists will not be eroded.

	<p>The PSI now in 2016 have decided there is a need to define the temporary absence clause. They have decided to define it by curtailing hours of cover to 12 per week. The natural extension of this thought process would be that the PSI qualification is not fit for purpose as it needs to change the working conditions of its graduates. Were that the case hundreds of pharmaceutical assistants have been practicing for many years with a faulty qualification. I assume that the PSI defend their own qualification and so I am still entitled to practice pharmacy as I have done since my conferral.</p> <p>I also want to comment on Rule 9 of the public consultation where a supervising pharmacist must ensure satisfaction that a Pharmaceutical Assistant has the requisite skills including language skills and fitness to act in his temporary absence. The fact that we hold a PSI validated qualification and are accepted as registrants of the PSI must certify we have the necessary skills. I do agree that the supervising pharmacist must vouch for the ability of all staff in their employ pharmacists, pharmaceutical assistants and front of shop staff so the need to add in the extra specified requirement for pharmaceutical assistants is not necessary. A locum pharmacist sent from an employment agency will be deemed qualified by virtue of their registration and the supervising pharmacist might never meet that pharmacist personally. The locum agency staffed in some instances by people with no pharmaceutical background are vouching for the fitness of that pharmacist to work in a locum position.</p>	
329.	Ann Blaney	
	<p>My name is Ann Blaney and I am a registered pharmaceutical assistant number XXXXXX. I qualified in September 1983 and have worked for the last 32 and a half years in community pharmacy in XXXXXXX. Over 95% of my working life I have worked alongside one or two pharmacist and on occasions I have been left on my own to manage the pharmacy due to lunch breaks, days off or holidays and sometimes due to unexpected events. There has never been an issue with this ,and the pharmacists and my view was that my qualification entitled me to do this.</p> <p>On a small number of occasions I have worked in a couple of local community pharmacies. The pharmacist on these occasions had an unexpected occurrence where they needed some cover. With my experience they were satisfied that I was able for the job and these were” temporary absence” positions. On one occasion the pharmacist wife went into XXXXXXXX XXXXXX and gave XXXXX to a XXXXXXXXXX XXXX.</p> <p>My class were the last year to do this course so we are all now of a “mature” age and hopefully will not be working for an awful lot longer. I never agreed to a code of practice in 1994.</p>	

	I hope that this matter will be resolved to everyone's satisfaction.	
330.	Tony Whelan	
	<p>It has been brought to my attention that you are considering amending the existing regulations concerning cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants in 'the temporary absence of a Pharmacist'. Can I ask you to ask yourself why or where exactly has this come from? All I know is that the Pharmaceutical Assistants have provided an unquestionable and dedicated professional service in many community Pharmacy's for over 100 years, since they received their hard earned qualification. How can it be that someone who has had over 30 years front line experience are good enough, capable enough, to cover a Pharmacy for up to 12 hours in a week but suddenly become incapable and incompetent if for some unexpected reason (illness, accident, or other reason) runs over 12 hours in a week? It just does not make sense - can you explain the justifiable logic and legal standing?</p> <p>I work in an education environment and fully understand the status, quality and importance of a recognised qualification. I also know that to get a qualification is the first and a very important step but an even more important step is the experience gained from using that qualification. Over 30 years ago now, the last of the Pharmaceutical Assistants got their recognised qualification from the the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. The majority who are still working have worked tirelessly over this period gaining very valuable and un-quantifiable experience that cannot be thought in any lecture room or laboratory.</p> <p>What you are effectively now considering is to say to the remaining Pharmaceutical Assistants, who have served us all so well, that you are no longer good enough to do the job you have done so well for over 30 years and that the safety and well being of the community would be better served by some fresh faced, newly qualified Pharmacist who may have got the exam qualifications but does not have a working relationship and knowledge of the people in the community being served?</p> <p>I have had some first hand experience when over a year ago my elderly Aunt was seriously ill in hospital but thankfully made a good recovery and was discharged from hospital. She was on a lot of medication before going into Hospital and when she got out was given an updated prescription. When this was handed into her Pharmacy by a member of her family, the Pharmaceutical Assistant, whom my Aunt always dealt with, questioned some of the items listed and calls were made to her GP and the Hospital medical team. If that Pharmaceutical Assistant was not present on that day and that prescription was dispensed as written, then the reality is my Aunt may no longer be with us today or certainly would have suffered very serious set backs in her recovery.</p> <p>I would just ask that you think very carefully about the decision you are considering and don't put the lives of people, like my Aunt at risk by discarding over thirty years of knowledge and experience by a decision made around a boardroom table - far from, the 'on the ground' practical world of serving the Pharmaceutical needs of our community. I sincerely hope that should any of your</p>	

	<p>family ever get a 'a badly written and constructed prescription' that you will have someone behind the Pharmacy counter that knows and has served your families needs for years and is knowledgeable enough to make that right decision for the health and well being of your family member - don't insult or degrade Pharmaceutical Assistants or one day your or someone else's family member may not be as fortunate as my wonderful aunt was over a year ago.</p> <p>I know I'm not in the Pharmaceutical industry and don't even know why it is now coming to this but in any walk of life I think it is better to get a job done by the person who has done the job and knows the job - all Pharmaceutical Assistants qualified over 30 years ago and the majority have only worked in community Pharmacy's and if you are to diminish or undermine the people who have delivered, in a practical way, then you will be doing a dis-service to those who are in need.</p> <p>Please make the right decision and don't even consider this proposal - if you met my Aunt I think you would understand.</p> <p>Thanking you for taking the time to read this.</p>	
331.	National Women's Council of Ireland	
	<p>I am writing to you in relation to the above consultation and to support the submission made by the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association, a group of 398 people, 99% women, now in their 50's and 60's whose livelihoods may be seriously threatened by the introduction of new rules that will restrict their professional practice.</p> <p>NWCI understand that until 1979, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland offered a Pharmaceutical Assistant's qualification. Upon conferral, a Pharmaceutical Assistant (PA) was competent to transact the business of a pharmacist in his/her temporary absence. In general terms therefore, and in circumstances where the registered pharmacist is temporarily absent from the pharmacy a registered PA may act on his/her behalf and carry out the functions of the pharmacist. The single restriction placed on the role was that they could not open or manage a pharmacy in their own right.</p> <p>Back in the 1960s and 1970s, few women would have had the opportunity to take subjects like physics and chemistry, or had higher education opportunities, or the opportunity to open a chemist due to persistent gender inequalities. This can explain the gendered nature of the PA graduates. Since 1890 'temporary absence' clause has been open to a wide range of interpretations. It is NWCI understanding from members of the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association that temporary absence can range from holiday cover of any pharmacist to weekly days off, late night opening, sick leave, maternity cover, unscheduled short absences and the myriad of situations that can occur in life.</p> <p>It is our understanding that the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland are now seeking to redefine and restrict the term 'temporary</p>	

	<p>absence' and have started this consultation process. At present there are less than 400 registered PAs. The last examinations for this qualification were in 1985, meaning that the youngest PAs are now in their mid-fifties. (there have been no new entrants to the profession since 1985). In other words, these PAs</p> <p>– mainly women - will all be retired in approximately 10 years, resulting in this qualification being naturally phased out.</p> <p>NWCI submit that there is real danger that changes to the conditions under which PAs can work may have the consequence of forcing them out of the workforce. The draft rules seek to define the heretofore (since 1890) undefined “temporary absence” as no more than 12 hours per week. This means that a PA will only be allowed to work for 12 hours in temporary absence in any week. NWCI has read the testimonies of women currently employed in the industry as PAs and this amendment would have huge and detrimental implications for their employability and livelihood.</p> <p>NWCI note that the profession of pharmaceutical assistant has long been predominantly female, currently 98% are women. NWCI would like to support the submission of the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association and ask that the PSI to revisit this proposed amendment from a gender equality perspective and taking into account the testimonies of women who have worked the last thirty to forty years in this role.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.</p>	
332.	Susanne O’Mahony	
	<p>I would like to make a submission on the above.</p> <p>I would submit that the proposal to define a temporary absence as 12hours per week could in no way be seen as providing “for a <u>fair and workable</u> model” as it turns on it’s head what has been the practice for the past 30years and completely undermines the position and employability of people who have qualified under your programme.</p> <p>Furthermore, I don’t see the logic in determining that an assistant is qualified to cover for a Pharmacist for 12hours per week but no longer than that? Surely either the assistant is qualified to cover or not? It seems to me that the attempt to restrict cover in this way exposes an agenda other than patient safety. I, for one, have been under the care of a Pharmaceutical Assistant for over 25 years and feel perfectly safe in doing so, and if I, myself, were a Pharmaceutical Assistant I would feel very let down by this proposal to effectively invalidate my qualification.</p>	

	I would appreciate acknowledgement of receipt of my submission.	
333.	Ellen Giltinan	
	<p>I wish to support the PAA to ensure professional stability to qualified assistants in Ireland. I have worked as a qualified assistant since 1971, 45 years of professional experience.</p> <p>My knowledge and professionalism in this role have been appreciated in each of the pharmacies that I have worked in. I do not wish to see the profession of qualified assistant devalued and I insist that 45 years of experience provides a significant advantage and peace of mind to any supervising pharmacist who is required to be 'temporarily absent' for any period of time.</p> <p>During a period of 'temporary absence', I would find it difficult to refuse a customer because I have worked for just over the 12 hour period and put pressure on my colleagues therefore jeopardising the trust that customers have in the pharmacy and the supervising pharmacist, especially in the shop I have spent thirty hours a week working in for the last 10 years. For the few remaining qualified assistants that are on the register, I believe we should be allowed to carry out our professional duties with dignity</p> <p>To date, qualified assistant have provided great support and many hours of quality service to pharmacies around the country and I hope that this can do so. Thank you for taking my opinions into consideration</p>	
334.	Aelish McMahon	
	<p>I would like to make a comment on the changes proposed for Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>I have a friend who for the last 35 years had been practicing as a qualified assistants, and I cannot understand how you could now propose to just decide that her qualifications are not deemed acceptable. She has been a loyal, loved, respected and trusted staff member in several pharmacies in Limerick city, and it has enabled several small privately owned pharmacies to continue in business, and allow the owners to take their well earned time off and holidays. I would appreciate if you would think long and hard before you take this drastic decision.</p> <p>Can I suggest that if you are considering going ahead with this proposal, you would at least honour and respect the loyal qualified pharmaceutical assistants who have gone through your PSI course and you have accepted their registrations fees, in the case of my friend, for</p>	

	30 years and NOT make them unemployable after all their years working.	
335.	Aine Barrett	
	<p>I am a registered pharmacist with the PSI and have worked in community pharmacy for 16 years. In that time I have worked alongside two Pharmaceutical Assistants. In my experience they are highly trained, competent, very professional carrying out their work and an asset to any pharmacy. Within the pharmacy setting they are the one other colleague who has the same understanding, accuracy and professionalism as myself which is invaluable to me in a busy pharmacy. In truth they have helped guide me in many areas of my work when I was starting out in pharmacy and still today their knowledge and guidance is of huge benefit to me in my daily work.</p> <p>I understand the PSI validated and examined the training and qualifications of the Pharmaceutical Assistants as far back as 1890, when their qualification was written into the pharmacy Act 1890. This qualified these professionals to legally carry out the dispensing of a valid legal prescription in a registered pharmacy but they cannot conduct a pharmacy business on their own account and as far as I am aware, none have sought to do so.</p> <p>So I now find it very confusing, why since all the years this group of professionals have been practicing, that the PSI has come up with a new restriction on hours worked in a week. How and why are the reasons the PSI have come up with this number and why now?</p> <p>A professional body which represents myself I find this very unprofessional to declare this draft statement with no clarification as to why and how the society has come up with this now.</p> <p>I qualified as a pharmacist and legally registered with the PSI and now fulfill my duties as a pharmacist. I would find it unprofessional and legally incorrect if the society curtailed the hours I could work, just because they put forward a draft to do so. So to limit the hours worked by this group of professionals in the future, where does it stand legally as to the hours they worked before where it exceeded 12 hours per week?</p> <p>This group of professional Pharmaceutical Assistants in my knowledge have been an asset to the life of pharmacy in Ireland over the years helping many pharmacists find temporary cover when a locum pharmacist could not be got anywhere, due to the small number of pharmacists qualifying from then the two schools of pharmacy in Ireland/Northern Ireland. This resource is and was invaluable to pharmacy in Ireland. Now with more schools of pharmacy and more qualified pharmacists now available to work, my professional representative body the PSI, decides to kick these highly skilled, loyal professional Pharmaceutical Assistants to 'the kerb', so to speak, and mask it as a reclassification of 'temporary absence cover by pharmaceutical assistants'.</p> <p>The pharmaceutical society says 'it acts to protect and promote the health and safety and wellbeing of patients and public' .</p>	

	<p>This is a very clear statement which I am glad the professional body, which represents myself, aims to do. However how can the society stand over such a statement , when what they propose to do in this new draft involving Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>To undermine the years of commitment, loyalty , expertise and professionalism of this group of people and to extinguish or curtail their right to work and provide for themselves and families with a living, which they have been doing so for so many years, to me is a far cry from looking after the health and wellbeing of the public. After all shouldn't we and the PSI be equally looking after the health and well being of these members of the public, our highly skilled professional Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p>	
336.	Mary Ann Danaher	
	<p>I wish to support the PAA in their endeavour to ensure professional stability to qualified assistants in Ireland. I have worked as a qualified assistant since 1980, 36 years of professional experience.</p> <p>My presence, knowledge and professionalism in this role have been appreciated in each of the pharmacies that I have worked in under long-term and short-term contracts. I do not wish to see the profession of qualified assistant devalued and I insist that 36 years of experience provides a significant advantage and peace of mind to any supervising pharmacist who is required to be 'temporarily absent' for any period of time.</p> <p>From a practical point of view during a period of 'temporary absence', I cannot agree that I can work for a 12-hour period in a pharmacy and then have to refuse a customer because I have worked for 12 hours and one minute which would put undue pressure on my colleagues and jeopardise the image and trust that customers have in the pharmacy and the supervising pharmacist.</p> <p>To date, qualified assistant have provided immeasurable support and many hours of quality service to pharmacies around the country and I hope that this can continue until those who qualified in the mid-eighties have reached well-deserved retirements.</p> <p>Thank you for taking my opinions into consideration.</p>	
337.	Eimear Conroy	
	<p>I have recently become aware of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland which seeks to impose a restriction on the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p>	

	<p>I fundamentally disagree with this proposal as I feel that it is discriminatory and vindictive in nature as it seeks to change a long established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p> <p>Given that Pharmaceutical Assistants will cease to practice in the next 15 years, it seems unnecessary to now impose these new conditions on a sector of employees who have acted at all times in a manner consistent with their qualification. The proposals being put forward will effectively leave members of the Pharmaceutical Association unemployable as they have given their entire working lives to the Association and are approaching retirement age in the next 15 years. How on earth can the PSI in all good conscience even consider doing this? I think it's an absolute disgrace what you're society is trying to do to these individuals.</p> <p>Surely the Pharmaceutical Society can focus their energies on matters more urgently in need of their attention and not waste public funds trying to destroy the careers and lives of a Pharmaceutical Assistants who will no longer be in the picture in the next 15 years. The overpricing of medicines in Ireland relative to other countries for example would appear to be a matter more worthy of this level of scrutiny and attention.</p> <p>I am requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined.</p>	
338.	John Barry	
	<p>I wish to register my disagreement with the changes proposed to the definition of temporary absence.</p> <p>The 12 hours a week to "cover" is unworkable and doesn't even allow for a lunch hour and a day off in a week with no allowance for holidays.</p> <p>It is much safer for a pharmaceutical assistants working in a shop covering holidays, lunch hours and days off than a locum pharmacist who knows none of the patients or any of the procedures. It flies in the face of patient safety to take such approach.</p> <p>If there is a worry about patient safety pharmaceutical assistants could simply be brought under the auspices of the IIOB to guarantee quality of care and patient safety.</p> <p>I have had the opportunity to work with many fine assistants and I consider this proposition both unnecessary and insulting.</p>	

339.	Shane O'Reilly	
	<p>I write both as a child of one of your members directly affected, but also as a concerned member of the public served competently and professionally by Pharmacies employing Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants for over 35 years. I do not believe that the PSI proposal is fair or just to the PSI Qualified Assistant membership. I am deeply concerned that it will not be feasible for Qualified Assistants to continue to be employed in some pharmacies.</p> <p>One could denounce the PSI for the months of sleepless nights, heartache, stress and tears my mother has had to endure through PSI actions and proposals on this matter. But there have been enough attacks already – mainly on the assistants - and not enough support. Some support is the least that the Qualified Assistants should have been entitled to count on for their years of membership.</p> <p>Public safety doesn't seem to be at the heart of this rule change, as how can someone qualified to do something for the first 12 hours not be qualified for the thirteenth hour, and so on? How can the PSI ensure that longer hours or no/reduced breaks for supervising pharmacists caused by this will not cause a public safety concern?</p> <p>From the outside, it looks as if the PSI is seeking to eliminate Qualified Assistants from the job pool by making their positions unfeasible - this is the most shameful aspect of this proposal. Qualified Assistants have been paid up members of the PSI each and every year. Qualified Assistants are expected to and have complied with continuing education. Qualified Assistants paid the PSI for this qualification in the first place. This proposal is bereft of courage or integrity, and possibly one of the darkest days for any organisation – the day that they turn their backs on part of their membership.</p> <p>I would ask the PSI to please reconsider their actions, and the affect this has on the livelihoods of its own membership. I would appreciate if you could please acknowledge receipt of this letter.</p>	
340.	Maeve Jacob	
	<p>I qualified in 1968,with the legitimate expectation of work.I am retained on the register of the P.S.I. since the above date, as evidenced by payment of my annual required retention fee. I am certified to conduct the business of a qualified pharmacist in his or her temporary absence.</p> <p>I now find that the P.S.I. council intend to in effect abolish my right to work, which is my right by virtue of my legitimate</p>	

	<p>qualification and established practice. I have never agreed to the draft code of practice (as it turns out it was NOT a legal document)</p> <p>I have worked continuously for 48 years covering numerous pharmacies with an unblemished record.</p> <p>This effective and unilateral diminution and abolition of my legitimate qualification will have serious financial impact on myself and my family if this proposed amendment goes ahead..</p>	
341.	Claire Coleman	
	<p>I am writing in relation to the draft publication for Regulation of Temporary Absence by Pharmaceutical Assistants. Having read the draft publication, I am of the opinion that these new regulations are entirely unfair and discriminatory against a minority group of qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants. I do not need to point out to you the small number of these – mainly – women left working, or the small number of years they have left before retirement. Nor do I need to point out to you that Pharmaceutical Assistants have anywhere ranging from 30 to 50 years practical experience in the industry, and that this experience translates into competent, qualified and capable Pharmaceutical Assistants. It is my opinion that Rules 7 & 8 are entirely unfair and unworkable.</p> <p>In relation to Rule 7: Placing such strict limits on the number of hours a Pharmaceutical Assistant is allowed to work translates into a claim of incompetence after that number of hours is fulfilled. Pharmaceutical Assistants have worked alone in the temporary absence of Pharmacists since their qualifications were conferred. After decades of experience, are we now to assume that they are incapable of maintaining the same level of knowledge and professionalism after 12 hours in one week? What would happen if they were to work a Friday and Saturday in one week and a Monday and Tuesday in another? Are they incapable of fulfilling their job requirements for more than 12 hours in ANY seven days, or does the resetting of the clock on Monday morning reinstated their skills, allowing them to restart their allowed 12 hours? I am, perhaps, being ridiculous, but so are these arbitrarily decided 12 hours of competence. This doesn't even take into account the impracticalities of this limit; for example, instances of emergency where a Pharmacist would be forced to bring in an inexperienced and unknown (to the patients) locum to cover him- or herself, should there be the need, instead of getting assistance from a trusted employee and colleague.</p> <p>Furthermore, that Pharmaceutical Assistants would be required to work with a supervising pharmacist for 12 hours in each preceding month is a highly insulting addition into an already unworkable proposal. With decades of experience, these Pharmaceutical Assistants are suddenly required to look over the shoulder of their Supervising Pharmacist for 12 hours per month? To what end? To learn the skill they have been practising for decades? Or to make it so awkward for a Pharmacist to hire a Pharmaceutical Assistant, that the Assistants all lose their employment? That certainly seems to be the only goal with this rule. Again I do not need to point out the fact that there are about 10 years before the last of the PSI Qualified Pharmaceutical</p>	

	<p>Assistants retire, meaning the “issue” of their qualification is quite literally a dying one.</p> <p>In relation to Rule 8, I would point out that the very essence of the original qualification, as set out on your own website which states that assistants can “act on his/her [the supervising pharmacist’s] behalf, and carry out the functions of the pharmacist” is completely contradicted by the rule stating an assistant “shall not act in the capacity” of a supervising pharmacist. This entirely vacates the meaning of the original qualification and again points to what appears to be an insidious attempt to entirely remove Pharmaceutical Assistants from the workforce.</p> <p>Most patients would not even be aware that there is a very small difference between the qualifications an Assistant and a Pharmacist have. Most would not even be aware of whether or not the nice woman in their local pharmacy has one qualification or the other, because Pharmaceutical Assistants have been doing the same job as Pharmacists for decades. Attempting to redefine Pharmaceutical Assistants’ qualifications is simply an attempt by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland to bully a minority group within their organisation, who have worked to the rules set out by the PSI at the time of their conferral. If the PSI wants to remove the title of Pharmaceutical Assistant, the only fair way is to register Pharmaceutical Assistants as Pharmacists, granting them the same rights, and liabilities, as a Pharmacist. Their decades of experience have to count for something.</p>	
342.	Sheila Doran O’Reilly	
	<p>I am pharmaceutical assistant with over 40 years’ experience of working in a number of community pharmacies. I am xx years old and this has been my life's work. I worked for this qualification, with the full understanding of a specific career pathway when I started out. I have been a highly valued member of the Pharmacy community over these years providing an important service on behalf of my employers to the public. I liaise with colleagues, doctors and hospitals to provide the best possible community service to clients. My expertise, experience and work ethic have combined to deliver a dedicated service to the high standards expected of any professional. I have attended training and information days to keep abreast of new developments and medications so I can continue to provide this valuable service to the public. I receive affirmative feedback on the professionalism and beneficial service provided to clients, on a regular basis.</p> <p>It is important to state that we (Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants) can work independently, as distinct from pharmaceutical technicians, whose work must be supervised by a pharmacist at all times.</p> <p>The mission statement on the PSI Website is that they wish to "provide a fair and workable model of temporary absence and also</p>	

provide public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and public safety".

The proposed changes to our professional status suggest that there are public safety issues with the longstanding work practice of independent working arrangements with Pharmaceutical Assistants. However, the PSI has not presented any research or other evidence that shows that the current or indeed historic work practice of pharmaceutical assistants, has led to unsafe practice or patient safety issues. Pharmaceutical Assistants do not fall under Fitness to Practice regulations under the 2007 Act, whereas pharmacists do. If this is the yardstick to measure competence, then Pharmaceutical Assistants have always maintained that this should be introduced for all – pharmacists and pharmaceutical assistants. It would be both fairer and more reasonable on the regulator's part to work to introduce Fitness to Practice and CPD rules rather than to limit the hours of practice of highly experienced and responsible Pharmaceutical Assistants.

How can it be justified that a person is fit to practice for a specified number of hours and if they work one minute above that specification they would be committing an offence? If a person is trained, qualified, and maintains competence through compliance with Continuing Professional Development requirements, and are considered competent for twelve hours, can they be incompetent if they take responsibility for the pharmacy for more than twelve hours? Surely additional (normal) hours beyond that arbitrary twelve hour period can only add to competence and fitness to practice?

There are approximately 400 Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants left on the register. All are over 50 years old, each one has over 30 years pharmacy experience. Over 99.5% are women and the majority are working part time in the same pharmacy for many years. Many are close to retirement, with limited pension provisions. This is a diminishing number of people with extensive experience who have given, and continue to give, valued service over the years. Pharmaceutical Assistants have been seen as a group of very professional healthcare professionals who had worked alongside pharmacists for a long time.

Having achieved a qualification under the old PSI regulations that set out the parameters and expectations for a career pathway and associated earnings for pharmaceutical assistants, Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants have a legitimate expectation that the parameters will not be altered in a way that is unreasonable and adversely affects their capacity to continue their professional careers.

My life's work and extensive experience should not now be devalued to only allow me work for 12 hours. I appeal for fair play on

	behalf of myself and my Pharmaceutical Assistant colleagues.	
343.	Daniel Gallagher	
	<p>I would like to make a submission to the Public Consultation on draft Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence cover by Pharmaceutical Assistant) Rules 2016.</p> <p>My submission is against the proposed rules. I have worked with a Pharmaceutical Assistant for 10 years, and have found her to be more than competent in her work. I have often worked with locum pharmacists over the years who do not have the same knowledge or experience, and quite often when regular customers come in they do not like dealing with a new face.</p> <p>As the pharmacy is located in a rural area, our customers rely heavily on her as she is the person they know and trust. I know how competent and reliable she is and the health and safety of all of our customers is central to her. Her work standards are as good if not better than some of the pharmacists I have worked with over the years.</p> <p>Temporary Absence has never been fully defined and I cannot understand why the PSI are attempting to do so now. How can someone be able to act in temporary absence for 12 hours but after that they are not?</p> <p>Common sense must prevail, the last class of Pharmaceutical Assistants graduated 30 years ago, meaning they have more than sufficient knowledge and experience.</p> <p>Should the PSI go ahead and implement these new rules I believe many of those affected will lose their jobs. I would call on the PSI to reconsider these new rules and protect Pharmaceutical Assistants and not render them extinct.</p>	
344.	Sean Cooke	
	<p>My wife is a Pharmaceutical Assistant and was conferred with this qualification in 1982. Since that time, she has worked in retail pharmacy and has enjoyed a varied and interesting career. These new guidelines have been enforced without any consultation with her representative body, the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association. This has resulted in and contributed to a diminution of her qualification and status within a community pharmacy and has led to a loss of employment and employment opportunities. She has also had to register for unemployment benefit which she never had to do previously.</p> <p>It is highly unfair and unacceptable for her to accept any diminution or conditionality of her qualification post conferral. She</p>	

	<p>undertook this course in good faith, which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI. It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon her a qualification that legally allowed her to work in a specific manner for over 34 years is now defining the terms of its qualification without consultation or negotiation.</p> <p>It is unacceptable that the PSI would redefine this qualification whereby the right to work have been impinged upon for all Pharmaceutical Assistants. These guidelines should be retracted to allow Pharmaceutical Assistants to work under the original Pharmacy</p>	
345.	Jack Shanahan	
	<p>I fail to see that the public interest is served by moving from the current agreed situation, which seems to have worked well in recent decades. However, if the PSI has evidence to the contrary, it should be published.</p> <p>2. A better approach would be to enable qualified pharmaceutical assistants to meet pharmacist CPD and FTP criteria, under a 'grandfather' clause. This would ensure that any quality issues are addressed and allow the current situation to continue.</p> <p>3. I expect that, should the PSI decide to adopt the proposed changes as they stand, that there will be legal action. As we all know, this will be costly as it will involve constitutional issues. Any fees incurred will be inevitably paid by my colleagues and I. I would regard this potential litigation as spurious, particularly as the age profile of QAs means that they will all be retiring in the next few years.</p>	
346.	Bernie Conroy	
	<p>My wife, a Qualified Assistant of c. 35 years, has informed me of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society which seeks to restrict her working hours and those of her colleagues.</p> <p>This is, in my eyes, a vindictive proposal which discriminates against her and her work colleagues by changing their long established work practices. Furthermore, I don't see any good reason for this proposed action.</p> <p>I am at a loss to know why this proposal is being driven "Coach and four" style when the youngest Qualified Assistant is in their mid 50's and therefore will likely exit the work force by 2030.</p> <p>Any employment or financial decisions taken by myself since we married were always underpinned by my wife's</p>	

	<p>Professional qualification and the terms and conditions of her employment. When we XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX we always felt secure in the knowledge that my wife had a qualification which generated the necessary income to carry our debts.</p> <p>When I moved jobs to work with three different financial institutions and subsequently when XXXXXXXXXXXXX, I again relied on the security of my wife's qualification and her ability to earn an income capable of supporting our outgoings should I fail in business.</p> <p>We have also planned for our retirement and our plans are again reliant on my wife's work practices and terms and conditions remaining as they are. I resent our future being threatened for no honourable or necessary reason. I also resent your proposal to change the terms and conditions of Qualified Assistants who graduated through your own educational programme, worked diligently since then and command the respect of their Pharmacists, clients and work colleagues.</p>	
347.	Dorothy McKane	
	<p>I wish to express my concern at the proposal to limit the working of Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants to 12 hours per week.</p> <p>It is not clear what problem, if any, is being fixed by this proposal.</p> <p>I have employed a Qualified Assistant for over 25 years, and that experience will be very difficult to replace if this proposal stands. In rural areas, Locum cover is frequently difficult to obtain, and I cannot pretend that I will be able to find someone of equivalent experience on a regular basis.</p> <p>This proposal of 12 hour maximum working hours is roughly the equivalent of 6 lunch hours and a half day off for a pharmacist. Never mind that the holiday cover currently enjoyed will also be lost.</p> <p>Just last month, my flight was delayed overnight returning from holidays, and I was very grateful to be able to call on my QA to step in to help. Under the new proposals, would I then have to tell her not to bother coming in another full day that week, as it would exceed the 12 hours? It would be poor thanks indeed.</p> <p>Furthermore I am concerned that this proposal will force businesses to breach existing employment contracts, by unilaterally altering working terms and conditions. Has the PSI considered the full effects of this on their members?</p> <p>I do not wish to scaremonger, but rather would ask that the benefits of this proposal, which are unclear to me at this time, be carefully measured against what will surely result in protracted legal proceedings and extensive costs to be borne by your pharmacist members.</p>	

348.	Sarah McGahon	
	<p>It is my understanding that the proposed changes outline the requirement for a Qualified Assistant to cover for the Pharmacist for no more than 12 hours per week.</p> <p>This considerably changes the present role of the Qualified Assistant who has been providing cover for much longer periods ie, the annual holiday of the pharmacist and thereby devalues the services of the Assistant if the Pharmacist has to now employ the services of a Locum for annual holidays etc.</p> <p>I believe there are approximately 200 such Qualified Assistants left in Ireland some of whom have 30 years service. It seems grossly unfair to reduce their worth to their employer so considerably which I am sure will also reduce their annual salaries.</p> <p>I am sure a better solution is available, one that is not so punitive as the proposed draft.</p>	
349.	Imelda Kehoe	
	<p>I would like to make a submission regarding the above proposed change to temporary absence cover by the PSI.</p> <p>I have employed a pharmaceutical assistant for in excess of twenty years. In that time I have found her to be meticulous in her work , dutiful with regard to all the legal implications of a Retail Pharmacy Business.</p> <p>The terms the Pharmaceutical Assistants have worked under for 35 years do not allow them to open shop on their own account but to act in temporary absence which has not been defined in law.</p> <p>I do not wish these terms to be amended.</p>	
350.	Mary Spillane	
	<p>To whom it concerns..Temporary according to dictionary is defined as 'lasting for only a limited period of time:not permanent'..Absence is defined as'an occasion or period of being away from a place or person'..i qualified as a PA in 1979 and have paid my annual regristration fee to PSI for the past 37years so it was a surprise firstly to be actually acknowledged by the PSI and that the definition of temporary absence is still a bone of contention..we are almost extinct!!before we are cast aside i would like to remind the society of the invaluable contribution the many PA members made to pharmacy and pharmacists.we were and still are the backbone of many pharmacies.we bring our own individual skills to the profession..care ,compassion,kindness and</p>	

	<p>above all a holistic approach to patient care.we are an essential and invaluable part of pharmacy..a pharmacist never had or has to worry about being absent for business,recreational or health issues the PA assumed the role of pharmacist in a professional manner.temporary absence is as it is defined TEMPORARY..why is it necessary to have a defined time limit?many pharmacies could not and would not function without the PA..even when a locum pharmacist is present in a pharmacy it is the PA who knows how the business operates..it is the PA who knows the clients, it is the PA who knows the various doctors ,it is the PA who knows the palliative care team, it is the PA who knows the mental health team, it is the PA who knows the local homecare team,it is the PA who can advise the pharmacist..our skills are endless so please respect us for what we are and not trying to deplete our input to society into an abyss of rules and regulations.</p>	
351.	Noel Galvin	
	<p>In a recent article in the Pharmacy Journal, the former president of the Pharmaceutical Society Mr Darragh O'Lochlainn outlined that due to the amount of regulation and compliance which has to be adhered to by pharmacists it was not a priority to reply to questionnaires from a research student.</p> <p>In view of such regulation and compliance surely it does not make sense for the Pharmaceutical Society to restrict the hours by which an assistant can work. Common sense should prevail and there is no need to try to fix something which is not broken. If in the future, regulation and compliance is relaxed then time will have taken care of the pharmaceutical assistant.</p>	
352.	Margaret Ryan	
	<p>I would like to make a personal submission with regard to the proposed draft rules for public consultation as provided for under section 30 of the Pharmacy Act 2007 as to what constitutes the temporary absence of a pharmacist.</p> <p>I was registered as a pharmaceutical Assistant in 1972 (Registration Number XXXXX) having completed the prescribed academic course and practical training. Since that date I have worked continuously in Community Pharmacy. I have been committed to my profession and adjusted and up skilled to the various changes experienced within the sector.</p> <p>Thankfully my employers have always considered me competent to fulfil my role and duties. I have over the years covered the Temporary Absence of the registered Pharmacist; this has been days off, annual leave or short-term emergency absence.</p> <p>My working conditions have always been commensurate with my duties and responsibilities. I am seriously concerned that the impact of the proposed changes will have a detrimental effect on these conditions. Having been employed as a Pharmaceutical</p>	

	<p>Assistant, for over forty years, I find it difficult to understand how my competence and credibility as a Pharmaceutical Assistant could now be diminished in any way. I have worked to since my registration in 1972 according to the terms of my qualification and I simply cannot agree to a definition of Temporary Absence that reduces and undermines my qualification that.</p> <p>The proposal as outlined brings into question my ability to carry out the duties I have undertaken since 1972, it is in effect saying that what I have done for over forty years is ok but I am no longer fit to carry out the same duties or responsibilities. On graduation I set about a career with a legitimate expectation. I feel this decision is being taken without any justification or foundation.</p> <p>I enjoy my job and as a single person I am dependent on my income. These changes will have a direct impact on my working conditions and undermine me in the eyes of customers, patients and colleagues. I would also be concerned about the impact on those who have placed their confidence in me regarding their medication and medical condition over the years; will they now question my competence? Given that training for the qualification of Pharmaceutical Assistant no longer takes place it seems to me that in the fullness of time this will no longer be an issue but I fail to see why the professional competence of those of us currently employed in the role should be questioned in such a manner.</p> <p>I appeal to you to recognise the personal consequences of this change, which effectively penalised me for fulfilling my professional duties in a proper and competent manner for the past forty-four years.</p>	
353.	Margaret Cullinan	
	<p>I am a registered qualified assistant of 62 years.I qualified in 1974 and have worked continuously in pharmacy for 42 years. But in the last 30 years I have worked part time. I have worked in XXXXXX, XXXXXX and XXXX.</p> <p>I love my job and have always acted in a responsible professional and diligent manner throughout my career.</p> <p>I work an average of 16 to 24 hours per week with my pharmacist boss and employer. Over the course of a month I cover his absence on average about 18 to 27 hours in the month.</p> <p>I am very concerned about the proposed definition of " temporary absence "</p> <p>I cannot agree to a definition of Temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferred and registration in1974. At the time of conferred temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to my employability.I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for their</p>	

	<p>entitlements today's off,holiday cover and sick leave etc.</p> <p>I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post conferred to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated,validated and privately run by the PSI. It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 40 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all these years.</p> <p>Narrowing the factual parameters pertaining to the practice of pharmaceutical assistants by prescriptive measures has the effect of interfering with an established right to practice on the part of the PA which attracts constitutional protection as both a personal and property right (articles 40. 3 and/or 43)</p>	
354.	Mary Barry	
	<p>I am a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant, qualifying in 1980. I have worked under that qualification and regulations since then.</p> <p>I never agreed to the draft Code of Practice (as it turns out this was not a legal document). I am employed under a different version of temporary absence.</p> <p>I have not been working in accordance with the draft Code of Practice but have been employed based on a different understanding of 'temporary absence' as below:</p> <p>I work 9 hours weekly in one pharmacy and cover the pharmacist's holidays, sick leave, funeral days etc.</p> <p>I sometimes work other pharmacies throughout the year under 'temporary absence', whether this is a scheduled or unscheduled day off, holiday cover, sick leave, wedding and funeral leave and for a family illness.</p> <p>If the proposed changes are imposed I will lose all employments as no pharmacy is willing to pay me to work alongside a Pharmacist for any unnecessary hours. Each Pharmacy believes that 'temporary absence' is that TEMPORARY – they WILL return to the pharmacy.</p> <p>With the new proposal I will have no income and as I am the only wage earner in the household this will have a major impact</p>	

on our lives. I will have to apply to the State for unemployed assistance and to the HSE for a medical card, both of which are totally unnecessary as I am qualified to work since 1980.

I always worked according to the terms of my qualification under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 - **do not seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on own account.**

I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferral and registration in 1980.

At the time of conferral temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to my employability. I have always been **legally** entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence for their entitlements to days off, holiday cover and for sick leave etc.

I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI. It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 35 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.

In over 35 years working in different pharmacies I have built up customer relationships and customer trust. I am a valued member of staff in each pharmacy and recognised by my qualification. How do I explain to a valued customer 'sorry but it is 1 minute over the time imposed on me by the PSI so therefore I cannot dispense your prescription???

I would appreciate if the PSI can answer the following for me:

What is the logic of being able to act in 'temporary absence' for 12 hours and on the 13th hour working illegally?

I would like to draw the PSI's awareness to the following:

1. The interpretation of 'Temporary absence' that has stood for many years is where the pharmacist is away from the pharmacy on a temporary basis. Defining 'temporary absence' in concrete terms, exact hours etc lacks logic or knowledge of the real world. It will become an offence if a Pharmaceutical Assistant works for one minute outside the hours defined.

	<p>This does not allow for normal life challenges e.g. sickness, funerals, traffic delays and a whole myriad of problems that occur on a daily basis.</p> <p>The concept of “temporary absence” has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice since 1890. It is synonymous with “not permanent”, i.e. conduct business on own accord etc (as outlined on certificate of qualification). It is related to context and depends on the facts of a particular situation. Three factors are relevant intention; length of absence; and reason for absence.</p> <p>2. Health and safety is a concern where locums with minimum experience and no knowledge of customers and business cover ‘temporary absence’.</p> <p>Are Health and Safety concerns being addressed where there is no requirement for CPD or Fitness to Practice?</p> <p>In professional judgement a Pharmaceutical Assistant does not pose a health and safety risk in the 126 year old accepted definition of temporary absence.</p> <p>3. Equality and Non-Discrimination - Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights explicitly prohibits discrimination. This means that everyone is entitled to the equal enjoyment of all of the rights in the ECHR. Given that pharmaceutical assistants are predominantly female and that part-time workers within the profession are predominantly female, any attempt to impose minimum hours of service as part of the qualification of the conditions of exercise of the profession will have a far greater impact on women, violating the equality rights guarantee in the Constitution and under ECHR.</p> <p>This proposal will impact on the older women’s Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as it does not meet the principle of proportionality in that the restriction on Pharmaceutical Assistant’s right to work is more than necessary.</p>	
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	<p>Narrowing the factual parameters pertaining to the practice of Pharmaceutical Assistants by prescriptive measures has the effect of interfering with an established right to practice on the part of the Pharmaceutical Assistant which attracts constitutional protection as both a personal and property right (Articles 40.3 and/or 43).</p> <p>Looking forward to hearing from you,</p>	
355.	Fiona Hopkins 1	
	<p>I do not agree with the recent proposal to halt the Temporary Absence Cover for Pharmaceutical Technicians. This is an absolute injustice to women who have been paying fees, and supporting this society for nearly 30 years. These women are a dying breed as the course has not existed since the 1980's and this issue will become non existent within the next 5-7 years.</p> <p>These women are a small minority, mostly in rural and independent pharmacies. This is an action which would be unjust and unfair to long-serving embers of your society.</p>	
356.	Fiona Hopkins 2	
	<p>I disagree with this proposal on the following grounds;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discrimination on the basis of age, and minority groups - These women were awarded a qualification which permits them to cover Temporary Absences - The majority of these women are in their 50's and close to retirement, the last graduates were in the 1980's, this will not be an issue in future years. - This action will stop these technicians from being employed in various roles in which they fill an important niche, especially for rural and independent pharmacies. <p>I absolutely disagree with this proposal.</p>	

357.	Patrick McGee	
	<p>In relation to the public consultation on the "Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants" I would like to make a submission.</p> <p>I have worked with several Pharmaceutical Assistants over the years and have found them all more than competent and extremely capable. I believe this proposed legislation will adversely affect their current and continued employment in a sector that they have given their entire lives to. With the majority of Pharmaceutical Assistants set to retire in the next several years - is this legislation absolutely necessary?</p>	
358.	Pat McGee	
	<p>owned my own pharmacy from the mid 70s till I sold it in 2012 and in most of that time I had a qual. assistant in the shop with me and always found it helpful. I never abused the temp absence rule but the fact is that my assistant was more capable than any locum I had when on hols. or away on business. apparently the last qualified was in 1979 so they are all over 60 now and will not be working much longer anyway so why the panic? they have served the public and the pharm industry well over the years and surely it is our duty now to repay them. They are all responsible people and would not be in employment as cover unless they were trusted so please don't cut their hours now by legislation and effectively put them out to grass!! I am now semi retired and just do locums but I feel things should just be left as they are at present. My father trained 5 or 6 assistants in his time here and they all served their communities well. To the best of my knowledge only 2 are still working so the first point I made that they will not be working much longer holds up.</p>	
359.	Mike Mullane	
	<p>I am writing to you regarding the worrying situation regarding Pharmaceutical Assistants. As I understand it the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) ran a qualified pharmaceutical assistant course, which consisted of 3 years apprenticeship, 1 year full time college with an exam to complete. The successful candidates were then conferred and registered with PSI which entitled them to cover a pharmacy during the temporary absence of the pharmacist but not to keep open a shop in their own right.</p> <p>And now the PSI have now decided to change the working conditions retrospectively, defining temporary absence as 12 hours per week. This would mean the pharmaceutical assistant could not cover the pharmacy any longer than this, making it illegal for even</p>	

	<p>12 hours and 5 minutes. This change would be disastrous for qualified pharmaceutical assistants, if they cannot cover they would not be employed.</p> <p>The disruption to the long existing relationship between qualified pharmaceutical assistants and their customers would be highly detrimental. The age profile of the clients has to be considered also as most of them are of advanced years where the trusted and usual face is very important and highly valued. The change may even impact on the clients health.</p> <p>Considering that the last exam was in 1985 therefore, all qualified assistants have at least 30 years of experience it seems ludicrous to cast away such a valuable well of experience.</p> <p>The implications for small business people, that is singlehanded chemists, will be huge as they will even have to employ locums to go to lunch!! The additional costs to the small chemist will be very harmful to their business model.</p> <p>Most worrying is that you, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland created the course, validated it and have accepted pharmaceutical assistants registration fees for years and now the PSI want to make them unemployable. As they are members of your society they are supposed to be protected by you. The perceived conflict of interest has to be considered that the PSI is now harming their own members, the very people they are charged with, and paid to, protect.</p> <p>This worrying situation should not be allowed to continue and I would suggest may even open the PSI up to legal and financial ramifications</p> <p>Please confirm your receipt of this appeal on behalf of all qualified pharmaceutical assistants and the great work they do.</p>	
360.	Kate Byrne	
	<p>I am both disappointed and surprised that the issue of 'temporary absence' has arisen yet again, particularly in the light that most qualified assistants are now a mere few years from retirement.</p> <p>I qualified in good faith as a pharmaceutical assistant to cover in the temporary absence of the pharmacist. When I qualified I understood this qualification enabled me to not only professionally assist the licensed pharmacist in the daily running of his or her practice but also to cover his or her annual holiday. I note in the new draft guidelines that there is no mention of holiday cover or any short unscheduled absence.</p> <p>To continually undermine my qualification in the manner in which I believe the Pharmaceutical Society is doing is threatening and</p>	

	<p>undermining my value in my current employment. I would also like to question the legality of this undermining and altering of ones qualification. No other profession that I know has had to endured the constant treat of the detail of their qualification being altered by the organisation that granted them their status.</p> <p>I work sixteen and a half hours a week, one day being on my own and the other day with the supervising pharmacist in order to comply with the current guidelines. For the overlapping hours I am paid at the technician's rate which in itself is a demeaning of my position. If I cannot cover other occasional short absences or a two week holiday period I fear that I will be no longer an asset to not only my current employer but to other pharmacy that I may consider applying to.</p> <p>For 36 years I have carried out my duties to what I believe to be a high professional standard. During this period I have taken time to gain a degree and complete post graduate studies in Fine Art from the National College of Art and Design and the University of Ulster respectively. I continue to work in pharmacy because I feel I am good at my job and I enjoy the interaction with both customer and staff.</p> <p>To undermine or alter my qualification will render me unemployable. I am xx years of age and among the last few classes to qualify. I find it extraordinary that we are not allowed to continue working for the remaining few years before retirement without the ongoing worry that is being continually generated by the Pharmaceutical Society.</p> <p>On a final note I would like to question how many complaints the PSI have had to deal with concerning the professional practice of a Qualified Assistant.</p>	
361.	Sarah Duffy	
	<p>My name is Sara Duffy. I am a registered pharmacist (XXXX). Since my appointment of supervising pharmacist in XXXXXXXXXX pharmacy I have worked alongside XXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX. A registered PA (XXXXX).</p> <p>XXXXXXX qualified in 1980 . S he undertook a course which was formulated validated and examined by the PSI. On passing examinations XXXXXXXX has worked according to the terms of this qualification for 27 years.</p> <p>XXXXXXX provides cover for weekly days off, holiday cover, sick leave and unscheduled short absences such as GP appointments.</p>	

	<p>XXXXXXX is a great asset to me , to XXXXXXXX pharmacy and to the people living in the village of XXXXXXXX. Our customers know her, trust her and value her professionalism. She is very competent in her role. Her pharmaceutical knowledge is never questioned.</p> <p>9+She is a constant face in pharmacy and is happy and very able to provide a service to the community.</p> <p>It seems unbelievable that the body which conferred upon XXXXXXXX a qualification and legally allowed her to work in a specific manner for 27 years is now defining the terms of her qualification in a manner that suggests she was working illegally all those years. Why 12 hours? Why not 10 hours or 15 hours?. What happens after 12 hours? Is XXXXXXXX no longer competent to perform her duties. Is she no longer trustworthy, dependable? Is she breaking the law or am I breaking the law after 12 hours? Imposing these rules and defining temporary absence will hugely affect XXXXXXXX's right to earn a living and provide for her family. It is very unfair and unjust.</p> <p>XXXXXXX is a PA. She is not in permanent charge. I am happy and take full responsibility for her actions in the pharmacy. Her working above 12 hours a weekly will do nothing to advance safe pharmacy practice.</p> <p>Please do not define temporary absence in terms of hours. There has been no issues with this for over 27 years, please do not make an issue of it now.</p> <p>In Short I am against these Draft rules.</p>	
362.	Anthony O'Sullivan	
	<p>I think the 12 hours rule proposed is unfair and unworkable given the age profile of the subjects and the reality of working in a retail pharmacy business.It makes no sense.</p> <p>I believe the status quo should be preserved ,there are many other areas of the regulations that need attention more than this aspect and I would urge the PSI to concentrate on amending section 63&64 of the Act to more effectively ban co location of prescribers and dispensing without the current ineffective financial and fiduciary defined restrictions and to actively promote the legislation to realistically discourage and eliminate direction to pharmacies by prescribers and their staff.</p>	
363.	John Madden	
	I would like to make the following points with regard to the draft proposals:	

	<p>Firstly, as no new pharmaceutical assistants have qualified for some time, this issue is self-limiting within a reasonably short time-frame.</p> <p>Secondly, the fitness to practice of a pharmaceutical assistant is more so determined by their work experience and continuing education rather than a course undertaken over thirty years ago.</p> <p>The draft proposals are overly restrictive on a cohort of workers that have served pharmacy well.</p> <p>I would suggest extending the period of absence to 24 hours per week, and also including a provision for emergency and holiday cover.</p>	
364.	Theresa Adamson	
	<p>To whom it may concern</p> <p>The following are my comments on the proposal the PSI has authored regarding temporary absence as it relates to pharmaceutical assistants and temporary absence</p> <p>The PSI have decided to define temporary absence as twelve hours per week. I will not agree to or accept this definition.</p> <p>I am a practicing Pharmaceutical Assistant in a rural pharmacy. My hours of work differ week by week and are dictated by operational demand. I mainly work with a pharmacist who is also the owner of my place of employment. However I would cover his day off and other unscheduled temporary absences. This all falls under the remit of my qualification as awarded by the PSI</p> <p>I served an apprenticeship, attended college lectures and sat exams all under instruction of the PSI. I continue to pay registration fees to the aforementioned body.</p> <p>I expect them to honour the terms of my qualification that they granted and indeed invented.</p> <p>In recent years this same body has been attempting to erode my qualification and has been inflicting great reputational damage on me and my profession. They are giving the perception to the public and to other professionals that we are unfit to practice.</p> <p>How come the PSI deemed it okay for me to work under the terms of my qualification whilst in my 20s, 30s and 40s? Now in my 50s I find myself in a very vulnerable situation courtesy of the PSI. Is this not age discrimination?</p> <p>I really am so sick of this witch hunt and it is time a halt was called. My peers and I will not accept these bullying tactics and we will stand up for our qualification.</p>	
365.	Maire O'Neill	
	As an employer/ superintendent pharmacist who currently employs an extremely capable Pharmacy Assistant (PA) and is carrying out my business under the current code of practice, I feel the proposed changes will require further consultation and revision as	

	<p>they will not benefit any pharmacy employing a PA. In fact, the opposite is the likely outcome in that they will inhibit the safe running of the pharmacy on a day to day basis.</p> <p>Under the current legislation the PA can cover my day off, holiday cover and any unforeseen circumstances which may arise at short notice. Under the new draft guidelines, it appears the PA will no longer be able to cover my annual leave. As a valuable member of staff for more than 10 years who knows customers, staff and other local professionals(e.g. GP's), it is not logical that she can no longer provide cover which leads to a smooth running and safer work environment for both patients and work colleagues due to the lack of continuity in work practices.</p> <p>“Temporary Absence” in a day to day running of a pharmacy can crop up at any stage as in any other work place. Currently, the PA can step into the role which they are entitled to do 16 hours per week, 52 weeks a year and can keep the pharmacy running smoothly until the situation has resolved, usually within a day or so, as most of these absences are due to short term unforeseen circumstances such as a sick child or a hospital appointment.</p> <p>The disruption and unnecessary upheaval for the superintendent/supervising pharmacist doesn't warrant an unknown last minute locum who is being hastily placed in an unfamiliar work environment with little local knowledge of the job they're about to carry out or the patients they are caring for.</p> <p>As part of my responsibility as a superintendent pharmacist to provide a safe working environment, I require my PA to undertake CPD so that she can carry out her job in a professional manner with the relevant knowledge and skills for her job.</p> <p>I think it would be a more sensible approach if rather than focusing on the exact minutes, hours or weeks a PA works, more time and concentration went into ensuring PA's have mandatory CPD and are skilled up to the latest medicines and treatments.</p>	
366.	S.P. Kelly	
	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>As an extremely busy pharmacist ,working in community pharmacy and as an employer of a qualified assistant I ask you to please reconsider your proposal on temporary absence.</p> <p>I could be accused of having a vested interest in so doing but I can assure I would make no such request if it were not for the years of experience I have on the contribution made by my qualified assistant to my pharmacy business and to pharmacy in general.</p>	

	<p>On many occasions I have had to rely on my assistant to provide cover for me in my absence, on occasions such as lunch hours, when I can fit one in that is, days off and holidays etc. I could not have done so with a clear conscience had I had any reservations with regard to the capabilities of the person I was entrusting my business to.</p> <p>What does it say about the PSI if it cannot appreciate the huge contribution made by qualified assistants to the profession of pharmacy, that instead of commending them for their commitment and dedication to pharmacy, they seem to be dismissing them as though it all counted for little or nothing.</p> <p>I know the worth of the qualified assistant, my customers know their worth, does the PSI ?.</p>	
367.	Philomena Crerand	
	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>In 1979 I commenced practical training to become a qualified assistant by serving an apprenticeship to a registered pharmaceutical chemist for a period of three years, attended an academic course for one year and passed an examination as prescribed by the pharmaceutical society of Ireland.</p> <p>As 1979 was the last year this course was ran and as I qualified in April of 1983 that makes me at the age of fifty four one of the youngest qualified assistants in existence today.</p> <p>For all my working life I worked to as stated in the pharmacy act 2007 i.e. a pharmaceutical assistant is a person who is competent to transact the business of a pharmacist in his /her temporary absence. the act also states that no offence is committed where a registered pharmaceutical assistant acts on behalf of a registered pharmacist during the temporary of a pharmacist (section (30)).</p> <p>I can only say that I was shocked and indeed horrified to find myself in part the subject of an inspection report, following an inspection carried out in the pharmacy where I work. it stated that I was found to be working outside the terms of the code of practice as agreed between the psi and the pa in 1994. This was the first time I had heard of such an agreement and had to search online to find out what it entailed, I had received no communication with regard to this agreement so therefore could not have agreed with it.</p> <p>I as a qualified assistant have dedicated my entire working life to the pharmacy profession with the exception of an absence of four years due to XXXXX XXXXXX and recovery post my XXXXXXXX due to the very generous donation of a XXXXXXXXXX.</p>	

	<p>Over the years since qualifying I have provided cover for my boss on many different occasions ,days off ,annual leave and on more than one occasion when in difficult circumstances it would have been impossible and I mean impossible for my boss to get cover ,an example a phone call at 8am on a Monday morning when the pharmacist scheduled to work rang in sick,this is the reality of every day life .</p> <p>Whether i am working with or providing cover in the absence of my boss my commitment and attention to my work is carried out in the same manner,that is to a very high standard and with the safety and wellbeing of each and every person I deal with regardless of age,creed ,race or status within the community.i defy anyone to find me wanting in any way while working in my capacity as a qualified pharmaceutical assistant. I know most of my customers on a first name basis as they do me and I have on many occasions when they present in the pharmacy have it said ,oh I'm glad it s you or I can talk to you about anything.this I attribute to their knowledge of my work as they know if it is me taking care of their needs I will give one hundred per cent and more.</p> <p>I feel that I am under attack from the very body that I have served faithfully and have strived at all times to adhere to their rules i.e. The pharmaceutical society of Ireland. Does the psi realise how hurt i feel ,does it realise I am left wondering has all my hard work been in vain ,all the years I have devoted to pharmacy about to be dismissed as though meaningless . Does the psi care? Surely it must ,because it is part of the same caring profession as I am .</p>	
368.	Therese O'Sullivan	
	<p>I am writing to you in regards to the proposed Draft rules in relation to the regulation of the term Temporary Absence Cover. I wish to express my disappointment that these rules have been proposed. I respect my fellow colleagues - Pharmaceutical Assistants. I feel that this is a gross undermining of their professional qualifications, years of service and their dedication to the pharmacy profession.</p> <p>When I speak of years of service, to the best of my knowledge this "closed book" of unique professionals, comprising mainly of women in their 50+years who would have worked in their community pharmacy all of their professional life. They have built a rapport with their customers and prescribing Doctors based on a trust of their professional pharmaceutical knowledge. A "trust" that the introduction of these proposed rules would cast a shadow of doubt over, with a rippling effect that it could comprise the integrity of the pharmacy profession, so as a practicing pharmacist I can not support the introduction of these rules.</p> <p>On attendance to the IPU training events I regularly see Pharmaceutical Assistants present, demonstrating their dedication to the pharmacy profession by keeping upto date with the latest guidance for the benefits of their customers and complying with registration requirements. I feel that it is unjust to question after all these years their pharmaceutical knowledge and work ethic</p>	

	<p>by proposing pharmaceutical assistances serve as a risk to patient safety.</p> <p>I am asking the Society to please respect the years of experience, service and dedication that our Pharmaceutical Assistants have provided us with and allow them their professional dignity and respect to continue in their current roles. I therefore please ask the Society to reconsider any actions it may be considering.</p>	
369.	E Kelly	
	<p>I wish to express my concerns about the draft which is currently before the PSI regarding pharmacy assistants and the cover they provide.</p> <p>I know two pharmacy assistants in my local town (in two different pharmacies) and have always found them to provide a very professional and competent service. I deal with them on a regular basis and have complete confidence in the service they provide. I work in another field within the health service and I see regularly the difficulties which arise when dealing with locums. It is a great comfort to me, and to many others I'm sure, to deal with someone whom we have known and trusted for many years.</p> <p>As I understand it the qualification in question ceased in 1983/1985 so the last pharmacy assistants qualified thirty one to thirty three years ago. They have, obviously, been working under their current rules and regulations for over thirty years so why change it now. In these times of economic strife I feel it would be completely unjust to take away the careers and employment of people who have dedicated many years to the pharmacy industry.</p> <p>I, personally, have no concerns about the service which pharmacy assistants provide and have complete confidence that the guidelines which they currently practice under are completely sufficient to ensure the safety of all concerned.</p>	
370.	Paul Farrelly	
	<p>I want to put on record my rejection of your proposals to only allow pharmacy assistants to work less than 12 hours.</p> <p>Pharmacy assistants perform a great service and are excellent in the role they perform minimising their input will increase costs to both pharmacies and the consumer.</p> <p>Please refrain from any amendments.</p>	
371.	Eugene Quinn	

	<p>My wife is a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant. She was awarded this qualification from your organisation and you have extracted an annual registration fee from her for the privilege of being on your register</p> <p>For what? So you through your officers can continue to intimidate and victimise her in her place of work. You have no clue about community pharmacy and the service she and her boss provide to a mainly elderly population in a rural setting.</p> <p>She works 10 hour days for the most part alongside her boss who is a pharmacist. She covers his day off and his holidays and also unscheduled short absences ie doctor appointments, funerals etc. Now you are saying she is unfit or not qualified to do this. This will result in her losing her job. She is the breadwinner of the family but you do not care about this sitting in your ivory tower in Dublin 2 ticking your made up boxes.</p> <p>My wife and her peers in pharmacy represent a certain age profile that is 55 years and older. Is your problem with her age? Her qualification and her ability to cover "temporary absence" has been ok with you throughout the years. Now that she has reached her mid fifties she is in danger of being displaced by the PSI because she is too old.</p> <p>I urge you to stop your campaign of trying to define temporary absence.</p>	
372.	Louise McDevitt	
	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I strongly oppose the proposed amendments. The HSE is actively encouraging the public to seek advice from pharmacies rather than visiting GPs. I have consulted pharmacists and assistant pharmacists on several occasions, particularly since my young son came along. The thought that it is now being proposed that professionals who have practised for years will now have their temporary absence hours reduced to 12 hours per week is quite shocking. These people have served their communities for lengthy periods and during this time, have acquired vast amounts of experience. They have also gained familiarity with many local people and their medical needs. To reduce these people's working hours will not only place enormous pressure on the pharmacists who have been relying on their support for a great many years but it will also represent a huge disservice to those members of the community who have turned to their assistant pharmacists for support and advice over the years.</p>	
373.	Patricia Fitzpatrick	

	<p>With reference to your proposal to limit Assistants to absence cover of 12 hours per week I disagree that this limitation is necessary or warranted. Why are you trying to change something that has worked well for over 100 years. The assistants that I have had contact with in my local pharmacies are hard working, conscientious people who take their work very seriously and are an asset to their community. They have trained and practiced over many years and are trusted by many people. I have not heard of adverse findings against them, obviously there will be some people as in all professions who do not do their duty but I assume they are a small minority or we would have heard about it. Pharmaceutical Assistants have given sterling service to their profession and I think they should and can be trusted to do the same in the future under their present conditions.</p>	
374.	Edward & Ann Larkin	
	<p>I have recently heard of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland which seeks to impose a restriction on the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>I fundamentally disagree with this proposal as I feel that it is discriminatory and vindictive as it seeks to change a long established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p> <p>Given that Pharmaceutical Assistants will cease to practice in the next 15 years, it seems unnecessary to now impose these new conditions on a sector of employees who have acted at all times in a manner consistent with their qualification.</p> <p>Surely the Pharmaceutical Society can focus their energies on matters more urgently in need of their attention. The overpricing of medicines in Ireland relative to other countries for example would appear to be a matter more worthy of this level of scrutiny and attention.</p> <p>I am requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined.</p>	
375.	Kathleen Doherty	
	<p>I wish to voice my objection to the PSI's proposal regarding Temporary absence, which will affect all qualified assistants working in many pharmacies throughout the country.</p> <p>As a long standing customer in my local pharmacy who regularly encounters a qualified assistant when I attend there for my monthly prescription, I can only say that I have always been dealt with in a professional manner. I have over the years built up a great rapport with this lady and have total confidence in entrusting my medical needs to her care. Please reconsider this proposal</p>	

	as I certainly prefer to deal with someone who has known me for years than someone who may only be passing through.	
376.	Philip Brady	
	<p>As a concerned pharmacy customer I am totally opposed to the above draft rules to be imposed on pharmaceutical assistants.</p> <p>In my local pharmacy the pharmacist and the assistant pharmacist manage the shop together and there is mutual respect for each others capabilities. The pharmacist is more than happy to allow the assistant pharmacist cover for temporary absences such as holidays and family emergencies. The assistant pharmacists now working qualified under PSI examinations in the seventies and early eighties and also had to undergo an apprentice period of three years together with one year in college.</p> <p>The definition of temporary absence was never defined in law for the obvious reason that it is impossible to define the length of temporary for every possible scenario. Pharmaceutical assistants are an integral part of the profession and have been covering for pharmacists without health and safety concerns for forty years and longer.</p> <p>I am not aware of any pharmaceutical assistant who has been the subject of a professional negligence or misconduct charge. A locum pharmacist who is not familiar with the local pharmacy customers could be more of a health and safety risk. Furthermore a locum pharmacist from the EU with poor language skills and or who is unfamiliar with Irish pharmacy best practice pose an even greater health risk. The Irish pharmacist is no fool. They continue to use their assistant pharmacists for temporary cover because they know the customers and their needs best.</p> <p>It seems to me that the PSI is trying to marginalise this group of employees for its own purposes. The health and safety issue is a red herring. All of the pharmaceutical assistants are now in their fifties or older and are as experienced as their pharmacy colleagues. Furthermore I will continue to use my local pharmacy knowing that I am in the safe hands of my pharmaceutical assistant.</p>	
377.	Deirdre Brady	
	<p>My name is Deirdre Brady and I am a qualified pharmaceutical assistant registration no XXXXX.</p> <p>My father was a pharmacist and I grew up working with him and gained a lot of valuable experience, excellent training and a love of pharmacy.</p>	

	<p>I have working continuously since qualifying in 1983 and have approximately ten years left until retirement.</p> <p>The proposal to introduce restrictions on hours and holidays that I can cover would be devastating for me both financially and professionally. I have also sought legal advice with regard to these proposals. Many of my colleagues have already been affected and have either lost their jobs or had their hours reduced.</p> <p>Every year I pay a substantial fee to register with the PSI. The PSI should have included pharmaceutical assistants in their development plans for pharmacy and not allow the current situation where our role is undermined and minimised - after all we are in existence for 126 years!</p> <p>At a recent meeting with the Minister for Health Leo Varadkar he expressed surprise that the society is seeking to downgrade us as it goes against current trend to utilise staff with qualifications and experience. One recent example of this is the mutual recognition of Physical Therapists and Chartered Physiotherapists.</p> <p>I am a member of the IPU academy and the IOP. I have always availed of CPD which I point out has only recently been made compulsory for MPSIs.</p> <p>I can assure you that I pose no risk to public health and safety. I believe from speaking with council members that the body of members support us. It is neither equitable or fair to pursue these draft proposals. I suggest that CPD be made compulsory and that the PSI recognise us for the pharmacy professionals that we are.</p>	
378.	Grace Kelly	
	<p>We strongly object changes to the working practices of our pharmaceutical assistants. This group of professionals have been practicing safely and effectively for years in our local pharmacies. How can we decide that after they have done such a fabulous job for years that they are now only capable of covering a lunch hour. Who can make such crazy decisions that would make such a huge impact on their customers who have grown to rely on their professional judgment and guidance. Some of these people are working full time in their role for 20-30 years and these decisions would have a huge impact on their careers and livelihoods. I can't see any sense in this and therefore don't support it. How can someone practice safely and effectively for 20 to 30 years and over night only be able to cover a lunch hour. Please reconsider for the benefit of all concerned.</p>	
379.	Thomas Lowthe	
	<p>I am writing to you re the Draft rules on the definition of temporary absence for pharmaceutical assistants announced recently by the PSI ,I am an old aged pensioner ,a customer ,an ordinary member of the public and I am simply outraged at your draft, to</p>	

	<p>consider treating qualified people who are very dedicated and committed to their profession ,like this ,is grossly unfair</p> <p>For many years a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant worked in my local Pharmacy until she relocated to another area, she was a wonderful lady and was always ready to explain things to me, with her wide experience she was a great help to me and an asset to that Pharmacy.</p> <p>I can list many instances where I have been very fortunate to benefit from the help, care and guidance of another Qualified Assistant. One occasion stands out in my mind, I was unfortunate to develop XXXXXX and was returning from the XXXXXXXX one Sunday morning. A qualified Assistant dispensed my prescription and went through everything with me, offering me great practical advice etc., which I believe helped greatly in my recovery.</p> <p>I strongly object to the draft you are considering regarding Pharmaceutical Assistants in relation to the definition of the term Temporary Absence.</p> <p>I would be grateful if you could please acknowledge receipt of this letter.</p>	
380.	Janet Lowthe	
	<p>I am writing to you in response to the proposed Draft Rules recently announced by the PSI in relation to the regulation of the term Temporary Absence Cover. I have worked in community pharmacy for almost 30 years, during this time I have been privileged to work with Qualified Pharmacy Assistants .I can honestly say I have always had the utmost confidence in them. They have at all times been a credit to their profession, in fact one would have to compliment those who lectured them and tutored them, they were certainly given a fantastic training.</p> <p>It is very hard to understand why the PSI is seeking to limit their temporary cover to a mere 12 hours per week, surely if they are competent to cover 12 hours they are competent to cover more hours and holidays?</p> <p>It is rather strange that the PSI has suddenly decided to make it impossible for these Qualified Assistants to continue to be employed in many pharmacies .If the supervising Pharmacist takes a day off each week, they will in reality not be able to take a proper lunch break each day as the Qualified Assistant will not be able to cover the lunch break, surely this is an unwise situation and not in the interests of good practice?</p>	

	<p>To an onlooker it would look as if the PSI is seeking to eradicate the Qualified Assistants completely, one would have to ask have they given any consideration to the impact this will have on many small community pharmacies, the wealth of knowledge and experience of these people will be thrown on the wayside .Who is going to fill these gaps, will the end result be the Pharmacist in these situations having to work longer hours without adequate breaks? Surely that would raise more concerns and needs to be considered.</p> <p>Qualified Assistants have paid their fees each year, they have been allowed to join the PSI ,In addition they have been expected to and have complied with continuing education and after all this the PSI only want to allow them to provide a maximum of twelve hours cover per week ,I cannot understand the logic .</p> <p>Finally, even more important I would have 100% trust in any of the Qualified Assistants to dispense my own prescriptions and also to offer me advice and guidance, given their wonderful training and their wealth of knowledge and experience.</p> <p>I would ask the PSI to please reconsider any actions they are considering regarding Pharmaceutical Assistants in relation to the definition of the term Temporary Absence. I would be grateful if you could please acknowledge receipt of this letter.</p>	
381.	Mary Philomena Dunne	
	<p>My family has a long history with Pharmacy and its regulation – my Grand Uncle was James G. Coleman, he was my mother’s Uncle a previous Registrar – his successor was Michael J. Cahill who was married to my father’s sister – this was a happy accident of marriage between the two families.</p> <p>It is my firm belief that both Uncle Jim and Uncle Joe would be horrified at the treatment by the current Regulatory Body to Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants as both had absolute respect for us as professionals in the Pharmaceutical industry.</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns for my ongoing capacity to work as a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant.</p> <p>I trained and studied for 4 years and qualified in 1981 as a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant. I have worked ever since then, anything from 10 to 40 hours a week across a range of Chemist shops, covering for the temporary absence of the resident Pharmacist on a routine and regular basis.</p> <p>- XXXXXXX Pharmacy EVERY SINGLE SUNDAY over a 5 year period.....yes..... Every single Sunday I took NO holidays during that period.</p>	

- XXXXXX Pharmacy XXXXXXXXXX - All Saturdays and late nights for 9 years – XXX X'XXXXX sadly died and the shop changed hands.
- The shop I currently work in has been my sole place of work for the last 22 years.

We have been covering our employer's absences up to a month at a time in some cases.

I find it both baffling and seriously distressing that as I enter my final working years I am facing such a huge threat from the very Society I joined in order to ensure a measure of security for my qualification in my chosen profession.

With "norms" established over a lifetime of employment it is both insulting and demeaning for the Society to even consider trying to define "temporary absence" in order to restrict our value and worth to the Pharmaceutical Trade. There is no logic to the argument that there is a particular period of time (the temporary absence period) after which a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant stops being capable of doing the job, so why would anyone want to introduce such a restrictive practice?

I have covered for as much as 3 weeks at a time. What gives you the right to change my ability and capacity to do my job as I have done for the last 35 years?

If you threaten my career in this way you can expect to hear from my solicitors, you have no right to dilute the qualification I studied and trained for all those years ago.

Why, why, why would you or anyone ever want to do that to somebody else.

I also believe exclusion of Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants under fitness to practice Part 6 of the Pharmacy Act further erodes my qualification and places unnecessary barriers to Pharmaceutical Assistants in carrying out their work.

It is time to lay this issue to rest for good and accept that we, as Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants, need to be left to continue the good work we have always been doing for our customers.

There is no doubt that defining "temporary absence" will lead to my qualification being effectively redundant and if that happens I will be seeking redress through legal means.

382.	Jim Harrington	
	<p>My wife has worked as a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant since 1976 which is 40 years having achieved highest marks in Ireland (Photo attached below) she has many years of vast experience having worked and lived in XXXXXX for 13 years and now back in her native County XXXX, in various Pharmacies.</p> <p>As her husband I am shocked to think this rubbish about " temporary absence" is still going on after many years. Temporary absence cannot be defined (end of story) as confirmed by comments made recently by a Judge, and it is shameful that The Society continue to attack the rights of Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants by continuing in their attempts to reduce the hours they can cover a tactic to make them unemployable, what use is a person in a Pharmacy Trade who can only cover 12 hours??.</p> <p>Does the Society still accept her qualification???, as someone on the outside I believe that the Society has lost all respect for Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants, the people who attended classes in good faith back in the 1970's, I wonder what there Teachers, Lecturers and Examiners would think of this proposed legislation.</p> <p>It is my understanding, she is, and will always be, a Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant and if we took a case to the European Court to say her rights to work under her qualification were been eroded by the Society due to this proposed new legislation, I believe we would win.</p> <p>If my wife can cover for 12 hours, why can't she cover for 40 hours there is no difference, cover is cover, it has been for the past 40 years of her working life, but now the Society whats to move the goal posts, try telling a doctor in a hospital he/she can only cover when the Consultant is in attendance there would be uproar.</p> <p>I wonder is it on the Society's agenda to make Qualified Assistants redundant in the sole purpose of attaining jobs for young Pharmacy Graduates??, this is the only logical reason I can see why the Society are pursuing the reduction of cover hours for Qualified Assistants .</p> <p>The Assistants also have the backing of most of the older Pharmacists, I have asked some of them and the answer i got was " it was utter nonsense" the continuing attack on the Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant Grade and your attempts to wipe them out by reducing the hours they can cover. This will make them unemployable under the proposed new legislation.</p> <p>Recently some of the new Pharmacists working with her on a trial basis decided to leave telling my wife the shop was too busy for</p>	

	<p>them and they could get a far easier job elsewhere, seems to me the Society is training them in the act of Management and Overseeing and not stressing enough on them that they must also work. They get a degree and think they are Gods, obviously this applies to only some,there are many hard working Pharmacists, but the new breed just want to stand around and Manage.</p> <p>I appeal to the Society to use their logic, and stop this continued attack on my wife's career as all this worry is not good for her health, having been through a tough time some years ago, and also we have a mortgage, please show some consideration and kindness towards all past students of the College of Pharmacy in Shrewsbury Road, no matter what Grade or Qualification, they are all graduates created in the College of Pharmacy and deserve to be treated as so.</p> <p>May I also add most Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants will be retired within 5 years.</p> <p>Finally my wife is XXXXX XX (XXXXX) XXXXXXXXXXXX (Reg Number XXXX)</p> <p>I hope to get a logical reply from you in the future.</p>	
383.	Maire Reilly	
	<p>I would just like to state my disappointment with the proposed changes to the role of pharmacial assistants. My sister XXXXXXXX has been a true professional in her position as a pharmacy assistant over the last 30 years. Our father was a pharmacist and my sister got her love of community pharmacy through him. How disappointed he would be today for XXXXXXXX and her qualification that it is being disrespected in this way. Shame on the PSI! Support your members please!</p>	
384.	Dr Julie Dunne	
	<p>I am writing in response to the public consultation on the rules for defining ‘temporary absence’ for pharmaceutical assistants.</p> <p>This public consultation is of interest to me as a lecturer in higher education concerned that the employability of pharmaceutical assistants will be reduced by these rules, and consequently their livelihood will be impaired.</p> <p>The PSI has stated that the <i>‘the purpose of these rules is to provide for a fair and workable model for the definition of “temporary absence”, which also provides public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety’</i>. The latter aspect of this statement suggests that there is currently a situation deemed to be ‘unsafe’ that requires rectifying. However, the PSI has not presented any</p>	

	<p>research that shows that the current, and indeed historic, practice by pharmaceutical assistants has led to unsafe pharmacy practice, or led to patient safety issues. Perhaps the PSI is concerned that pharmaceutical assistants do not fall under ‘fitness to practice’ rules and therefore safety cannot be assured. If this is the case, the PSI should be working with the members of the profession to implement a strategy that demonstrates and assures their ability to practice safely. This would seem a lot ‘fairer’ than making assumptions about their ability and, based on these assumptions, attempting to change the rules to prevent these professionals from maintaining their current livelihoods. I find it particularly inequitable that the very organisation that validated and operated the training of these professionals would seek to undermine its own graduates in this way, instead of working to provide them with whatever up-skilling or CPD it believes would be required, and allowing individuals the choice to up-skill in order to protect their livelihood. Instead, it seems the PSI would have the public believe that pharmaceutical assistants can safely practice for twelve hours per week, but once they go beyond that, safety to practice becomes an issue. As an educator I find this rationale deeply flawed. If an individual is trained and develops skills to competently carry out a task, they are then deemed competent. It is understandable that, since pharmaceutical assistants are not qualified to carry out the additional roles of a superintendent or supervising pharmacist that the pharmacist’s absence must only ever be ‘temporary’. However, this is so that the additional work of the superintendent pharmacist to implement and monitor systems that assure overall operating safety of the pharmacy can be carried out. Provided this work is done however, the duties carried out by the pharmaceutical assistant can be competently performed for any duration. Attempting to define ‘temporary’ is not possible when it is taken by all to mean ‘not permanent’. The only <i>‘fair and workable model’</i> is to find a strategy that continues to allow pharmaceutical assistants to practice in a pharmacy that is adequately supervised and managed, without attempting the irrational task of setting a safety to practice limit to a certain number of hours, beyond which safety cannot be assured</p>	
385.	Anne Boyce	
	I refer to the above matter and note that in defining temporary absence you propose to reduce the time Pharmaceutical	

	<p>Assistants can cover to 12 hours per week. I think this is very unfair and dismissive of all their hard work and dedication I attend my Pharmacy and the Assistant Pharmacist there provides me with great advice which I fully rely on. I as a concerned member of the public would ask you to please reconsider this course of action.</p>	
386.	Maureen Lambe	
	<p>I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in 1973. My certificate and qualification stated that I was authorised to dispense prescriptions, to offer professional medical advice and to perform the duties of a pharmacist in his/her temporary absence. The only restriction was that I could not act as a manager of a pharmacy or open a pharmacy on my own account.</p> <p>For over 40 years I have worked in pharmacy with no blemish on my professional reputation. After qualifying I worked full time for a number of years and then part time as I raised my children. Over the years I have worked in different pharmacies. I have worked with the pharmacist, in temporary absence of the pharmacist on his/her days off, illness of the pharmacist, and when pharmacist went to the bank, wholesalers, funerals etc. Many times over the years I have received phone calls early in the morning asking to cover that day because of the illness of pharmacist or family emergencies. These are the type of events you cannot plan for. If Pharmaceutical Assistant can only cover for 12 hours a week, do you close a pharmacy if an emergency occurs and leave the patients without their medication?, or do you risk breaking the law?. How can this make practical sense in the real world? Is there any other profession in the world whose members can legally practice for a certain number of hours in the week, and then suddenly, after 12 hours in one week, not be competent to carry out the same tasks?</p> <p>Many years ago I voted to accept the Draft Code of Practice which was agreed with the Pharmaceutical Society because I believe we were bullied into accepting it. We were told that if we did not accept it, we would only be allowed cover for four hours a week. Like most Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants I have never worked according to these rules and all pharmacists who employed me were happy to leave me covering for as long as suited them. I now have discovered that the Draft Code of Practice was never legal as no signed document could be discovered. The Pharmaceutical Society has been responsible for a number of my colleagues losing their jobs in the last couple of years by implementing this.</p> <p>I cannot agree to a definition of Temporary Absence that reduces the terms of my qualification that I have worked to since my conferral and registration in 1973. I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of this qualification post conferral to a course</p>	

	<p>that I undertook in good faith, which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the Pharmaceutical Society.</p> <p>I thank you in allowing me to make this submission.</p>	
387.	Anita O'Reilly	
	<p>I have worked in community pharmacy for over 22 years and I feel that I am in a very good position to comment on this ridiculous notion that is being proposed in relation to Pharmacy Assistants and the Temporary Absence Cover....</p> <p>Pharmacy Assistants have and are still playing a very essential role in pharmacy and to suggest a notion to demote and downgrade their qualification and experience in such a way is unacceptable....</p> <p>This proposal is flawed...If a Qualified Pharmacy Assistant is deemed qualified to cover without a supervising pharmacist I the first place ... why should they now be deprived of regular and decent working hours for which they are qualified ?</p> <p>Please give these hard working professional people the respect that they deserve...</p>	
388.	Marita O'Brien	
	<p>As a pharmaceutical assistant for over 35 years I would like to make the following points regarding the draft Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016.</p> <p>You state the rational for proposing these rules is "to provide for a fair and workable model for the definition of "temporary absence", which also provides public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety".</p> <p>1. The concept of 'Temporary Absence' has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice since 1890. From that time, pharmaceutical assistants acted on behalf of the pharmacist and carried out the functions of the pharmacist, when there was a pharmacist responsible for the pharmacy but he/she was temporarily absent. The certificate awarded to me by the PSI, 35 years ago supports this understanding of 'temporary absence'. This was the basis upon which I embarked upon training for a</p>	

career as Pharmaceutical Assistant and have worked within that definition of 'temporary absence' every since. The PSI set up this course, examined and validated the qualification. Now 35 years later, the PSI wish to change my qualification to one that permits pharmaceutical assistants cover the 'temporary absence' of a pharmacist for an arbitrary time frame of 12 hours. Can you really believe that this is 'a fair and workable model'?

I would contend that these rules are not fair or workable and are totally unnecessary as the Pharmacy Act 2007 ensures that any absence is 'temporary' by placing statutory responsibilities on supervising and superintending pharmacists. Under the 2007 Act, the role of the supervising and superintendent pharmacist is prescribed in statute in a way which clearly places the clinical and professional management and accountability of a retail pharmacy business within these two key-roles, in co-operation with the pharmacy owner. Hence as the supervising pharmacist must be sufficiently present in the pharmacy to discharge his or her statutory obligations under the Act, this in turn ensures that any absence is "temporary", thereby obviating the necessity for any restriction on pharmaceutical assistants.

2. The proposed rules are unfair as they interfere with pharmaceutical assistants' right to work. The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) is an independent statutory body, established by the Pharmacy Act 2007. It is a public body so therefore has a responsibility under the European Convention on Human Rights to ensure that policies and rules being implemented uphold human rights These rights include Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, such as the right to work. The proposed rules will restrict my and my colleagues work practices making us unemployable or 'not fit for the purpose we were set up for. For family reasons, I work Saturdays to cover the pharmacist's day off, other emergencies and holidays. I have been working in this pharmacy for 34 years on and off and worked closely with the pharmacist until 18 months ago. Under the proposed rules, I will not fulfill the requirement of Rule 6 or Rule 7.

The proposed rules therefore, I would argue fail the test of proportionality, which under the European Convention on Human Rights requires that where a decision is taken to restrict a right, the restriction must not be more than is necessary. The objective of these proposed rules on 'temporary absence' is to address public assurance of a safe pharmacy practice and patient safety. The means chosen, defining 'temporary absence' to 12 hours per week, is not rationally connected to these objectives and is not based on evidence of any kind. The rules beg the question as to how a person may be competent to act on behalf of a pharmacist for 12 hours and become incompetent on the 13th hour. If adopted these rule will interfere with my right and that of all pharmaceutical assistants to earn a livelihood and practice their profession.

3. The proposed rules are unworkable as they do not take into account the challenges any business or service faces in day to day life such as illness, death, family responsibilities etc. If imposed, it will become an offence for a pharmacist to allow their 'temporary absence' be covered by a pharmaceutical assistant, 5 minutes over 12 hours. In the 'real' world how is this understanding of 'temporary absence' workable. A patient arrives 5 minutes after 6pm when pharmacy is due to close and PA's 12 hour window of cover is up, is the customer to be handed back their script and told to wait until the next morning. Imagine for a moment if that prescription is for inhalers, what are the risks to the patient of having to wait 15 hours for medication.
4. To address the objective of public assurance of a safe pharmacy practice and patient safety, I contend that a rational approach would be to ensure pharmaceutical assistants registered with the PSI are subject to mandatory CPD and Fitness to Practice requirements rather than through the imposition of arbitrary time constraints and the abdication of responsibility for ensuring

	<p>pharmaceutical assistants have the requisite skills to the supervising pharmacists. The PSI, as the statutory regulator and keeper of the register of pharmaceutical assistants, is failing in its duty to the public and the practice of safe pharmacy by not ensuring pharmaceutical assistants were included in the PSI (CPD) Rules 2015, which make CPD mandatory for pharmacists. Nor have the PSI sought to have pharmaceutical assistants included in the new Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill to amend the Medical Practitioners Act 2007, the Dental Act 1985, the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005, the Pharmacy Act 2007 and the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011 to update Fitness to Practice regulations for all such healthcare professionals.</p> <p>5. Having achieved a qualification under the 'old PSI' that set out the parameters and expectations for a career pathway and associated earnings, I have a legitimate expectation that the parameters will not be altered in a way that is unreasonable and adversely affects them, particularly without compensation as I like many of my colleagues still have 12 years or so left to work before we become eligible for the State Pension.</p> <p>I trust you as Council members will take these points on view in your deliberations and make the right choices and not rubber stamp what others see as the only way.</p>	
389.	Mary Sammon Quinn	
	<p>As a Pharmaceutical Assistant working in the system for 30 years I wish to make a submission in response to the proposed Draft Rules recently announced by the PSI in relation to the regulation of the term Temporary Absence Cover and my concerns as to the subsequent consequences I believe it has for the role of Pharmaceutical Assistant (PA).</p> <p>It seems to me to be a gross undermining by the PSI of the PA role, if you consider the years of professional service that those of us, who hold PA qualifications have provided in our respective community pharmacies under the faith and trust of our supervisors, colleagues and customers alike. We have also set the bar for the younger generations of Pharmacists in terms of providing support</p>	

	<p>and a readiness to share our experience and knowledge with younger colleagues. We are available to provide emergency cover when a pharmacist is sick or unavailable, allowing the RPB to trade and for patients to receive their medications without interruption.</p> <p>The current rules were agreed with the previous PSI counsel and thus employment contracts were agreed with our group on this basis. Enforcing these rules will now cause an issue with employment law and employment of PAs. As Pas we have a reasonable expectation of our career and employment prospects from the benefits bestowed on us at registration. Any change to the conditions added to our qualification post conferral would seem unfair and unjust. I believe that if this amendment were to come into effect it would make our group of highly experienced and qualified professionals unemployable for the job that we have already been doing very well until now.</p> <p>Defining the term Temporary Absence in the manner proposed, especially after the PSI were happy to allow PAs to join their society and pay their fees is an insult. It raises many questions as to the motives and even integrity of such an association that such a proposal would even be considered. Why would the PSI propose to define the term 'temporary absence' after 126 years and why would they consider a PA to be "competent" to cover the absence of a Pharmacist for 12 hours per week, and 1 minute over that time are "incompetent"?</p> <p>The reasoning for making such a change, in the absence of concrete published evidence, goes against the principle of "Evidence Based Medicine" and is open to legal challenge</p> <p>It is for the reasons outlined above that I reject the changes to the current rules for PA's. I would ask the PSI to please reconsider any actions they are considering regarding Pharmaceutical Assistants in relation to the definition of the term 'Temporary Absence'.</p>	
390.	Susan Mullane	
	<p>I would like to lobby against the changes to reduce the hours of temporary cover to 12 hours per week.</p> <p>I am concerned about a number of issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pharmaceutical assistants have been employed in Ireland for over 30 years in their current role and offer an excellent service 	

	<p>to their customers and I don't see any reason to change this.</p> <p>2. I think that the cover they provide allows continuity of care for the customers which allows them to remain with the same chemist and the same people who know and understand their medical history.</p> <p>3. The pharmaceutical assistants are fully qualified and have very valuable experience to carry out the role of temporary cover for the pharmacist. Surely the pharmaceutical assistant should be allowed to cover lunch breaks, annual leave, sick cover etc. With a restriction of 12 hours per week this would not be possible.</p> <p>4. The reduction of hours of cover would have a serious and detrimental effect on the employment status of the pharmaceutical assistant and I would strongly object to this.</p> <p>5. I feel the smaller and family run chemists would be affected greatly by this and could easily lead to their closure allowing the major chain chemists to take the majority of the market. I would very much like to see our local and family run chemists remaining as they provide excellent care and service in our community.</p> <p>Finally, I would like to ask you to consider these points, and continue to allow the pharmaceutical assistants to provide the temporary cover that they are qualified and registered to do as it stands at the present time.</p> <p>I would be very grateful if you could reply to my submissions at your earliest convenience.</p>	
391.	Katie Fitzsimons	
	I object to the Pharmaceutical assistant proposal.	
392.	Jane Fitzsimons	
	I object to the proposal.	
393.	Gemma Fitzsimons	
	I object to the proposal.	

394.	Shane O'Donnell	
	<p>Referring to the above consultation I wish to inform you that I am a Qualified Assistant working in a retail pharmacy business.</p> <p>I understand now and always understood that the qualification conferred on me in 1983 by the PSI allowed me to act for the pharmacist in his/her temporary absence and not restricted a set number of hours. I do not agree with the draft Code of Practice on the issue.</p> <p>Currently I am working in one shop since 2011 with the pharmacist, and without the pharmacist on a temporary basis by prior arrangement. This allows the pharmacist to deal with issues that takes him away from the shop on a short term e.g. meetings, sickness, family issues and I provide holiday cover.</p> <p>The proposed changes will have a serious impact on my position and employment as it is too restrictive. It will have a negative impact on my earnings and I been informed by other qualified assistants that they have been put on notice of a reduction in their remuneration.I, in conjunction with other qualified assistants have children in full time education and any reduction in salary would bring a lot of hardship.</p> <p>The role of qualified assistant will come to an end in 10 to 12 years through retirement and I would ask that we be allowed end our working life without our qualification being diluted and our value to the pharmacy profession diminished as will happen if these new rules are introduced.</p>	
395.	Aideen Tobin	
	<p>I don't agree with the proposed Draft Rules to limit the working hours of qualified pharmacy assistants to 12 hours a week. These hard working experienced assistants are the backbone of many a pharmacy and a necessary asset to pharmacists everywhere</p> <p>Why do this now when most of these assistants have given over 30 years and more to the community pharmacies where they work ?</p>	
396.	Anne Marie O'Reardon	

	<p>I am a retired pharmaceutical assistant. I qualified in May 1972 and retired in May 2015.</p> <p>I worked continuously in community pharmacies during this time, mostly full -time but part -time in recent years. I worked in busy pharmacies alongside pharmacists and provided cover during their temporary absence. I covered days off, short unscheduled absence, annual leave and sick leave. I worked safely and competently and was always regarded as a valued member of staff.</p> <p>I am therefore dismayed to hear that the Council of the PSI has now decided to define Temporary Absence and limit the period of cover to 12 hours in any one week.</p> <p>This will certainly result in loss of employment for many pharmaceutical assistants.</p> <p>It is a sad reflection on the lack of appreciation the PSI has for this group of professionals who have worked safely and diligently in their pharmacies and for their customers for the past 126 years. I fail to see how replacing them with locum pharmacists - often newly qualified with little experience and no knowledge of the pharmacy they are covering or its customers - will provide a safer dispensing environment.</p>	
397.	Brian Baker	
	<p>I strongly disagree with the proposed changes regarding the work practices of qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants, I have knowledge of such qualified persons and find them to be extremely competent, experienced and extremely capable to fulfil the role and service that they currently provide, I don't see in any way why the current status should be changed.</p>	

	<p>The proposed changes will have devastating effects on individuals who are perfectly capable of carrying out the duties which they have done so for many decades now, the proposed changes in some cases would see their employment untenable, and would lead to these people losing their jobs because of unnecessary changes, and this is not acceptable.</p> <p>The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland ran the courses for qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants, (which qualified them to do exactly what they are currently doing and have been for decades) and now if the PSI change the rules - you victimise this group of qualified people, this cannot be allowed to happen, I am sure if the PSI attempt to implement these changes the consequences will be far reaching - Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants will have no option but to take action including legal proceedings to cover loss of earnings.</p> <p>I trust that the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland will NOT implement these proposed changes, and leave the Public continue to receive the excellent care and service that we have enjoyed for decades from our Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p>	
398.	Eamonn Hopkins	
	<p>As a member of the public I wish to make a submission on the proposed draft rules .</p> <p>I do not see anything fair or just in these changes . Qualified assistants were educated and examined by the PSI who now want to penalise and affect their presents jobs and future employment opportunities . Why does temporary absence have to be defined by law now ? Is there some undisclosed reason behind this decision by the PSI ? Is this more about victimisation and ageism than regulatory matters?</p> <p>What about the loyal service these people have shown to an entire profession ? To be treated in this way must be both hurtful and discouraging ! Maybe we can find out some undisclosed information from them hithero unknown to the general public ? Possible whistleblowers maybe ?</p> <p>I do not understand how any fair minded person could consider it just to alter a qualification 50 years after it's conferral.</p> <p>I do not agree with the draft proposal</p>	
399.	Anne MacDonald	
	I strongly object to the proposal which will seriously impact pharmaceutical assistants qualification.	
400.	Catherine Hopkins	
	I wish to make a submission on the draft proposals on temporary absence as a qualified assistant myself . The concept of temporary absence has already been established since 1890 so why should it be changed now ? The word temporary means a	

	<p>period of time with no upper or lower time limit which was always understood by all members of the pharmaceutical community so by defining it to be twelve hours is a miscarriage of justice !</p> <p>As the PSI prefers to use a "common sense " approach when defining "whole time charge" where supervising pharmacists are concerned I do not understand the need to be so prescriptive when defining " temporary absence " .</p> <p>We are a small group of middle aged women , fifty four being the youngest age who feel victimised, bullied and intimidated by the same governing body which originally conferred their qualification to them ! Such an injustice cannot be allowed and must be brought to both Irish and European courts if necessary . This is an astounding situation that has been greeted by the general public with incredulous reactions , a governing body reneging on their own qualifications Our course consisted of a three year apprenticeship plus a year in college which cost a substantial lot of money and hard work and now in our final working years to be victimised and discriminated is just outrageous!</p> <p>Surely if the objective of the proposed rules are to provide public assurance of safe pharmacy practise and patient safety a rational approach would be to ensure pharmaceutical assistants registered with the PSI are subject to mandatory CPD and fitness to practise and not through the imposition of arbitrary time constraints ?</p>	
401.	<p>Roisin Adams</p>	
	<p>I have read, with a great sense of disquiet, your draft rules concerning temporary absence cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants. I have also read , with interest, the Historical Background document you have provided on your site. As a Pharmacist of more than thirty years standing and as the continuous employer of the same Pharmaceutical Assistant for more than twenty of those years, I wish to comment on both of these documents as follows:-</p> <p>My memory of events was that , prior to the 1994 agreement , we were directed by the PSI that Pharmaceutical Assistants could cover a day off per week and one weeks annual leave. There was no stipulation as to how many hours the Pharmaceutical Assistant had to work regularly in order to cover this. Roll on to 1994 and, at last , we had a workable ,sensible arrangement . It was was at this time that I increased my colleague's working hours to more than comply with the requirements of the agreement ,in order that she could legally cover my annual leave.</p> <p>Bear in mind, a fact which is omitted from your Historical Document, that Locum Pharmacists were in very short supply at this time, particularly in places like the Midlands. Indeed ,there were fewer than 50 pharmacists qualifying per annum and there was no Free Movement of Pharmacists until much later. This agreement was reached under what would now be termed ,"Health and Safety Grounds," for the, then predominantly, Sole Trader Pharmacists. It was not on economic grounds that I employed a Pharmaceutical Assistant ,(since Locum rates were essentially the same for both groups), but rather of necessity. The Pharmacist whom I had engaged to cover my Maternity leave , let me down in the middle of it with little or no notice, to go and open his own Pharmacy. The Pharmaceutical Assistant who came to my aid at this time , and who still works with me, was highly recommended</p>	

to me by my Father in Law, (RIP), with whom she had trained.

And so I come to the crux of my objections to this Draft Document , which I find offensive on so many levels. Firstly, on my own behalf , because it seeks to imply that by employing a Pharmaceutical Assistant to cover for me in my absence, at all times in accordance with current legislation and long-standing , accepted practice, I am in some way putting the public at risk. This inference is objectionable in the extreme and nothing could be further from the truth. My colleague and I work together tirelessly to ensure the very best care and outcomes for our patients . I have every confidence that my patients are as well looked after in my absence as in my presence. Indeed , it is my considered professional opinion that my patients are much better served by someone educated,experienced and conscientious ,who knows them and their histories intimately rather than someone who is drafted in sporadically , no matter how competent or qualified.

Secondly, on my colleagues behalf, I have to say this document beggars belief. How can a Statutory Body which has happily accepted the registration fees of this group of professionals under a particular set of terms for a long number of years now turn around and arbitrarily alter those terms, almost on a whim? It is , I fear, no coincidence that we are talking about a group of women. What other professional group could be effectively stripped of their qualification , their means of earning a living ,without any fault ,whatever, on their part or, sinisterly, any recourse to normal fair procedure. There is no Public Interest at play here in my opinion , just the financial interests of a group of pharmacists who find themselves in a position of over supply. In the seventy-odd years that my family have been involved in the Pharmacy Profession I don't believe that there has been one documented incident involving a Pharmaceutical Assistant.

Thirdly, I draw your attention to your own stated aim of providing a "fair and workable model for the definition of "temporary absence ," which also provides public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety. " Frankly , this document does none of those things. "Temporary Absence, " has been defined in law and in practice for the last 22 years. By seeking to change that definition in a negative way , it is you , our governing body who are generating an opportunity for unnecessary and unfounded public disquiet. There is nothing fair about impugning a persons professional reputation and competence by implication, especially when there is no avenue to refute such an implication. I stand , full square , shoulder to shoulder with my colleague. We have worked together side by side, learning with and from one another and accessing the same continuing education opportunities for the past 25 years. I have no doubts whatever about her capabilities or competence and there is no-one whom I trust more to safely conduct the professional side of my business in my absence.

If , as stated , The Pharmaceutical Society is serious about public safety and fair and workable solutions they should scrap the whole nonsensical notion of " Temporary Absence." If someone is competent to do a job for any time , they are competent for all time. If there are any perceived gaps in a professional's knowledge ,they should be fully and openly addressed and courses run , if necessary, to bring them up to speed. Cognisance must be taken of years of service and vocational learning . This small

	<p>,hardworking, group of women were perfectly fine for us when we needed them and nothing has changed in the interim except that, like ourselves they now have even more knowledge and experience. They should be compelled to keep the same CPD records as ourselves. I have no fears for my Colleague were this the case.</p> <p>Finally , The Pharmaceutical Society has a duty to protect the public but it also has a duty of care to us as Registrants. We have a right to expect the support and respect of our Statutory Regulator to enable us to provide the best possible care to that Public. Pharmaceutical Assistants are being treated like second class citizens in this Draft Document, a document which strips them of all the rights which normally pertain to decent people in a civilised society. This draft has legal implications at every level ,moral , employment , gender discrimination and human rights. There is no mention of monetary recompense for the inevitable loss of income or emotional and psychological support for the loss of position and professional status. Indeed , there is no professional respect of any kind evident in this document.</p> <p>Speaking of evidence , I would be very grateful if you would furnish me immediately with any evidence based study in your possession which would explain the necessity for any change in the status quo. It seems ridiculous to me , in the absence of such evidence, to waste time and money -not to mention causing huge , unnecessary distress to decent people - on something which will no longer be an issue in ten to fifteen years , given the age profile of the people involved.</p> <p>I am happy to make myself available for any discussion forums which must inevitably take place before such life and career changing decisions can possibly be made.</p>	
402.	Tracey Carroll	
	<p>It has recently come to my attention that the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland are seeking to impose a restriction on the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants which would have a detrimental effect on the employability of Pharmaceutical Assistants. I wish to express my dissatisfaction with any such proposal which I feel is discriminatory as it seeks to change along established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p> <p>The Pharmaceutical Assistant in our family pharmacy in XXXXXXXX, XXXX, has worked in the temporary absence of the Pharmacist for a significant number of years. I have always found her to be professional and knowledgeable in the administration of her duties. Ms. XXX has a friendly disposition and is very approachable, qualities that are key to reassuring people at a time when they are at their most vulnerable. No question is too silly for her and she has always had time to listen and provide reassurance when required. Over the years as we left home, the local pharmacy remained the pharmacy of choice for my parents despite there being alternative pharmacies that may have been more conveniently located. The reason for this was due to the relationship they had developed over the years with staff in the chemist and in particular the confidence they had in Ms. XXX.</p>	

My parents both have medical needs for which they are reliant on medication. Ms. XXX has a working knowledge of their prescriptions and has on more than one occasion liaised with both of their GPs and Hospital staff/Consultants when they have been prescribed a drug which was not compatible with their existing medication. My parents are of a generation where they do not question Doctors it is therefore imperative that the person administering their medication is knowledgeable, which Ms. XXX has always demonstrated she is. It was due to her knowledge that these errors were detected. I dread to think of the consequences if this was not detected.

According to the Act “absence” refers to period when the pharmacist is not physically present to exercise their professional judgement and supervise the sale and supply of medication. I am confident in Ms. XXXXX’s professionalism and ability to administer medication and do not think she poses a health and safety risk as suggested by the 126 year old definition of temporary absence. I would be more concerned with my parents being administered their medication by a locum who has little experience and who does not have the personal knowledge of my parent’s medicinal needs. It could be argued that this poses a greater health and safety risk.

It is my understanding from reading the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016 that a Pharmaceutical Assistant will be permitted to work in temporary absence for a period not exceeding 12 hours. So a Pharmaceutical Assistant is trusted to perform duties for 12 hours and no more? I fail to see the logic behind such a proposal. What does the PSI think will happen after that 12th hour? Has consideration been given to circumstances where the Pharmacist may be delayed returning to work due to unforeseen circumstances and the 12 hour cap is approaching? Does the Pharmaceutical Assistant “down tools” and leave the customer waiting? Hardly best practice or in the customers best interest!

Ms. XXX works in a small family run pharmacy. The restrictions on working hours would mean that a locum Pharmacist would need to be employed to work when Ms. XXX has worked 12 hours. There may not be enough work for all three nor would it be economically viable. Furthermore employing a locum would mean a lack of a consistency for customers as the same locum may not always be available.

I understand that the position of Pharmaceutical Assistant will cease to exist in the next 15 years. Therefore I find it hard to

	<p>comprehend why the PSI feel it necessary to impose new conditions on a small sector of employees at this juncture. To date I assume that the PSI have never had any concerns with the service provided by these Pharmaceutical Assistants who have been performing their duties in line with their professional qualifications? I understand that most Pharmaceutical Assistants are middle aged women coming up to retirement age. These restrictions would infringe on their economic, social and cultural rights as it does not meet the principle of proportionality. The proposed restriction on their right to work is more than is necessary.</p> <p>The proposed restrictions seek to undermine the position of a group of valued, qualified professionals who had the right to work autonomously in the temporary absence of a pharmacist conferred upon them upon qualification from a course that was undertaken in good faith and which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI.</p> <p>I wish to make this submission to the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) on the draft PSI (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016. I am making this submission on behalf of my parents. I am respectfully requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined above. I am available to discuss this matter further and welcome contact from you and can be reached on XXXXXXXXXX</p>	
403.	Greg Ryan	
	<p>Revenue in Ireland define a temporary absence from the state as anything up to 182 days in a calendar year, UK Law defines a temporary absence from the home for benefits purpose as up to 13 weeks in a calendar year and yet the PSI seeks to determine a temporary absence (that appears to have worked quiet well since 1890 as just what it is; an absence that is not permanent) at just 12 hours in a week.</p> <p>A couple of things jumped out at me while reading your draft “Regulation for temporary absence cover” document on your website for public consultation. Firstly this set of rules differs significantly from the previous set of rules which your own website says was in place since 1994 even though the PSI as a regulatory body was only established by the act of 2007, so do these older rules even count ? There definitely wouldn’t appear to me to be any basis in law for them. Secondly there are a serious of definitions on the first page of the document all of which quote specific sections of the act except “skilled assistance” which references nothing so is presumably your own creation and “temporary absence” which references section 30 which basically</p>	

	<p>states a pharmaceutical assistant can legally act in place of a pharmacist during their temporary absence.</p> <p>Irish law in general seems to be fairly good at providing very specific definitions of things where they are required and more common sense definitions that then tend to fall back on case law for more detailed explanation where they are appropriate. As such the act of 2007 seems to have settled on a temporary absence being an absence that isn't permanent, probably because the legal minds drafting the law looked in depth at the unique situation of pharmaceutical assistants and came to the conclusion that this definition was appropriate.</p> <p>We are talking about a very limited group of professionals who qualified under old rules and practices that haven't been available to new entrants for years. As such these people all seem to have at least 18 years and in many cases up to and above 45 years. To my mind this is a group of skilled professionals that should be seen as a resource to be relied upon to support registered pharmacists and supervising pharmacists in conducting their business and not a group to be undermined and made obsolete which is what to my mind what this proposed set of guidelines seeks to do.</p> <p>Given the qualification of the group we are referring to I would suggest that a temporary absence should be defined for the purpose of your guidelines as an absence that is not permanent, be that a pharmacist's day off during the week, holiday cover during the pharmacist's annual leave or running in for an hour that morning when you get the phone call advising you that the pharmacist won't be in on time as one of the kids is sick and they need to get them to a Doctor. These are the type of guidelines that make sense to let a pharmacist rely on the experience of a pharmaceutical assistant to support them in their role. If it needs a quantifiable definition then to my mind 12 weeks in a year at the discretion of the supervising pharmacist makes a lot more sense than 12 hours in a week.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to read this submission and I hope my views will be taken into consideration in the formulation of the final guidelines for defining this temporary absence.</p>	
404.	Fiona Black	
	<p>I have attended my local pharmacy for years and have had the pleasure of building up a great relationship with the staff especially their pharmacy assistant who I can say carries out her position with great knowledge and professionalism. I find it absolutely disgraceful that you consider their years of experience and devotion to pharmacy are so little thought of that you are lowering their hours that they can cover for to 12 hours per week. You can throw out as many new qualified pharmacists but as for having</p>	

	the years of knowledge you are doing the communities who are still lucky to have a pharmacy assistant working for them a very serious injustice.I hope you will reconsider your decision and give these hard working people their rights back.	
405.	Mary Walsh	
	<p>I would like to make a submission on behalf of my former colleague, XXX who has been a Pharmaceutical Assistant for many years and whose current role and employability will be effected if the proposed ruling comes into force.</p> <p>I worked with XXX for six years and she is competent, conscientious and extremely trustworthy at her job. She is also very experienced and keeps herself up to date to ensure she continues to be professional. During this time and since, she has been trusted by several pharmacists to step in for holidays and sickness.</p> <p>To now say that she can only look after a pharmacy for 12 hours per week makes her qualification rather obsolete but also her worth meaningless over the last thirty odd years. I would urge you to review the proposed change and consider an alternative solution such as continuous assessment to ensure continued competency.</p> <p>I would be grateful if you can acknowledge my email and I look forward to hearing from you.</p>	
406.	Brigid Brophy	
	<p>I am a Qualified Assistant and have worked since the early seventies as such in different parts of Ireland. The PSI, in its wisdom, granted me my qualification. The Society now wishes to alter the terms under which I can work.</p> <p>An analogous situation exists at the moment with Second Level Teachers of Mathematics. Qualifications already attained are now considered insufficient for the teaching of Mathematics at second level. The Department of Education and Science is providing a path, Professional Diploma in Mathematics Teaching, for such teachers to upgrade their skills to the requisite level.</p> <p>I feel it is incumbent on the PSI to provide a similar path to Qualified Assistants so that we can continue to work as we always have.</p> <p>Brigid Brophy</p>	

407.	Mairead Holmes	
	<p>I have been working as a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant since 1976 and wish to submit my following comments;-</p> <p>On a personal basis, I strongly object to the proposals being put forward by the new PSI for the regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants Rules 2016, for the following reasons :-</p> <p>The proposal for a maximum period of cover of 12 hours per week is impractical and unworkable and would immediately cause me to lose my job as I would be unable to cover for annual holidays or fulfil my existing terms of employment.</p> <p>The restrictions to 12 hours per week only if I had completed 12 hours in the previous month for the same pharmacy, would mean that I could never work in any other pharmacy than those in which I have had employment in the previous month, thus rendering me incapable of getting work in any new pharmacy.</p> <p>If I had no work in any pharmacy for a period of a month, for whatever reason, I would never be able to work again as I would not have “12 hours work in the previous month” anywhere.</p> <p>My professional qualification, when granted, allowed me to cover the temporary absence of a pharmacist without definition of what that period might be. In 1994 the guidelines were changed to require PA’s to be permanently employed for a minimum of 15 hours per week by the same employer. This led to a number of redundancies for PA’s and greatly restricted work available for the remaining PA’s. These new proposed Statutory Regulations propose even further restrictions on the work of PA’s and is effectively restricting the “right to work” of the remaining PA’s , like myself, and forcing us into redundancy. This would be contrary to our Human Rights and rights to work in a profession for which we studied hard to join and continue to study to remain up to date.</p> <p>I continue to study and attend CPD courses, paid for by my employer, in order to remain up to date, even though the PSI failed to include PA’s in the legislation for mandatory CPD. To my way of thinking, this was designed to undermine the qualification of the PA.</p> <p>The PSI has continued to take our registration fees but has done nothing to help us in our desire to remain working in the profession and provide meaningful assistance to pharmacists.</p>	

408.	Mary Ball	
	<p>I wish to comment on the proposed draft from the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016.</p> <p>My qualification as a Pharmaceutical Assistant, under section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890, entitles me and recognises me as competent to transact the business of a pharmacist in his or her temporary absence. I believe now as I did when I qualified that "Temporary" is anything other than "permanent" and cannot be quantified in hours or days.</p> <p>I feel any attempt to define "temporary" or any changes to what may or may not be done by a registered pharmaceutical assistant while acting on behalf of the pharmacist would be in effect a downgrading of my qualification, with possible ramification regarding choice of employment and would be something that I absolutely object to.</p>	
409.	Anne Wallace	
	<p>It has been brought to my attention that you are planning to define temporary absence in an arbitrary fashion, that will result in a misogynistic outcome. If you discriminate against existing pharmaceutical assistants in this way, one it is ageist under the Equality Legislation and two it will deter employers from employing permanent staff. This will degrade the standing of pharmacists overall. Please revisit this proposal, perhaps with some discussion with the relevant parties. It is never too late to admit a mistake</p>	
410.	Susan McBride	
	<p>I have been working as a qualified assistant pharmacist for 40 years. My qualification allows me to do the exact same work as a pharmacist in his or her temporary absence and also in their presence. As i do not believe in breaking the law i have paid my registration to the psi to allow me to do so.</p> <p>However now after working all down the years you are now proposing to downgrade my qualification by changing temporary absence to a fixed absence. I believe this interference with my qualification is illegal. In addition to your proposal to diminish my qualification you do not seem to understand the importance we attach to taking part in the cpd by making it compulsory instead of optional. I undertook a number of years ago with two of my colleagues to study for a post graduate diploma at Brighton university in England in order to further my knowledge in my chosen profession pharmacy.</p> <p>Finally i trust you will this consider this submission favorably and also realize the amount of stress and pressure your proposal to</p>	

	restrict our qualification this causes myself and my colleagues.	
411.	Ian O'Reilly	
	<p>It is with great concern that I learn that the PSI are considering reducing the hours that Pharmacy Assistants are allowed work. These people provide a great service not just to the community they serve but also in allowing Pharmacists have a better work/life balance</p> <p>It is disgraceful that a few weeks before we celebrate the centenary of Irish people fighting and dying for the freedom of all Irish people, the PSI are considering removing their own members rights to freedom of work - the action is in effect an eradication of the Pharmacy Assistants.</p> <p>I call on the IPS to reconsider their proposal immediately.</p>	
412.	Patricia O'Neill	
	<p>I have heard about your plans to change the terms of above workforce. It would be good to have clarity on a number of issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you explain why temporary absence is classed as only 12 hours. Does that mean that 13 hours is a permanent absence ? Or 2 days? or one week? 2. Is it legal to negate/discredit/unvalidate a qualification 30 years after the fact? 3. Is it legal to make unemployable a whole sector of the workforce most of whom are women? What does the Court of Human Rights have to say about it? 4. Have you asked existing pharmacists/ qualified assistants their opinions in this matter ? I would have assumed that pharmacists who employ assistants would be sorry to lose them - apart from anything else they are less expensive than locum pharmacists. In addition the "in situ" assistant usually has organisational memory of customers and may be in a position to advise more effectively than a locum who does not have the local knowledge. <p>And finally, why now? If the last exam was 1985, why is it so important to raise it when in another decade, all graduates will likely be retired?</p> <p>I await with interest to see the outcome of your consultation which at this point in time appears to be an exercise in discrimination.</p>	
413.	Nuala Daly	
	QA's have been and continue to be a very valued member of the pharmacy profession ,our experience is valued and respected among employers,both independent and multiples , ,a lot of working QA are with employers a long number of years and are know	

	for their loyalty and flexibility and know all aspects of the business ,our fitness to practice has never been questioned and to redefine temporary absence is unnecessary and unacceptable to us	
414.	Brid O'Reilly	
	My husband was a Pharmacist and during his business years he employed Pharmacy Assistants. They were very highly regarded by him and the many other Pharmacists in this area and indeed, all over the country. Why should they now be demoted by the P.S.I. at this stage. They have given terrific service to many communities and the number will be declining in a short number of years so why should they be treated like this by reducing their working hours and their income!. I strongly object to the proposal being offered by your company	
415.	Dr Tony MacDonald	
	<p>I write in support of continuing the present role of Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>I have local experience for many years of Pas in my local pharmacies and I find them extremely knowledgeable and competent in their work.</p> <p>I feel that this new directive to restrict their hours of work is unnecessary and unfair and I would advise against such a move.</p>	
416.	Therese Cullen	
	<p>I am working full time as a QA (qualified assistant) since 1983</p> <p>My qualification was decreed on me by PSI which allowed me to cover in the temporary absence of the pharmacist I work along with</p> <p>Over the years PSI inspectors have visited pharmacies been covered by PA's in the temporary absence of their Pharmacist,which was within the rules and acceptance of temporay absence</p> <p>You are now proposing to cancel a qualification YOU the PSI conferred</p> <p>I am a single income woman who needs a few more years work before I can retire,you</p>	

	should maybe put the shoe on the other foot and consider how you would react if your qualification was downgraded	
417.	Kathleen O'Neill	
	<p>With reference to the new draft rules regarding temporary absence,I wish to state that I cannot agree to a definition that reduces the terms of my qualification.</p> <p>I am a 59 year old qualified assistant and I have worked full time in retail pharmacy since 1980.I have worked for my present employer for 12 years and I have never sought to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my own account,and I have always worked according to the terms of our qualification .</p> <p>I note the PSI States the purpose of these draft rules are to "provide a fair and workable model " for the definition of temporary absence.From my perspective as a qualified assistant I struggle to find anything fair about them and as to the suggestion that 12 hours cover in a given week offers a "workable" solution..it is completely impractical. It isn't enough to cover a day off plus lunch hours which one would consider to be the bare minimum cover required by any employer.</p> <p>Defining temporary absence in such restrictive terms does not recognise the normal demands of every day life, absences from the pharmacy can be due to any number of unforeseen reasons,eg.sickness ,family emergencies etc.Why would any owner of a business continue to employ me if under these new proposed rules I couldn't cover lunch hours ,a day off a hospital appointment or any absence of a temporary nature.</p> <p>If emergency cover was required and the qualified assistant had already covered 12 hours in that given week,does the PSI really believe that the patient would receive a better service from a locum pharmacist who may arrive with minimum experience and no back ground knowledge of the customers involved.Surely if we are capable of providing cover for 12 hours we are capable of providing it should an emergency or unforeseen event occur.</p> <p>I undertook this course in good faith,I feel I have always carried out my duties as a qualified assistant with the utmost care and I feel totally abandoned by the PSI in the dismissive way they are attempting to down grade my qualification,it is unfair and immoral and having spoken to people outside of pharmacy they are dumbfounded that the PSI could undermine a qualification that they themselves conferred.</p> <p>We are all in the 50+ age bracket and many of us are the sole wage earners in our homes ,any diminution in terms of our qualification would seriously erode our basic right to earn a living.</p> <p>I would appeal to you in the society to look at this again and afford us the dignity to continue to work and earn a living under the terms of the qualification formulated and validated by the society.</p>	

418.	Elenora Hogan	
	<p>I wish to make a submission regarding the issue of Temporary Absence</p> <p>I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in 1981 in a course that was validated and administered by the then PSI. My certification is from that body. I had always wanted to work in a Pharmacy, since my father X. X. XXXXX inculcated a pride and love of the profession in me from an early age.</p> <p>When I qualified my understanding was that I could never keep open shop. I could never own a Pharmacy, but I could cover the Pharmacy in the Temporary Absence of the Pharmacist. My understanding of this temporary absence was the Pharmacist's day off, Funerals/Family Commitments, and Holidays etc.</p> <p>I am a member of the IPU Academy and attend the Continuing Professional Development Programme annually. I am also a member of IOP and participate in their Professional Development Programme. I would have no problem being subject to Fitness to Practice Regulation.</p> <p>Our Pharmacy is open from 9am to 6pm. This is a 9 hour day. Under your proposed rules, if I cover this day, I cannot also cover the Pharmacist having lunch on 4 other days in the week, as it would be 13 hours per week. This seems unreasonable. In addition, it allows no flexibility for funerals, absence due to minor ailments etc. How can I be fit to practice for 12 hours and become unfit in the 13th hour?</p> <p>Despite the fact that I am a Director of XXXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX XXX. these proposed changes would have huge implications for me. We would have to employ a Pharmacist to cover the absence of the Supervising Pharmacist/Owner. This would have implications for the Company's profitability. Any reduction in profitability can only have implications for my income. We have incurred large fees in developing a Consultation Room, and also have to contend with increased registration fees for the Pharmacy, Pharmacist, Pharmaceutical Assistant etc.</p> <p>I have been working as a Pharmaceutical Assistant for 35 years, am 58 years of age, and have limited pension provisions.</p> <p>The number of Pharmaceutical Assistants left on the Register is between 350 and 400. We qualified under the old PSI, and I</p>	

	<p>personally, have always tried to practice in accordance with the terms of the qualification I received under the Pharmacy Act 1890.</p> <p>Bearing in mind that within the next 10 years, most of us will have retired or be retiring, is it unreasonable to expect that we would be allowed finish out our careers without alteration to our Statutory Rights?</p>	
419.	Mary McConn	
	<p>Thank you for the notification regarding the proposal to introduce the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Regulation of Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016. I wish to make a number of points for consideration by Council. As background, I would like to state that I qualified as a pharmacist in 1982, from the first class to attend the School of Pharmacy in the University of Dublin, Trinity College. I subsequently served on various committees of the Irish Pharmacy Union and was elected President for a two year term in 2000. I have also served on the Board of the IMB from 1996 to 2000. I was a member of the Council of the "Old" Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland in 2007 when the current Pharmacy Act was enacted. My sister qualified as an Assistant to a Pharmaceutical Chemist in 1981. The points I would like to raise are as follows:</p> <p>Temporary Absence has been in existence for 126 years, the Draft Code of Practice for in excess of 20 years, I am unaware of any serious practice issue arising which involved Pharmaceutical Assistants. It is possible that this proposal could be construed as an unnecessary interference with their right to practice, given that it seems to be imposing a significant restriction on existing custom and practice. Over the years, I have heard it argued that the phrase "unscheduled short absences" , which was included in the 1994 code, was legally unsatisfactory and I have a certain sympathy with that argument. But I would have to say that as a member of the Council in 2007, when the Pharmacy Bill was being discussed, it was my clear understanding that in its implementation the position of Pharmaceutical Assistants would be broadly in line with the 1994 Code of Practice.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statutory Basis. This qualification has a statutory basis deriving from the Pharmacy Act Ireland (Amendment Act) of 1890. There are 389 Assistants left on the Register this year, a decline from 537 in 2009. Indeed it would appear that since 2013, approximately 30 Assistants have left the register each year. In addition I understand that 99% are women and most or all of them are likely to be over 55. One does wonder whether it is really necessary to seek to significantly alter the status quo, given that the numbers are declining at an accelerated rate. 2. Supervising Pharmacist. It is interesting that the number of hours which a Supervising Pharmacist must work in a pharmacy seem to be unspecified. Is there any proposal to look at the maximum number of hours which a Registered Pharmacist can cover, that is a Pharmacist with less than 3 years experience who works in the shop but has not been 	

designated as Supervising Pharmacist? Or is the intention to rely on the written procedures of the pharmacy, the Code of Conduct which binds all pharmacists and the statutory responsibility of the Superintendent and Supervising Pharmacists. Arguably, a similar procedure could be applied in the minority of pharmacies which still employ Pharmaceutical Assistants.

3. **Individual Expectation.** Our pharmacy was opened in 1940 by my father XXXXXX X XXXXX. Within a few years of opening my father started to employ men and women who served an apprenticeship with him, prior to completing their studies in Dublin. At all times throughout his career, he employed a Pharmaceutical Assistant to cover the pharmacy in his temporary absence. Such cover included lunch hours, attendance at daily mass, going to the bank, attendance at funerals etc. It also covered annual leave of up to three weeks in Summer and attendance at the Pharmaceutical Society's Irish Pharmacy Congress and the Annual Meeting of the Society in October. When my sister qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant, she did so on the understanding that she would be able to work on the same terms as had previously operated in that pharmacy for over 40 years. In 1989, I took over the pharmacy and for several years my father, my sister or I ensured that the shop was fully covered when open.
4. **Code of Practice 1994.** I am aware of the Code of Practice which was put to a ballot of all registered pharmacists in 1994. I am also aware that it was passed by a significant majority. In this issue of the Code of Practice, it was stated that Assistants ***shall be entitled to cover short absences, such as lunch hours, two half days or one day off per week and unscheduled short absences. It also stated that the pharmaceutical assistant shall be entitled to cover the period of annual leave as recommended for the employee pharmacist by the Irish Pharmaceutical Union (currently 23 working days per annum).*** In the Irish Pharmacy Journal of October 1994, the results of the ballot were announced. 1155 votes were cast, being 49.5% of the Ballots delivered. Of those who voted 67.2% voted in favour of the proposal, with 32.8% voting against. This result represents a strong endorsement of the proposed Code of Practice by the general membership of the Society. I am not aware of seeing any Final Document. Following a search through a significant number of documents pertaining to pharmacy in the 1990s I failed to locate a final document from that era. However, the PSI produced a Ring Binder, in 1999, produced by Dermot McDermott, entitled The Practice of Pharmacy Guide. The Code of Practice is printed in this and includes the statement that ***6.2.6 In the event of the temporary absence caused by the pharmacist's holiday entitlement: 6.2.6.1 The pharmaceutical assistant shall be entitled to cover the period of annual leave as recommended for the employee pharmacist by the Irish Pharmaceutical Union (currently two working days per annum).*** This was obviously a misprint. In fact in 1994, the annual leave entitlement of a pharmacist as stated by the IPU in its Yearbook, was 23 days, which was the figure included in the Code as put to ballot. More recent iterations of the Code of Conduct (e.g. Codes of Ethics and Practice 2005) retain the same wording but say "***currently two working weeks per annum***". The only consistent phrase between all these documents is "***as recommended for the employee pharmacist by the Irish Pharmaceutical Union.***" Therefore it would appear that the Annual Leave which an Assistant can cover at present is in reality 23 working days.

5. **Annual Leave.** It is part of the role of the Supervising Pharmacist, reporting to the Superintendent Pharmacist to ensure that there is appropriate staff in the pharmacy to ensure its ongoing operation. Therefore, it should be a matter for the Superintendent and Supervising Pharmacists, in their respective roles, to decide what cover is necessary for the Annual Leave of any pharmacist employed in the pharmacy, and to be answerable for that decision.
6. **Arbitrary nature of weekly limit.** I think a precise time limit is difficult to define. A lot of pharmacies open from 9am to 6pm. The proposed 12 hours doesn't cover one 9 hour day and 4 lunch hours. Is that practical? If someone wants to work a 5 day week and have lunch each day, there is no provision for them to go to the bank, attend a funeral, or other such unscheduled absences. In addition, if at 5pm on a Friday, a pharmacist is taken ill, and the assistant has already covered 12 hours that week, does that pharmacy have to stay closed on Saturday, given the unlikelihood of securing a locum in that timescale. This would mean that even non-life threatening illnesses, such as influenza or a tummy bug, might result in the shop being closed. This would be very inconvenient for patients, not to mention possibly dangerous for people with serious illness. Sometimes it is interesting to look at the approach adopted in comparable situations. The Organisation of the Working Time Act provides for maximum working hours per week for all workers. But they rely on an average, over a defined period, recognising that demands can vary, so that one cannot impose a rigid time each week. It seems to me that a similar model might be worthy of consideration.
7. **Standard Operating Procedures.** Pharmacies are now required to have a range of Standard Operating Procedures. These have the advantage of clearly outlining the policies and procedures to be followed in the day to day operation of that pharmacy. The aim is that even in the absence of the regular Supervising Pharmacist, the same quality of service can be achieved. In my view this is a support to a Pharmaceutical Assistant or a locum pharmacist, in the performance of her duties, in that the pharmacy can have an SOP offering written clarification of many aspects of practice.
8. **Fitness to Practice.** If a Pharmaceutical Assistant can cover a pharmacy in the temporary absence of the pharmacist, then it is only logical that they should be subject to the same Fitness to Practice Regulations as the rest of us. A Superintendent or Supervising Pharmacist, when deciding whether to employ a Registered Pharmacist, can know whether that person has been subject to FtP findings and can make an informed decision. The law should be amended to facilitate the same situation with Pharmaceutical Assistants.
9. **Continuing Professional Development.** Irish Institute Of Pharmacy (IIOP) allows Pharmaceutical Assistants to register. Similarly, they are allowed to enrol with the IPU Academy and to attend lectures, avail of online webinars and use Distance Learning programmes. Again the law ought to be changed to make them subject to the same assessment / monitoring as pharmacists.
10. **Patient Safety and Preference.** Many patients like to attend the same pharmacy on a regular basis. This is because they build relationships with the staff, they come to trust the pharmacist, the pharmaceutical assistant and others and they derive comfort and reassurance from the relationship. Arguably, an experienced PA, who has worked in the pharmacy for many years, is in a better position to provide cover, in the temporary absence of the pharmacist, than an inexperienced

	<p>young locum.</p> <p>11. Inspections. Over the past few years, the PSI has completed inspections of every pharmacy in the country. Throughout that time, I understand that they have enforced implementation of the 1994 Code of Practice. It is surprising that having achieved compliance with the existing code, the PSI should now seek to change the rules.</p>	
420.	Aine O'Connor	
	<p>As a registered pharmacist, I strongly oppose the proposed change to the rules for pharmaceutical assistants. I believe it is not feasible to change their working hours. They are a valuable asset to pharmacists and retail pharmacy businesses across Ireland. To make this change would downgrade their qualification. Another consideration would be the effect this would have on these people's livelihoods. They are highly experienced individuals and I have had the pleasure of working with many of them. I can see no reason for these proposed changes.</p>	
421.	Emer O'Donnell	
	<p>As a qualified Pharmacy Assistant since 1973, I would like to make the following submission in relation to the proposed changes to the regulations governing temporary absence cover, currently being proposed by the PSI.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed changes adversely affect a particular group who are mainly female and in the final years of their career, and as such are grossly unfair, selective and discriminatory. 2. The lack of any provision allowing PA's to continue education, coupled with changes of which I was only made aware in 1973, (which meant that I personally and many others, could not continue their education to get full pharmacist qualifications) will in effect lead to, what amounts to, the Constructive Dismissal of myself and other PA's of a similar vintage. 3. The current system has been tried and trusted since the enactment of the Pharmacy Act in 1890, in my own case I have provided 43 years of continual satisfactory service to local pharmacies and their communities. 4. The proposed twelve hour rule is nonsensical and is absolutely without logic, how can a PA suddenly become incompetent after twelve hours? Perhaps we should call this the "Cinderella rule", as you seem to believe we turn into pumpkins when the clock strikes twelve. 5. The proposed changes seem to be little more than a thinly disguised attempt to take the remaining PA's out of the system entirely. <p>I am extremely disappointed to be treated in such an arbitrary fashion by the PSI, having been a paid up member for so many years. I believe that the current regulations provide ample protection to the pharmacist, the PSI and most importantly to the community. There does not appear to be any compelling reason for the PSI to impose this change, given that most of those</p>	

	<p>effected will be leaving the system in the next few years, this begs the question why the urgency and what exactly is the PSI's motive and agenda? I look forward to your response.</p>	
422.	Ronald Baker	
	<p>It has come to my attention that the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) has decided to change working conditions of qualified pharmaceutical assistants.</p> <p>All these qualified pharmaceutical assistants have at least 30 years' experience as the last exam was held in 1985 and the PSI has now decided to reduce cover time to 12 hours per week. This is most unfair as it now means that the QPAs may become unemployable or have a significant change in working hours.</p> <p>I would appreciate an acknowledgement on this issue</p>	
423.	Sarah Baker	
	<p>I am writing in relation to change in cover for Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant (QPA).</p> <p>My aunt is qualified and has 35 years of full time employment as a qualified pharmaceutical assistant. It is not fair and highly hurtful for my aunt and colleagues.</p> <p>I find it inadequate that the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland created the course, validated it and have received registration fees for many years and now wants to make pharmaceutical assistants unemployable or have a significant change in working hours.</p> <p>Is this acceptable to set a course and 30 years later decide that the qualification is not legal anymore?</p> <p>How would you feel if you have worked hard for many years? Have a qualification and now you may find yourself out of work?</p> <p>This is life changing for many people and their families.</p> <p>I hope you take my opinion into consideration; I look forward to hearing your response in the near future.</p>	
424.	Margaret Doherty	

	<p>The proposed rules seek to assign an arbitrary number of hours, 12 a week, to the definition of 'temporary absence'. This removes the flexibility of the supervising pharmacist and the PA to structure the working works in a manner the suits both of them and the needs of then business and to accommodate the various unexpected disruptions that can arise.</p> <p>For many years the Pharmaceutical Assistants have given valuable and badly needed support to pharmacists and have acted in a professional manner while not seeking to be in 'permanent charge'. This is often needed in rural areas where no matter how many pharmacists are on the register they are not available to provide cover, especially at short notice, in the case of illness or bereavement. Although I don't employ a PA, I have on a few occasions had to use one to cover a short unplanned absence when it proved impossible to get a pharmacist to cover. Removing this option could force pharmacies to close in the case of an unexpected illness and leave a wide area without a pharmacist.</p> <p>The role of the PSI is to ensure the safety of the public but making inflexible rules does not do this. Are the public public somehow less safe if a PA works 13 hours than if they work 12? Each pharmacy, its staff and workload is unique and the best person to make a judgement on when and how long a pharmacist can be safely absent from a pharmacy is the pharmacist in charge who understands the dynamic of a particular pharmacy.</p> <p>The best way to protect the public is to require ALL qualified staff to do mandatory CPD and to extend the provisions of Fitness to Practice to all those who can legally be in charge of pharmacy for any duration of time.</p>	
425.	Fintan Moore	
	<p>Pharmaceutical Assistants have played an important role in the practise of pharmacy in Ireland for more than three decades. There has always been a lack of clarity around the issue of what constitutes a 'Temporary Absence' in terms of the length of time of an absence. While I accept that the proposed draft rules are a well-meaning attempt by the PSI to provide a clear definition of what will be acceptable in the future, I think they are not an appropriate solution. Restricting all Pharmaceutical Assistants to a maximum of twelve hours of Temporary Absence cover in any week would be a drastic change in the working arrangements under which they have operated for 35 years, so it is important that a change of this magnitude is fully justified.</p> <p>The existing 1994 guidelines have served us well in that they have allowed a degree of flexibility in the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants without an adverse impact on the practise of pharmacy, or the safety of the public. In the drafting of any new rules regarding Temporary Absence there needs to be due recognition given to the strong value that attaches to the fact that a typical Pharmaceutical Assistant works predominantly in just one pharmacy. This permanence of employment gives them an unrivalled familiarity with the pharmacy's patients, standard operating procedures, pharmacy staff, local doctors, ordering procedures and dispensary software. The ability of a Pharmaceutical Assistant to take over the responsibility for the running of</p>	

	<p>the dispensary far outweighs the ability of an unfamiliar locum pharmacist to do likewise. The proposed draft rules would create a situation where the 12 hours per week restriction would usually rule out the option of the Pharmaceutical Assistant being able to cover the dispensary in the event of an emergency caused by the illness of the Supervising Pharmacist. In such a situation arising in a week when the Assistant had already worked 12 hours independently the pharmacy would have to close until a suitable locum could be found, rather than operating as normal with the Assistant in charge.</p> <p>Given that the ultimate aim of any regulatory changes in the practice of Pharmaceutical Assistants is intended to improve standards, and to protect the public, it would seem prudent to introduce mandatory CPD for Pharmaceutical Assistants that would enhance their role for all the hours they work, rather than simply reduce the number of hours for which they work.</p>	
426.	Cllr. James McDaid	
	<p>In relation to the PSI wanting to reduce the cover by a Pharmaceutical assistant for a pharmacist to a max of 12 hours per week, I would have huge fear concerns about assistants losing their jobs, the availability of pharmacists when needed and the possible closure of pharmacies.</p> <p>I think it is vital that medicine be available to patients at all times and the changes that the PSI are proposing would jeopardise this extremely.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical assistants are qualified at their work and practice with the pharmacist all of the time. In my view common sense must prevail for the benefit of everyone and I sincerely hope the proposed changes do not come into affect.</p>	
427.	Noel McCann	
	<p>I am writing to you in relation to the proposed draft rules for public consultation as to what constitutes the temporary absence of a pharmacist, as provided for under Section 30 of the Act.</p> <p>> "Rule 6 states that a pharmacy owner or superintendent pharmacist shall not operate a retail pharmacy business in the temporary absence of a registered pharmacist unless:</p> <p>> a period of temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week"</p> <p>></p> <p>> Having known XXXX and the family for many years I am appalled that this draft rule could be brought in to place after so many years of her hard work and dedication, not only to the pharmacy, but also supporting her family. I fail to see the logic behind introducing legislation that will affect someone who has been qualified and worked in this position for 32 years.</p> <p>></p> <p>> The terms of this 'draft code' would in fact make a largely negative impact on the employment of the majority of pharmaceutical assistance for the reasons below:</p> <p>> • In the event that the pharmacist is on temporary leave, XXX would not be able to stand in for as long as required if the</p>	

	<p>draft rules were defined, meaning that a locum pharmacist would have to fulfil this role. This may affect the community feel and familiarly for customers of small pharmaceutical businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > • as a customer I would also would prefer to see the pharmacist and pharmaceutical assistance that I know and trust rather than a stranger dealing with my precription, and would feel far more uncomfortable gaining pharmaceutical advice from a locum pharmacist. > • In XXX 's 32 years of experience and qualification as a pharmaceutical assistance, she has strived to create effective professional relationships with customers, and to continuously improve practice and her professional education, gaining invaluable experience, far superior to that of a newly qualified pharmacist. However the proposed draft rules now appear to state that a pharmacist would be better desired to fill over the 13th hour of temporary absence, regardless of their competency and years of experience and qualification. > • I believe that the draft rule expresses an utter disregard to years of service and dedication to the role as a pharmaceutical assistant. I find it very upsetting that the terms of her employment could be so belittled and meaningless, expressing a lack of trust in this role > • it is of illogical thinking to propose a rule of being able to act in 'temporary absence' for 12 hours and on the 13thhour not being able to cover. The rule appears far too rigid and unrealistic to real life situations in employment, for example to cover sickness, traffic delays, funerals e.g. of the pharmacist. > • The proposal of this draft rule could also affect her desirability as a candidate in employment, this could mean wage cuts, or cuts in employment hours, it is unfair to propose this large impact on her employment considering her expenses such as mortgage and loans, XXXXX is by no means near retirement and requires time to save for this. Additionally, speaking as XXXXXX daughter, it is upsetting and worrying to think that my mother could potentially be out of a job after so many years in a stable position of employment, the proposed draft rules have put strain on the family in terms of worrying for the future <p>> In consideration of the above argument, it is apparent that the original purpose in providing a 'fair and workable model' for the definition of "temporary absence" evidently failed to meet its aim. It is clear to see that it is unfair to dictate the future of someone's employment by changing the fine print in their terms of employment. Additionally, it is unimaginable to think that years of experience and dedication are overridden by the desire to have an inexperienced pharmacist in the place of a pharmaceutical assistance post 12hours a week. In my opinion this does not serve as patient and public safety, under direction of the PSI. Finally, I would like to propose that if the definition of temporary absence has to be changed, the realistic amount of hours done under temporary absence must be taken into great consideration, and must be well over 12 hours a week in order to provide safe practice.</p> <p>></p> <p>> Thank you in advance for your consideration of the points in this submission</p>	
428.	Jim Fallon	

The role of Pharmaceutical Assistant (PA) was introduced as an *“Irish solution to an Irish problem”*. There existed a severe shortage of pharmacists to cover for the absence of the pharmacist; indeed in 1890 travel around the country to locum was difficult. This system carried forward over the years with little problem and indeed a definition of “temporary absence” had been understood between the “old” Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) and the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association (PAA). The “new” Pharmacy Act of 2007 was drafted to regulate pharmacy in Ireland, the authors neglected to properly include Pharmaceutical Assistants another *“Irish solution to an Irish problem”*. It seems law makers hoped the PA’s would “retire away” their peculiar situation in Irish pharmacy. Indeed any PA’s who started training in 1979 at 18 would be expected to retire in or around 2026 at age 65.

Effects on the company carrying on a Retail Pharmacy Business

Any company which engaged a PA did so on the understanding that the PA would be able to cover the pharmacist for holidays. If they cannot cover for holidays it will cost each company at least €1500(€30+ per hour*42 hours +PRSI +agency fees) extra per week of holiday. How could a company retain an employee whose status has been changed by a regulator such that it will overnight cost the company €3000 extra per fortnight of holiday? Many Retail Pharmacy businesses have been badly affected by recent HSE price reductions, an extra €3000 may tip the balance and so the PA is likely to be made redundant. A PA with long years experience effectively made redundant by a PSI pen will cost many tens of thousands of euro in redundancy payments.

Good locum pharmacists are notoriously difficult to procure. In the days before the Pharmacy Act 2007 famously there were *“corpses with certificates”* available to fill the locum gap in the pharmacy jobs market, thankfully those days have passed, there is a shortage of locum pharmacists with proper knowledge of Irish community pharmacy and it’s byzantine rules and schemes. A newly qualified or newly arrived in Ireland EEA pharmacist will have little or no knowledge of Irish systems and procedures. To replace an experienced PA with a newly qualified or newly arrived pharmacist will not improve patient safety.

If these rules are enacted in their current form by the PSI I foresee a successful legal challenge. This will indirectly cost the company money as any monies the PSI spend our money on defending these legal challenges are paid from our annual fees.

Effects on an individual Pharmaceutical Assistant

If these rules are enacted in their current form all PA’s will become virtually unemployable overnight. Their raison d’être in pharmacy would virtually cease to exist. It is blatantly unfair to pick on a small cohort of workers to eliminate their jobs in this way

	<p>to try to satisfy some bureaucratic and legislative oversight which is not of their making. If these rules are brought into place within the year the PA's will have paid their annual fees to the PSI based on the possibility of gaining employment; that possibility will not exist.</p> <p><u>Effects on Patient Safety and Public Assurance</u></p> <p>There will be no improvement in Patient safety by these rules and from my experience patient safety will be reduced by having miscellaneous locums in pharmacies rather than a PA of long service. If it is considered injurious to public assurance and patient safety that a PA worked without the direct supervision of a pharmacist for more than this arbitrary 12 hours in any week how can it be considered safe practice that they work ANY hours? Another "<u>Irish solution to an Irish problem</u>"</p> <p><u>In conclusion</u></p> <p>Solving a legislative problem; that PA's are not subject to CPD and fitness to practice; by removing their right to earn a living is surely an "<u>Irish solution to an Irish problem</u>". The PSI would be better served requesting a change to the Pharmacy Act 2007 to allow assistants to be more appropriately regulated.</p> <p>A fairer more equitable solution would see the retention of the current understanding of temporary absence.</p> <p>Another more pressing "<u>Irish solution to an Irish problem</u>" in the Irish pharmaceutical world is the existence of dispensing doctors dispensaries operated by nurses and receptionists who are wholly untrained to dispense medicines, perhaps their regulation could be improved..</p> <p><u>Notes regarding any implementation of these rules</u></p> <p>If this regulation is accepted the period until it is in enacted must be extended past the summer holiday period of 2016 as I and many others have booked summer holidays based on Qualified Assistants covering the pharmacy and will not be able to procure appropriate locums at this length of notice for the busy holiday period.</p>	
429.	Eithne Morris	
	I am writing to you in relation to the proposed draft rules for public consultation as to what constitutes the temporary absence of a pharmacist, as provided for under Section 30 of the Act.	

“Rule 6 states that a pharmacy owner or superintendent pharmacist shall not operate a retail pharmacy business in the temporary absence of a registered pharmacist unless:
a period of temporary absence does not exceed 12 hours in any one week”

The terms of this ‘draft code’ would in fact make a largely negative impact on the employment of the majority of pharmaceutical assistance for the reasons below:

- In the event that the pharmacist is on temporary leave, XXX would not be able to stand in for as long as required if the draft rules were defined, meaning that a locum pharmacist would have to fulfil this role. This may affect the community feel and familiarly for customers of small pharmaceutical businesses.
- as a customer I would also would prefer to see the pharmacist and pharmaceutical assistance that I know and trust rather than a stranger dealing with my precription, and would feel far more uncomfortable gaining pharmaceutical advice from a locum pharmacist.
- In XXX 32 years of experience and qualification as a pharmaceutical assistance, she has strived to create effective professional relationships with customers, and to continuously improve practice and her professional education, gaining invaluable experience, far superior to that of a newly qualified pharmacist. However the proposed draft rules now appear to state that a pharmacist would be better desired to fill over the 13th hour of temporary absence, regardless of their competency and years of experience and qualification.
- As a qualified nurse myself, I would also like to point out that in nursing, when a shift is filled under temporary absence, it is imperative to ensure skill mix is taken into great consideration to provide safe practice, therefore years of experience count as a considerable quality in delegation of work, which would be very similar in the case of ‘temporary absence’ work in pharmaceuticals
- I believe that the draft rule expresses an utter disregard to years of service and dedication to the role as a pharmaceutical assistant. I find it very upsetting that the terms of her employment could be so belittled and meaningless, expressing a lack of trust in this role
- it is of illogical thinking to propose a rule of being able to act in ‘temporary absence’ for 12 hours and on the 13thhour not being able to cover. The rule appears far too rigid and unrealistic to real life situations in employment, for example to cover sickness, traffic delays, funerals e.g. of the pharmacist.
- The proposal of this draft rule could also affect her desirability as a candidate in employment, this could mean wage cuts, or cuts in employment hours, it is unfair to propose this large impact on her employment considering her expenses such as mortgage and loans, XXX is by no means near retirement and requires time to save for this. Additionally, speaking as XXX daughter, it is upsetting and worrying to think that my mother could potentially be out of a job after so many years in a stable position of employment, the proposed draft rules have put strain on the family in terms of worrying for the future

	<p>In consideration of the above argument, it is apparent that the original purpose in providing a ‘fair and workable model’ for the definition of “temporary absence” evidently failed to meet its aim. It is clear to see that it is unfair to dictate the future of someone’s employment by changing the fine print in their terms of employment. Additionally, it is unimaginable to think that years of experience and dedication are overridden by the desire to have an inexperienced pharmacist in the place of a pharmaceutical assistance post 12hours a week. In my opinion this does not serve as patient and public safety, under direction of the PSI. Finally, I would like to propose that if the definition of temporary absence has to be changed, the realistic amount of hours done under temporary absence must be taken into great consideration, and must be well over 12 hours a week in order to provide safe practice.</p> <p>Thank you in advance for your consideration of the points in this submission.</p>	
430.	Hilda Sayers	
	<p>I am a Community Pharmacist who has worked in Community pharmacy for 30 years (20 years as a Pharmacist and 10 years previously to that as a counter assistant and as a Pharmacy Technician). I have worked alongside Pharmaceutical Assistants who have also provided cover for my lunch hours and days off.</p> <p>During that time I have never had issue with the ability of any of the Pharmaceutical Assistants with whom I have worked to carry out their duties in a responsible, capable and professional manner. The Pharmaceutical Assistants that I know professionally have been working in community pharmacy for many years. They have a wealth of knowledge, experience and maturity and in my opinion they are a valuable resource for the provision of healthcare in the Community Pharmacy setting.</p> <p>I do not understand why it is felt necessary to change the current regulations that are in place regarding temporary absence cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants. Training of Pharmaceutical Assistants ceased about 30 years ago. The number of practising Pharmaceutical Assistants will continue to decrease over the coming years as they reach retirement. The qualification will therefore reach its natural end in the coming years. I wonder why this cannot be allowed to happen without interfering with the practice that currently exists.</p> <p>A Registered Pharmacist may be temporarily absent from the pharmacy for a variety of reasons – bathroom breaks, lunchbreaks, time spent in the consultation room with patients, illness, bereavement and a whole plethora of other problems that occur on a daily basis. Situations such as illness (of the pharmacist or of a family member) and bereavement are unpredictable, often sudden and may extend beyond 12 hours (the period of time the draft regulations propose that a Pharmaceutical Assistant can cover per week).These situations are stressful in themselves to deal with without having the added worry of having to organise locum</p>	

	<p>Pharmacist cover at short notice. Is it not better for ongoing patient care that a Pharmaceutical Assistant who is already employed by the pharmacy can step in, in these unscheduled situations rather than having to close the pharmacy without notice because locum Pharmacist cover cannot be arranged quickly?</p> <p>Regarding the authority of Pharmaceutical Assistants to provide temporary cover I believe that the current regulations provide a pragmatic, humane, flexible and understanding approach. It is my opinion that the new proposed regulations are restrictive on both Pharmacist and Pharmaceutical Assistant.</p> <p>The proposed draft regulations do not address the areas of mandatory CPD and Fitness to Practice. These issues should be included in any regulation that allows Pharmaceutical Assistants to provide cover whilst the Pharmacist is temporarily absent.</p>	
431.	Padraig McGuinness	
	<p>CARA Pharmacy is one of the largest Pharmacy Groups in the country with thirteen RPB in the Republic of Ireland and one in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>As Superintendent of the CARA Pharmacy Group and as a registered Pharmacist (PSI: XXXX) I wish to make the following submission regarding the proposed change:</p> <p>PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND (REGULATION OF TEMPORARY ABSENCE COVER BY PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANTS) RULES 2016</p> <p>Pharmacy Assistants (PAs) provide a vital function in retail pharmacy businesses throughout the country. They provide an excellent service, with an excellent practical knowledge base, underpinned by years of vocational experience in pharmacy practice. They are used by our business and others to provide reliable and sustainable cover to registered pharmacists to allow them to take rest breaks, and days off, ensuring consistency in delivery of pharmaceutical services. They are available to provide emergency cover when a pharmacist is sick or unavailable, allowing the RPB to trade and for patients to receive their medications without interruption.</p> <p>The current arrangement, agreed in 1994, states:</p> <p>“The PA shall be entitled to cover short absences, such as lunch hours, two half days or one day off per week, unscheduled short</p>	

absences and the standard annual leave of the pharmacist. The maximum number of days which the PA could cover in the temporary absence of the pharmacist should not exceed 14 calendar days in any single absence”.

It is my professional opinion that this is currently adequate in definition of “temporary absence” and is a wholly workable solution. Under the Pharmacy Act, a Supervising Pharmacist must be in whole time charge of the RPB and thus this ensures that PAs are not therefore in a position to spend long periods of time “running” a RPB without supervision, but does however allow that pharmacist to have a reasonable rest break. It would not be

financially viable to employ two pharmacists for most RPBs to allow for rest breaks, and thus

PAs provide a vital role in this regard. Cont.

I have some specific concerns and comments regarding the new rules:

1. The current rules were agreed with the previous PSI counsel and thus employment contracts were agreed with PAs on this basis. Enforcing these rules will now cause an issue with employment law and employment of PAs. PAs have a reasonable expectation of their career and employment prospects from the benefits bestowed on them upon registration. Any conditionality now added to their qualification post conferral, having completed their course in good faith after formulation, validation and examination by the PSI, seems wholly unfair and unjust.
2. The new rules are impractical, as they would not allow for at least one hour rest per day for the pharmacist, and one day off in a standard working week. They also do not allow for short term unexpected absences lasting more than one day – for example in the case of a sudden bereavement where it would be reasonable for a pharmacist to require two days off, but where last minute provision of locum cover would be almost impossible resulting in closure of the RPB and suspension of service
3. The figure of 12 hours per week is arbitrary and not based on any evidence base, it is unworkable in the practical setting. For example, there is little logic in being safe and legal to practice for 12 hours, but not for 12 hours and 1 minute.

	<p>4. To alter the rules agreed with PAs originally, to now change their role and thus employment prospects would be wholly unfair on the profession and in my mind would be open to legal challenge by PA and employers of PAs</p> <p>5. Experienced PAs are in a much better position to provide pharmacist cover than a newly qualified locum pharmacist with little vocational experience and little knowledge of the systems and patients. They are much better placed to ensure patient safety, knowing the patients personally, their family background, their ability to understand instructions, visual, hearing and learning disabilities and ability to connect personally with the patient based on the professional relationship already established.</p> <p>6. If concerns exist with regards to professional standards or fitness to practice, then I suggest subjecting PAs to the same scrutiny under these arrangements as their pharmacist colleagues would ensure a quality service is maintained</p> <p>7. Given that no new PAs are being appointed, it seems reasonable to allow the current cohort to work out their employment contracts, enjoying the same rights they and their employers have received since the 1800s.</p> <p>8. The reasoning for making such a change, in the absence of concrete published evidence, goes against the principle of "Evidence Based Medicine" and is this open to legal challenge.</p> <p>It is for these reasons outlined above that I whole-heartily reject the changes to the current rules for PAs and believe that the rules agreed in 1994 should be maintained.</p> <p>I hope you will take these concerns on board. I am happy to discuss them further if required.</p>	
432.	Brenda Kelly	
	<p>The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI), according to your website 'Our vision is to ensure that pharmacy services are delivered in a competent, professional and ethical manner and in an appropriate environment, to the highest standards of quality care and best practice'.</p> <p>I understand that you as a society are attempting to define temporary absence and in so doing reduce the time qualified assistants</p>	

	can cover to 12 hours per week. I feel this is totally unjust and dismissive of all the years qualified assistants have dedicated to pharmacy. Taking your own 'vision' into consideration would it not be prudent to refrain from attempting to define temporary absence and to continue to utilise the wealth of knowledge these individuals have gained in delivering high standards of quality care and best practice.	
433.	Teresa Murphy	
	<p>I am a Pharmaceutical Assistant, qualified in June 1974. I worked in XXXXX for a number of years and now in later years I am working in XXXXXXXX.</p> <p>At all times I have worked according to the terms of my qualification.</p> <p>I do not seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open a shop on my own account. I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of my qualification. At the time of conferral - June 1974 - temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to my employability. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence, ie. holiday cover, sick leave, etc.</p> <p>I cannot accept any diminution of this qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the PSI.</p> <p>It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 40 years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.</p>	
434.	David Baker	
	<p>I am writing to lodge my objection to the proposal to reduce the maximum number of hours a pharmaceutical assistant can cover a pharmacist to 12 in one week.</p> <p>I cannot understand why you would want to make these changes which would affect small pharmacies in rural and urban communities which are run in this way.</p> <p>Who would cover the pharmacist if they were on planned or unplanned leave, particularly unplanned like illness or a bereavement?</p> <p>I have received a fantastic service over many years and do not see a reason for this to change.</p>	

	<p>Pharmaceutical assistants qualified at least 31 years ago. What has happened now for these changes to be made which would prevent them working in their current role and undoubtable lead to redundancies. How can a regulatory body who has been accepting the registration fees make a suggestion like this which would directly affect jobs?</p> <p>I also cannot understand how the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) who created, ratified the course and set the examinations, could now over thirty years later try and introduce an initiative which would irreparably change the conditions that members who were successful on this course can work. As I have ready said such changes would mean that the role of a pharmaceutical assistant would not be a viable options for a single pharmacist shop. Why would they then be employed?</p>	
435.	Mary P. Larkin	
	<p>I have recently heard of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland which seeks to impose a restriction on the working hours for Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>I fundamentally disagree with this proposal as I feel that it is discriminatory and vindictive as it seeks to change a long established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p> <p>Given that Pharmaceutical Assistants will cease to practice in the next 15 years, it seems unnecessary to now impose these new conditions on a sector of employees who have acted at all times in a manner consistent with their qualification.</p> <p>Surely the Pharmaceutical Society can focus their energies on matters more urgently in need of their attention. The overpricing of medicines in Ireland relative to other countries for example would appear to be a matter more worthy of this level of scrutiny and attention.</p> <p>I am requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined.</p>	
436.	Ita Staunton	
	<p>I am a registered Pharmaceutical Assistant for almost fifty years and have worked in both a full time and part time capacity in our pharmacies in XXXXXXXXX , Co. XXXX. I understand that the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland is proposing to change the definition of "temporary absence ". It was always my understanding that my qualification legally allowed me to cover a pharmacy in the temporary absence of a pharmacist. This included days off, holidays and sick leave. I cannot believe that the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, the body that formulated, validated and examined the course that I took in good faith is now suggesting that I</p>	

	<p>have been working illegally all these years. It also seems unbelievable that this same body is suggesting that I can legally cover a pharmacy for just 12 hours per week and that on the 13th hour I am no longer qualified !</p> <p>I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces my qualification to such a level nor can I accept that the PSI, the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to cover a pharmacy in temporary absence for over 50 years is now defining these terms and suggesting that I may have been working illegally all those years.</p>	
437.	Paul Wright	
	<p>I am responding to your invitation for submissions regarding the draft rules for Temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>Please acknowledge receipt of this submission.</p> <p>I have taken the time to read the background information and the draft rules which are available on your website.</p> <p>I note the main points of the agreement reached with the PAA in 1994. This agreement clearly forms the basis whereby a Pharmaceutical Assistant can have a viable opportunity to make a living in the field for he/she is qualified.</p> <p>I also note that the last examination for Pharmaceutical Assistants was held in 1985. This is over 30 years ago. It would seem reasonable to assume that any Pharmaceutical Assistants, who remain practicing at this time, have built up a considerable wealth of experience. Thus, they are in a position to offer a valuable service to the public.</p> <p>I now turn my attention to the draft rules. These will greatly reduce the number of working hours available to the Pharmaceutical Assistant. As a result, their ability to earn a viable income will also be reduced.</p> <p>I fear that the result of the draft rules will be to force many Pharmaceutical Assistants from their profession, for which they are qualified. These individuals have at least 30 years experience, which will now be lost.</p> <p>I do not understand how the public interest is served by this development.</p> <p>The information available on your website does not explain why there is now a need to rewrite an agreement which has stood for over 20 years. Facts and dates are stated, but the underlying motivation remains a mystery to me. I see no advantage to the</p>	

	<p>public, nor is one clearly stated.</p> <p>What is stated:</p> <p><i>The purpose of these rules is to provide for a fair and workable model for the definition of "temporary absence", which also provides public assurance of safe pharmacy practice and patient safety.</i></p> <p>Did the 1994 agreement not achieve this?</p>	
438.	Niall Mulligan	
	<p>I want to make a few points in relation to the Pharmaceutical Assistants and the position the PSI seem to be taking with this group. I do understand that the PSI are in a bit of a bind of what to do with this cohort, who are not fully registered as pharmacists but who can provide this role for certain periods but are not fully accountable to the PSI under the Pharmacy Act.</p> <p>It would appear that the Council are just making the situation worse with the present set of proposals, which do not bring PA's into the fold of the PSI but which are only a means to regulate the number of hours they can work. I believe the draft is just making it more difficult for this group to carry on working as they currently do and is more than likely going to end up with a large number being made redundant. Nearly all PA's are over the age of 55 and as such have a limited amount of time left in which they will still be actively working, so why force them out of their jobs now? They also have been working within pharmacy for over 30 years and so have a wealth of experience, knowledge and have built relationships within the community that the Council appear to be disregarding.</p> <p>What I suggest is a more practical, simple, and achievable approach which would also bring this group into line with pharmacists.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The PSI should recognise all PA's as a form of pharmacist, much in the same way as we have people who have a full licence but still must display the letter N on their cars. I think we should have a subsection of members who are Pharmacist PA. 2. These Pharmacist PA's would then come under the full control of the PSI and would then have to comply with all rules and regulations eg Continuing education, Fitness to Practice etc 3. Instead of limiting this cohort to 12 hours in a store it would be easier to control the time worked on their own by allowing them to work only 20% of the hours that a store is open over a month. 	

	<p>This has the benefit of allowing some flexibility to the number of days worked in a row by any PA without the need for them to be under the supervision of a full time member of the PSI but also makes it easier to validate through either the register or the companies payroll. I think by doing this, the PA's not only continue to provide a service to both pharmacy owners and the public, they would also become fully accountable to the PSI and so would be responsible for everything when they covered a store (which is not the current situation) in the same way a pharmacist is now.</p> <p>I hope the Council do rethink the draft and look after our PA's and stop trying to treat them as second class citizens but welcome them into the PSI as fully (well almost) fledge members for the limited amount of time they will be members.</p>	
439.	Anne Staunton	
	<p>I am a Registered Pharmaceutical Assistant and have worked in this capacity on a full time basis in three Pharmacies in XXXXXXXX, Co. XXXX for over 30 years.</p> <p>I have never agreed to the draft Code of Practice and have not been working in accordance with this draft but have been employed based on a different understanding of ' temporary absence '. This term has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice and is interpreted as ' where the pharmacist is away from the pharmacy on a temporary basis.</p> <p>At the time of my conferral the term ' temporary absence ' was not defined and as such conferred rights on me with regard to my employability. I have always been legally entitled to cover for a pharmacist in their temporary absence ie: days off, holiday cover, sick leave. I have worked according to the terms of my qualification and do not seek to conduct or manage a business or keep open shop on my own account. As such I cannot agree to a definition of the term 'temporary absence'. A reduction to 12 hours per week will impact on my employability and that of my colleagues and will without doubt result in job losses. I also cannot understand the logic of being able to act in 'temporary absence' for 12 hours and on the 13th hour not being qualified to cover!</p> <p>I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of my qualification post conferral to a course that I undertook in good faith which was formulated, validated, examined and privately run by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over thirty years is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally for the duration of my employment.</p>	
440.	Elaine McGrath	
	<p>I qualified in 1982 as a Pharmaceutical Assistant having completed a four year course of study which comprised of a three year apprenticeship followed by an intensive academic year of lectures, in both theory and practical, which took place at the School Of Pharmacy, Shrewsbury Rd. and final exams which were held in Trinity College.</p>	

	<p>Since qualifying,I have worked in Community Pharmacy on a full time basis.The career path I chose 36 years ago to which I am totally dedicated,has brought many challenges over the years-advances in patient treatments,new drugs etc. So the learning and study didn't end with qualification,but continues daily,so that we are equipped with the most up to date information to enable us to dispense,advise,inform and counsel our patients appropriately.</p> <p>One of the more recent challenges however is not related to medicine knowledge or patient care.This challenge is due to the changes being brought about due to the Pharmacy Act 2007 with relation to my status as a Qualified Assistant! Over the past three years,following an Inspection in 2011,I no longer have a full time position in the pharmacy due to pressure by the PSI re; temporary absence clause.I now provide cover on 1 day per week and annual leave.This determination by the PSI to define "temporary absence" as meaning 1 day per week is outrageous and an encroachment on my Qualification ,which has been standing valid for over 32 years. Of perhaps even greater concern is the latest proposal,whereby the PSI are now looking at what duties a Qualified Assistant may or may not do "on behalf"of the pharmacist. As I recall,I am qualified to carry out ALL of the duties of the pharmacist - but I cannot own or manage my own pharmacy.</p> <p>If these proposed changes to my qualification are passed and become law,then it will put me in the position of being un-employable,as far as my Pharmacy qualification goes- and that cannot be permitted surely!.My own employer has already said so to me .We have a very good working relationship,he relies on me for many reasons,not the least of which is the tremendous experience I have gained through my years in Pharmacy,but if I cannot provide professional cover he and other pharmacists will not employ us Assistants.</p> <p>And that,surely,is taking away my livelihood and undermining my Qualification in one fell swoop .</p> <p>Should this happen it would leave me with no option other than to take legal advice and pursue the matter further.However ,I would hope for a satisfactory and decent response from my colleagues in the PSI. After all,we have the same goal- to see the standard of pharmacy in Ireland and patient safety and care to be second to none.</p>	
441.	Terry Doran	
	<p>To whom it may concern</p> <p>It has been drawn to my attention that there is discussion around downgrading the grade of Pharmacist's Assistant.</p>	

	<p>I find it incomprehensible that the PSI would be even considering this.</p> <p>The grade, as I understand it, is awarded to suitable candidates who have completed a considerable amount of training and study.</p> <p>It is also my understanding that there are some 400 people who are the remaining people to have attained this grade.</p> <p>It is against all natural justice that these professional people should have their status within the community reduced.</p> <p>If the PSI should decide to abolish the grade I should think that any fair minded judge would rule in favour of these 400 people who after all are considered proficient enough to cover pharmacists even on a temporary basis.</p> <p>I for one as a person interested in natural justice would support any legal action should the PSI decide to remove this grade.</p>	
442.	Annmarie Nolan	
	<p>I would like to submit an objection to attempts to define "temporary absence" with regards to pharmaceutical assistants. A system which has worked very well for a long number of years should not be changed as the proposal is to limiting. Not only is it unfair to the assistants as it down grades their qualifications causing problems in finding employment and earning a living. Customers will also lose out by possible caused in delays receiving their medication.</p>	
443.	Tom O'Keeffe	
	<p>To Whom it May Concern</p> <p>The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland have published proposed draft regulations concerning the work of Pharmaceutical Assistants. I wish to make a submission as a concerned citizen, and in the interests of fairness and natural justice.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical Assistants have already suffered reduction in their incomes and employment opportunities as a result of past unfair and inappropriate changes and attempts to undermine their status.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical Assistants have been working within the terms of their statutory entitlement under section 19 of the 1875 Act to transact the business of a registered pharmacist in his or her absence for at least 30 years.</p> <p>The only limitation on a Pharmaceutical Assistant's qualification is that he or she cannot <u>own</u> a retail pharmacy, or be in "<u>whole</u></p>	

	<p><u>time</u>" charge of one. This original restriction is in itself quite interesting.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical Assistants (PA) do the exact same job as a pharmacist outside of this limitation; in fact, most people would not even know whether or not their local pharmacist is a PA or a registered pharmacist. An employed pharmacist does the same job, save for the restrictions unfairly and unilaterally IMPOSED upon PSI Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants have DE FACTO been carrying out the same work as Pharmacists for decades. They have, in addition, gained the commensurate experience. Customers have received the benefits of this accumulated knowledge and experience. What actual physical evidence has been collected to back up PSI's "concerns"? One wonders what exactly the PSI is "concerned" about, is it really about customer safety?</p> <p>I am calling on the PSI to refrain from implementing the proposed regulations without meaningful consultation with Pharmaceutical Assistants. It is unfair, and probably illegal, to implement the changes proposed in the draft regulations.</p> <p>If the PSI is concerned with the title of "Pharmaceutical Assistant", then register Pharmaceutical Assistants as Pharmacists, granting them the same rights, and liabilities, as a Pharmacist. They are in fact , doing the same job and have been for decades.</p>	
444.	Anne Lenehan	
	<p>I'm a Qualified Assistant since 1970.I never agreed to the draft code of practice,(it was not a legal document).Ive worked all my life,firstly for my pharmacist who I trained with.I covered his holidays,lunch hours,funerals,and days off,and this pharmacist covered everything to the letter of the law.Then after marriage,I worked for 16 years under the same conditions for another pharmacist in my new relocation.</p> <p>Im now working nearly 17 years in my current employment,originally doing 5 days,then 4,and now doing 3 days(24 hours) per week.</p> <p>I cannot accept any diminution or conditionality of my qualifications,as I grew up in a pharmacy owned and conducted by my father and currently owned and conducted by my brother who is a pharmacist also and I undertook this course in good faith which was formulated,validated,examined and privately run by the PSI.It seems unbelievable that the body that conferred upon me a qualification that legally allowed me to work in a specific manner for over 45 years,is now defining the terms of its qualification in a manner that would suggest that I was working illegally all those years.</p>	

445.	Rosemary Cotter	
	<p>i would like to submit our observations on the draft proposals re temporary absence cover by p.a.rules 2016</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the draft has a very economical content 2.holiday cover is not mentioned 3by virtue of the length of time all p.a are qualified skilled assistance is a given for all who have remained in full time employment 4.all p.a. pay an annual retention fee that entitles them to act on behalf of the registered supervising pharmacist during their absence within the parameters of that absence. 5.the p s i are in danger of throwing out the baby with the bath water as the p.a is a valuable tool in the day to day running of the pharmacy 	
446.	Gayle Purcell	
	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>In response to the public consultation on the regulation of temporary Absence cover by Pharmaceutical assistants I would like to make the following submission.</p> <p>The current guidelines governing temporary absence have been a fair and workable model, which has provided our customers and patients with a consistent and high quality care.</p> <p>Our Pharmaceutical assistant is working in the shop alongside the pharmacist for 24 hours a week and is a valued member of the pharmacy team. She covers the pharmacists day off/sickness and holidays. She knows all the customers , local doctors, pharmacy</p>	

	<p>staff and procedures and as such provides a level of care to the customers which a locum with none of this knowledge would be able to give.</p> <p>As a mother of two, currently if there is an issue with the children I can leave safe in the knowledge that the pharmacy will be covered in a manner which will not affect patient care. With the current proposals this may not be the case if this would put my pharmaceutical assistant over the 12 hours for that week. This recommendation of 12 hours per week is far too restrictive and does not allow for any emergencies/unpredictable absences. In the event of an emergency occurring after the assistant has already covered for 12 hours, now a locum would have to be called in who would not have the familiarity with the pharmacy or patients.</p> <p>It does not make sense to cut back the time the assistant is required to spend working in the pharmacy alongside the pharmacist in that pharmacy to 12 hours in the previous month and yet still they are allowed to cover for 12 hours unsupervised per week. I do not see how this will improve patient care compared to the current guidelines.</p> <p>The pharmaceutical assistant employed in our shop is religious about cpd and staying up to date with current developments. I believe that a requirement for mandatory cpd for assistants as well would ensure that patient care is upheld.</p>	
447.	Denise Hughes	
	<p>I, Denise Hughes am a pharmaceutical assistant and am looking for a fair work ethic to practice my profession in community pharmacy. When I qualified as a P.A I never agreed to the Draft Code of Practice. Therefore I have not been working in accordance with the Code of Practice but have been employed based on a different understanding of Temporary Absence. I am employed by a group pharmacy and work an average of 26hrs per week, 9hrs with a supervising pharmacist and the remainder in Temporary Absence. Occasionally I provide holiday cover for the pharmacist. Because my husband is unemployed I am the sole provider for our household therefore we are totally dependent on my wages. I have worked as a P.A for almost 40 yrs. and have been with my present employer for the past 25yrs. I do not wish to conduct or manage a business or open my own shop. I cannot agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduce my qualification. I undertook the course in good faith which was formulated, validated, examined, and privately run by the P.S.I</p> <p>Because you are now defining the terms of the qualification are you suggesting I was working illegally for all those years?.</p>	

448.	Helen Sweeney	
	<p>Thank you for this opportunity to make a submission regarding the “temporary absence” working of Registered Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants (QAs).</p> <p>If “temporary absence” becomes defined as a maximum of twelve hours per week (under certain circumstances) it could create situation where QAs become unemployable. What pharmacist will risk his/her business by our shutting the door on a customer at close of business on a given day because the QA’s twelve hours for that week end at that time.</p> <p>Should a customer arrive at, or close to, closing time with a hospital discharge prescription it could not be filled because the qualified person on duty must leave. This is not an isolated occurrence, especially in rural Ireland where there are fewer pharmacies and where most close at 6pm or earlier.</p> <p>A patient who is unwell or a family member who is concerned about the patient may present a prescription containing several drugs, sometimes as many as ten or more. It takes time to check the new prescription against the patient’s medical history to see what is new and therefore urgent, what is not new and may or may not be available at home and what may have been discontinued by the hospital. Then it must be dispensed and the patient/representative counselled.</p> <p>This can take an extra 30 minutes, or longer if the computer has to be restarted, but it seems we or our employer pharmacists, or both of us, would be breaking the law during this time and subject to prosecution. In my opinion this is an absurd situation.</p> <p>Since qualifying under the Pharmacy Act (Ireland) 1875 Amendment Act 1890, my predecessors, colleagues and I have, for the last 126 -140 years, worked within the terms of our qualification without the term “temporary absence” being defined.</p> <p>As the Pharmaceutical society of Ireland, which was responsible for our education and for examining us, discontinued our course and held the last exam in 1985, our numbers are diminishing and our working life expectancy is little more than fifteen years from now.</p> <p>It also seems absurd that since we qualified, in my case almost 40 years ago, we have been trusted with the lives and safety of the public. Now that will be limited to twelve hours per week. Suddenly after twelve hours our work becomes a risk to public health and safety.</p>	

449.	Anne O’Leary	
	<p>Thank you for this opportunity to make a submission regarding the “temporary absence” working of Registered Qualified Pharmaceutical Assistants (QAs).</p> <p>If “temporary absence” becomes defined as a maximum of twelve hours per week (under certain circumstances) it could create situation where QAs become unemployable. What pharmacist will risk his/her business by our shutting the door on a customer at close of business on a given day because the QA’s twelve hours for that week end at that time.</p> <p>Should a customer arrive at, or close to, closing time with a hospital discharge prescription it could not be filled because the qualified person on duty must leave. This is not an isolated occurrence, especially in rural Ireland where there are fewer pharmacies and where most close at 6pm or earlier.</p> <p>A patient who is unwell or a family member who is concerned about the patient may present a prescription containing several drugs, sometimes as many as ten or more. It takes time to check the new prescription against the patient’s medical history to see what is new and therefore urgent, what is not new and may or may not be available at home and what may have been discontinued by the hospital. Then it must be dispensed and the patient/representative counselled.</p> <p>This can take an extra 30 minutes, or longer if the computer has to be restarted, but it seems we or our employer pharmacists, or both of us, would be breaking the law during this time and subject to prosecution. In my opinion this is an absurd situation.</p> <p>Since qualifying under the Pharmacy Act (Ireland) 1875 Amendment Act 1890, my predecessors, colleagues and I have, for the last 126 -140 years, worked within the terms of our qualification without the term “temporary absence” being defined.</p> <p>As the Pharmaceutical society of Ireland, which was responsible for our education and for examining us, discontinued our course and held the last exam in 1985, our numbers are diminishing and our working life expectancy is little more than fifteen years from now.</p> <p>It also seems absurd that since we qualified, in my case almost 40 years ago, we have been trusted with the lives and safety of the public. Now that will be limited to twelve hours per week. Suddenly after twelve hours our work becomes a risk to public health and safety.</p>	

450.	John Fitzsimons	
	We object to this proposal.	
451.	Jacinta Conroy	
	<p>I have recently heard of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland which seeks to impose a restriction on the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>I fundamentally disagree with this proposal as I feel that it is discriminatory and vindictive as it seeks to change a long established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p> <p>Given that Pharmaceutical Assistants will cease to practice in the next 15 years, it seems unnecessary to now impose these new conditions on a sector of employees who have acted at all times in a manner consistent with their qualification.</p> <p>Surely the Pharmaceutical Society can focus their energies on matters more urgently in need of their attention. The overpricing of medicines in Ireland relative to other countries for example would appear to be a matter more worthy of this level of scrutiny and attention.</p> <p>I am requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined.</p>	
452.	Mary Fitzpatrick	
	<p>I qualified as a Pharmaceutical Assistant in 1971, having completed the course formulated, validated and examined by PSI and have worked according to terms of that qualification under Section 19 of Pharmacy Act 1890 since.</p> <p>It is unbelievable that a body that conferred a qualification that legally allowed me work in a specific manner for 44 years can now change</p>	

	<p>the terms of that qualification.I cannot accept any diminution of this qualification as at time of conferral,temporary absence was not defined and so conferred rights on me with regard to employment.</p> <p>I have always been legally entitled to cover a pharmacist for temporary absence for days off,holidays,sick leave etc.</p> <p>How can this change after 44 years doing it ? It is discriminatory and will breach Article 14 of European Convention on Human Rights !</p>	
453.	Paul Byrne	
	Get a grip.	
454.	Maureen Heneghan	
	<p>I am writing to you to strongly object to your proposal to define temporary absence for Qualified Assistants. I have two sisters who have been Qualified Assistants for nearly 40 years each and have worked diligently according to the terms of their Qualification under Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act 1890 which is 126 years now.</p> <p>It is extremely difficult for Assistants to agree to a definition of temporary absence that reduces the terms of their qualification they have worked to since their conferral and registration by the Pharmaceutical Society in 1975 and 1978 respectively. At the time of their conferral, temporary absence was not defined so conferred rights on them with regard to employability.</p> <p>It is very sad to think that a Society they have been a member of for nearly 40 years, deem it necessary to demean them now as they head towards retirement.</p> <p>I would respectfully ask you to leave them in peace.</p>	
455.	Charlie Browne	
	I feel under the act tempory absence should be defined as it is no one sure what it means and legally how do you know when a qualified assistant is breaking law by doing say a locum for a number of days ?	
456.	Mary Kennedy	

	<p>The proposed rules defining 'temporary absence' do not reflect that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of 'temporary absence' has an established meaning in terms of pharmacy practice since 1890. It is synonymous with "not in permanent charge", as outlined in the Certificates conferred to PA by the PSI. • Pharmacy practice is part of the 'real world', where normal life challenges arise such as sickness, funerals, and traffic delays ect. Defining temporary absence ' in concrete terms, i.e. exact hours, will make it an offence for PA to cover 5 minutes over 12 hours. • Narrowing the factual parameters pertaining to the the practice of pharmaceutical assistants by prescriptive measures has the effect of interfering with an established right to practice on the part of pharmaceutical assistants, depriving loyal and responsible pharmacy professionals with over 35 years experience of the right to earn a living. • Defining temporary absence ' in terms of " hours " will do nothing to advance ' safe pharmacy practice ', subjecting PAs to mandatory CPD and Fitness to Practice will. 	
457.	Mary Daly	
1983		

THE HIGH COURT

Wednesday the 27th day of February 1985. BEFORE MR. JUSTICE COSTELLO.

BETWEEN No.613 P

Mona O'Brien. Kathleen Walker, Gemma Ryan

and The Pharmaceutical Assistants Association.

Plaintiffs.

AND

The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland.

Defendant.

This action being listed before this Court for Hearing this day in the presence of Counsel for the respective Parties. Whereupon and said Counsel intimating to the Court that this Action had been settled in terms contained in Consent hereinafter referred to.

By Consent it is ordered that the consent herein dated 27th day of February 1985 signed by respective Counsel be received and filed. And by consent it is ordered that all further proceeding herein be stayed.

Mary P.O'Donoghue

Registrar 27/2/85.

Between

Mona O'Brien, Kathleen Walker, Gemma Ryan, and the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland

Plaintiffs.

And

The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland.

Defendant.

It is hereby consented to and agreed that these proceedings are settled on the terms hereinafter set forth and all further proceedings are stayed save as may be necessary to enforce the said terms.

1. The Defendant will at its own cost issue and publish with equal prominence as was given to

the guidelines issued in February 1982 the subject matter of these proceedings a new guideline

which will.

(a) Withdraw the February 1982 guidelines insofar as they defined or purported to define the term "temporary absence" as set forth in the Pharmacy Act (Ireland) 187E Amendment Act 1890 and in particular Section 19 thereof.

(b) Reiterate that the February 1982 guidelines only and were not a definitive interpretation of the Pharmacy Acts.

(c) State that "temporary absence" should if necessary be a matter for interpretation by a competent court in a particular case having regard to all the surrounding circumstances.

2. The Defendants will pay a sum of #2,500 towards the Plaintiffs costs.

To whom it may concern,

As a Pharmaceutical Assistant, qualified for over 40 years since 1973, I have grave concerns re the PSI's intention to define temporary absence to 12 hours weekly, given the High Court case ruling before Justice Costello on the 27th February, 1985.

Please find enclosed documents with particular attention to section 1(a) and (c).

The PSI introduced guidelines and advised all employer pharmacists of same and promptly purported them to be law, notwithstanding that by definition, compliance with a guideline cannot be mandatory.

When the EEC was formed the PSI set a precedent when they upgraded the status of druggists but not the assistants.

I did not give myself my qualification as a pharmaceutical assistant, it was bestowed on me by the PSI following the successful completion and passing of the set examination, after a four year period of study in total.

By their totally unjust action in this matter the PSI have engaged in restrictive and anti-competitive practices, causing a serious diminution of my status as a pharmaceutical assistant, which impinges on my statutory rights, including EU regulations.

	<p>The PSI's unjust and discriminatory behaviour would be seen as intimidatory in any other walk of life and is totally unacceptable for a statutory body which is obliged to uphold fair and non-discriminatory standards for which they are and can be held accountable,</p> <p>In view of the history outlined above, I request that these proposed discriminatory changes are withdrawn forthwith.</p>	
458.	Jessie Conroy	
	Attachment damaged and could not be read	
459.	Charles Kennedy	
	Attachment damaged and could not be read	
460.	Eugene Crerand	
	<p>My wife qualified as a pharmaceutical assistant in 1983.From then until now she has worked diligently and professionally dispensing medicines in our local pharmacy.</p> <p>She is the first in and last out of the pharmacy most days.</p> <p>Her dedication to her place of work, customers and the work of dispensing medicines is above and beyond the call of duty.She works very hard.</p> <p>For the P.S.I. to try and limit her cover for the pharmacist is a slap in the face to her and all the other qualified assistants in the</p>	

	<p>country. Shame on you all. She plays a vital role in our community and talking to various people in our town,they are more than happy if my wife is covering for the pharmacist if she is on holidays etc. This is because the customers have faith and trust in her years of experience in her role as a qualified assistant. Why has the P.S.I. suddenly decided to stop trusting these qualified assistants after years of sterling service. I urge the P.S.I. to reconsider limiting their hours of cover to 12 hours per week.This is a step backwards and very damaging to the self confidence of these hard working professionals</p>	
461.	Helen O'Meara	
	Email with no text	
462.	Paddy Digan	
	I have worked with and dealt with many Pharmaceutical Assistants and I have found them to be indistinguishable in competence from pharmacists. I therefore think any curtailment of there role is unfair and against natural justice.	
463.	Anita MacCrossan	
	<p>To whom it concerns,</p> <p>I am a qualified pharmacist and have had the benefit of working with a qualified Pharmaceutical Assistant for the last ten years.</p> <p>It is my view that the current draft PSI (Regulation of temporary Absence Cover by Pharmaceutical Assistants) Rules 2016 requires redefining.</p> <p>The proposed rules defining 'temporary absence' would have an adverse effect on me personally and also the pharmacy professionally.</p> <p>It is my belief that the redefinition of the role of Pharmaceutical Assistants could possibly see an end to the employment of a lot of Pharmaceutical Assistants who have served their time diligently and professionally for the best outcome of their patients and I believe that this is not in anybody's best interests.</p>	

	<p>It is my belief that Pharmaceutical Assistants should be entitled to cover short absences, such as lunch hours, one day off per week, unscheduled short absences and the standard annual leave of the pharmacist. The new draft PSI guidelines of 12 hours per week would just not be sufficient to cover this. These new guidelines would have a huge effect on me personally.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical Assistants are not currently subject to Fitness to Practice provisions as outlined in Part 6 of the Act and Pharmaceutical Assistants have been excluded from CPD legislation (even though most Pharmaceutical Assistants are up to date with CPD) and I believe that this is discriminatory and should be made mandatory as it is for pharmacists and it is these measures that will advance 'safe pharmacy practice', not defining temporary absence in terms of hours.</p> <p>It is my belief that the health and welfare of my patients are much better served by an experienced Pharmaceutical Assistant who is familiar with the SOPs of the pharmacy, the day-to-day running of the pharmacy, the computer system of the pharmacy and local knowledge of customers than that of a locum pharmacist who has no familiarity with the business, patients and possibly computer system and therefore this would not be providing a 'safe pharmacy practice'.</p> <p>I completely understand the need for The PSI to define the role of Pharmaceutical Assistants in terms of temporary absence however I do not think that The PSI should be taking this as an opportunity to reduce the number of hours that constitutes temporary absence and in doing so deprive loyal and responsible professionals with many years of experience of the right to earn a living which is completely unfair.</p>	
464.	Anonymous	
	<p>I have been working as a qualified assistant for thirty years.</p> <p>I mostly worked on a permanent part-time basis.</p> <p>At the moment I'm working three days a week. I provide cover</p>	
465.	Kathleen Joyce	
	<p>I write as a member of the public and a person who has worked in a number of Community Pharmacies for over 20 years.</p> <p>I have worked with a number of qualified Assistants over ny years and never had an issue with their ability professionalism or</p>	

	<p>qualification. Neither did their employers or the members of the public. In some instances the trusting relationship was stronger between the Assistant and the customer compared to to that of the Pharmacist and the customer.</p> <p>My understanding of Assistants' qualifications are that they are competent to fill in when a Pharmacist is unavailable. I have worked with qualified Assistants when they covered Pharmacists days off, meal breaks, annual leave, sick leave and other unforeseen absences. I have worked with qualified Assistants when covering as locums.</p> <p>As the PSI adopts a common sense approach when defining 'whole time change' where supervising Pharmacists are concerned, I do not understand the PSI's requirement to be as prescriptive when defining 'temporary absence'.</p> <p>I do not consider it 'fair and workable' that a qualified assistant and /or a Pharmacist, be at risk of professional misconduct and/or criminal sanction should the 12 hour limitation expire. The proposed limitation is neither fair nor workable.</p> <p>It is unfair and unreasonable to impose such a limitation on Assistants, 30-50 years post their conferral. This qualification has stood the test of time; it is a practical and useful one. I do not consider the proposals to be fair, practical or workable.</p>	
466.	Alicia Mary Rita Menton	
	<p>I am a qualified Assistant and will be 40 years qualified on 21st May this year. I have always worked full-time i.e. 5 days per week. When I qualified in 1976 the then definition of temporary absence was a QA was qualified to cover in the temporary absence of the pharmacist which also covered unscheduled short absences and annual holidays. The latest proposals seem to indicate to me that having worked as a QA for the last 40 years I am now less capable of covering for a pharmacist as per the above mentioned criteria than heretofore. As stated, I work a 5 day 40 hour week, under the new proposal all I am allowed cover is, for the pharmacists day off and 3 lunch hours (total 12 hours).</p> <p>I never cease to wonder why the PSI seem to think that Qualified Assistants are a threat to the profession when we have always been employed as assistants to the pharmacist. If this new legislation is implemented it will mean that myself and many of my colleagues are in danger of losing their jobs. The proposed 12 hours are so restrictive that if a pharmacist is missing from the pharmacy for even one minute over these 12 hours that it would be necessary to close the pharmacy or risk breaking the law. I wonder if this is legible or feasible. Surely you must agree that on my own behalf having worked for so many years (40) I would consider myself more than capable of managing the pharmacy in the temporary absence of the pharmacist. It seems a retrograde</p>	

	<p>step and almost a punishment to cut the time a QA is capable of providing cover to a mere 12 hours per week.</p> <p>We do not expect our qualification to be upgraded in any way, merely that our long service to the pharmacy profession should be acknowledged and respected and that the Council would seriously consider this 12 hour cover.</p> <p>I would hate to be dismissed as a result of the new proposal having given my whole working life to the profession and have loved every minute of it.</p>	
467.	Marie Conroy	
	<p>I have recently learned of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical society of Ireland which seeks to impose a restriction on the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>I fundamentally disagree with this proposal as I feel that it discriminatory and vindictive as it seeks to change a long established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p> <p>Given that the Pharmaceutical Assistants will cease to practice in the next 15 years, it seems unnecessary to now impose these new conditions on a sector of employees who have acted at all times in a manner consistent with their qualification.</p> <p>Surely the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland can focus their energies on matters more urgently in need of their attention. The overpricing of medicines in Ireland relative to other countries for example would appear to be a matter more worthy of this level of scrutiny and attention.</p> <p>I am requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined above.</p>	
468.	Sinead O'Connor	
	<p>I have recently learned of the draft proposal put forward by the Pharmaceutical society of Ireland which seeks to impose a restriction on the working hours of Pharmaceutical Assistants.</p> <p>I fundamentally disagree with this proposal as I feel that it discriminatory and vindictive as it seeks to change a long established practice with no apparent reason for same.</p>	

	<p>Given that the Pharmaceutical Assistants will cease to practice in the next 15 years, it seems unnecessary to now impose these new conditions on a sector of employees who have acted at all times in a manner consistent with their qualification.</p> <p>Surely the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland can focus their energies on matters more urgently in need of their attention. The overpricing of medicines in Ireland relative to other countries for example would appear to be a matter more worthy of this level of scrutiny and attention.</p> <p>I am requesting that you reconsider and withdraw the draft proposal for the reasons outlined above.</p>	
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