

Pharmacy Prepares for Winter 2025/26: Key Outcomes from the “Big Discussion”

Following four system-wide “Big Discussion” workshops led by the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Nursing Officer, senior pharmacy leaders from all sectors met during August 2025 to strengthen pharmacy’s role in the regional winter plan.

The workshop focused on pharmacy’s role in Winter 2025 care for older people & frailty, tackling medication issues, falls & polypharmacy. The workshop highlighted strong existing practice across NI, but noted they are not yet universal. Participants identified a range of practical, resource-neutral improvements that can be rolled out quickly this winter, alongside some longer-term proposals.

MOIC led on the organisation and facilitation of this workshop and presented a report on the findings to the Department of Health in September. The report will help to shape a regional pharmacy action plan to ensure consistent, high-impact contributions from pharmacy teams this winter and beyond.



MOIC Leads the Fight Against Antimicrobial Resistance at AMS Conference 2025

MOIC successfully hosted the 3rd All-Ireland Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) Conference 2025 in Belfast, uniting researchers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and patient representatives to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Over two days, the event featured cutting-edge research, interactive workshops, and dynamic discussions on innovative AMS approaches. Day one focused on research aspects and included a powerful keynote/workshop by Dr. Emma Dorris (UCD PPI Ignite Network) and patient advocate Stacey Grealis on the vital role of public and patient involvement in AMR initiatives.

Day two showcased Prof. Michael Tunney (Queen’s University Belfast) presenting new solutions for AMR in chronic respiratory diseases, a thought-provoking workshop on future AMR policy led by Dr. Rob Cunney (Children’s Health Ireland), and a moving personal story from Bernie O’Reilly (Patients for Patient Safety Ireland).

The conference fostered new partnerships, sparked creative policy ideas, and reinforced MOIC’s leadership in the field.

Anita Hogg, MOIC Lead, commented: “This event underlines our commitment to tackling AMR through collaboration and innovation. The connections made here will drive real progress in antimicrobial stewardship and medicines optimisation across Ireland and beyond.”



MOIC Represented at FIP World Congress 2025 in Copenhagen



MOIC joined over 3,320 pharmacy professionals from more than 100 countries at the 2025 FIP World Congress in Copenhagen, Denmark. Under the theme of "Continuity of pharmaceutical care and patient safety. Coordination of pharmacotherapy at different levels of healthcare", the congress provided an outstanding platform to showcase our work on a global stage and to strengthen international collaborations.

Highlights for the MOIC team included reconnecting and engaging in inspiring discussions with long-standing partners from the University of Malta and the University of Copenhagen. These interactions reinforced the value of global knowledge exchange and highlighted how collaborative networks are driving medicines optimisation forward.

MOIC at NICON 2025

NICON 2025 took place on 15-16 October at the La Mon Hotel, Belfast. Over 600 HSC leaders gathered to turn the Health and Social Care Reset Plan into action under the theme "Reset | Shaping Health and Social Care for the Future".

MOIC showcased our work on medicines optimisation, innovation adoption, and economic impact in the Health Innovation & Economy Network Zone. A highlight was Professor Mike Scott's 'On-the-Sofa Conversation' where he shared how MOIC is advancing innovation in health and social care.

MOIC looks forward to continuing to drive medicines optimisation and innovation across Northern Ireland's health and social care system.



MOIC Showcases Innovative Clinical Pharmacy Practices at 4th Croatian Congress

The 4th Croatian Congress of Clinical Pharmacy, held recently in Zagreb, brought together leading experts in pharmacotherapy from Croatia and across Europe. The programme explored key challenges and advances in the management of cardiovascular, haematological, nephrological, and infectious diseases, as well as inflammatory conditions in gastroenterology and rheumatology.

Representing the Department of Health Northern Ireland, Professor Cathy Harrison and MOIC's Anita Hogg were delighted to present Northern Ireland's pioneering work in clinical pharmacy practice. Their session highlighted innovative models of care that are improving patient outcomes and medicines optimisation across the region.

The event provided an excellent platform for reconnecting with colleagues, exchanging ideas, and strengthening partnerships that will drive future innovation in the field. MOIC is excited to build on these new connections while continuing to promote Northern Ireland's leadership in medicines optimisation in Europe



MOIC Signs MOU with Haramaya University, Ethiopia

MOIC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the College of Health and Medical Sciences (CHMS) at Haramaya University, Ethiopia.

This new partnership aims to advance medicines optimisation through joint projects, knowledge exchange, staff collaboration, and capacity building in both Northern Ireland and Ethiopia. Activities will include responding to funding calls, knowledge transfer, joint dissemination, and stakeholder engagement.

Mike Scott, Director of MOIC, said: "This MOU represents a powerful opportunity to share best practice in medicines optimisation and build sustainable clinical pharmacy capacity in Ethiopia".

Ammas Siraj Mohammed, lecturer and researcher in clinical pharmacy at Haramaya University, added: "Partnering with MOIC aligns perfectly with our commitment to excellence in health education, research and service. This collaboration will strengthen our ability to deliver high-impact, evidence-based healthcare improvements".

The partnership supports Haramaya University's vision to become a world-class health research, education, and service centre by 2045 and MOIC's focus on fostering partnership and collaboration.



Pharmacy Schools Programme: Building Health Literacy in Primary Children

Launched in 2021 by Belfast Healthy Cities in partnership with the Departments of Health and Education, the Pharmacy Schools Programme equips Primary 1-7 pupils with essential knowledge and life-skills to understand community pharmacies, promote self-care for minor ailments, and use medicines safely.

Key learning areas include:

- The role of pharmacists and how to access services
- Self-care for common childhood illnesses (colds, hay fever, head lice, diarrhoea)
- Safe medicine use and appropriate health service choices

Co-designed with pharmacy, education, health, and voluntary sector partners, the programme includes lesson plans aligned with the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding curriculum area.



Feedback from participating teachers has been overwhelmingly positive: they describe it as an engaging, skills-based resource and recommend rollout to all primary schools. Teachers highlight its potential to boost health literacy, encourage appropriate pharmacy use, and ease pressure on other healthcare services. The programme provided a rich, skills-based learning experience that was both educational and enjoyable for teachers and children alike.

MOIC Update: September Funding Bids and Pharmacy First Evaluation Submitted

MOIC has had a busy autumn, contributing expertise to four major international funding applications submitted in September 2025 and completing a key regional evaluation. Applications included:

- A UKRI Funding opportunity - Transdisciplinary research to tackle antimicrobial resistance. The submission is focused on a One Health Approach to antibiotic use, prescribing patterns and environmental concentrations across borders and developing countries.
- SHEMATTERS - a Horizon Europe application aiming to transform the understanding, diagnosis, and management of high-burden under-researched health conditions that disproportionately affect women.
- CARE4AGE - a Horizon Europe application focusing on older adults with multi-morbidity driven by CVD and frailty. The project aims to create a virtual assistant to support clinicians and patients.
- TWIN -SEPSIS: a Horizon Europe application aiming to address the challenges posed by sepsis by developing an AI-driven digital twin for sepsis patients that enables rapid detection, AMR profiling, and personalised treatment support.
- MOIC partnered in a COST Action application focusing on eco-directed medicines use.

Pharmacy First Evaluation

MOIC has submitted the full evaluation report on the Pharmacy First Service for Emergency Hormonal Contraception to SPPG.

Staff Spotlight

Congratulations to MOIC Director Professor Mike Scott MBE on the conferral of his Fellowship from the School of Pharmacy at Queen's University Belfast.

The Fellowship recognises individuals whose careers demonstrate exemplary, purpose driven leadership that advances patient care, strengthens professional standards, and drives meaningful change in pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences.

Professor Scott's pioneering work in medicines optimisation has delivered real improvements in patient outcomes across Northern Ireland, Europe and beyond. A well-deserved recognition - huge congratulations from the entire MOIC team!



Staff Spotlight



Congratulations to Catherine Goudy and Rachel Glass, who have successfully completed the regional Quality Coach programme!

Earlier this month, Catherine and Rachel joined fellow graduates at the Quality Improvement Celebration and Recognition Event, where they were formally presented with their certificates in front of colleagues, mentors and HSC leaders. The Quality Coach programme equips staff with the skills and tools to lead and support improvement projects within their teams and across organisations.

Well done to both - a fantastic achievement!



Dr Joanne Brown, Senior Research and Innovation Programme Manager at MOIC was delighted to be asked to serve as guest of honour by Queen's University School of Pharmacy at their 2025 Undergraduate Awards Ceremony.

Taking place in Queen's University Belfast's Great Hall, the annual ceremony recognised exceptional performance across the School's BSc and MPharm degree programmes.

Dr Brown addressed the graduates, prize winners and their families before the presentations began, highlighting the vital role the next generation of pharmacists will play in advancing medicines optimisation and patient care. A fantastic recognition of Joanne's expertise and leadership - congratulations from everyone at MOIC!



MOIC Publications

iSIMPATHY: a multinational pre-post non-randomised intervention study transforming medication review has been published in the BMJ Journal. To access this paper please visit:

<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/15/11/e102020>

Addressing potentially inappropriate prescribing in care homes: regional evaluation of a pharmacist-led model in Northern Ireland has been published in the International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy. To access this paper please visit:

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11096-025-02031-w>

Merry Christmas from all the team at MOIC!

As we enter the festive season we'd like to thank you for your continued support throughout 2025. Wishing you a peaceful Christmas and a happy, healthy start to 2026.

Warmest Wishes

The Team at MOIC

