

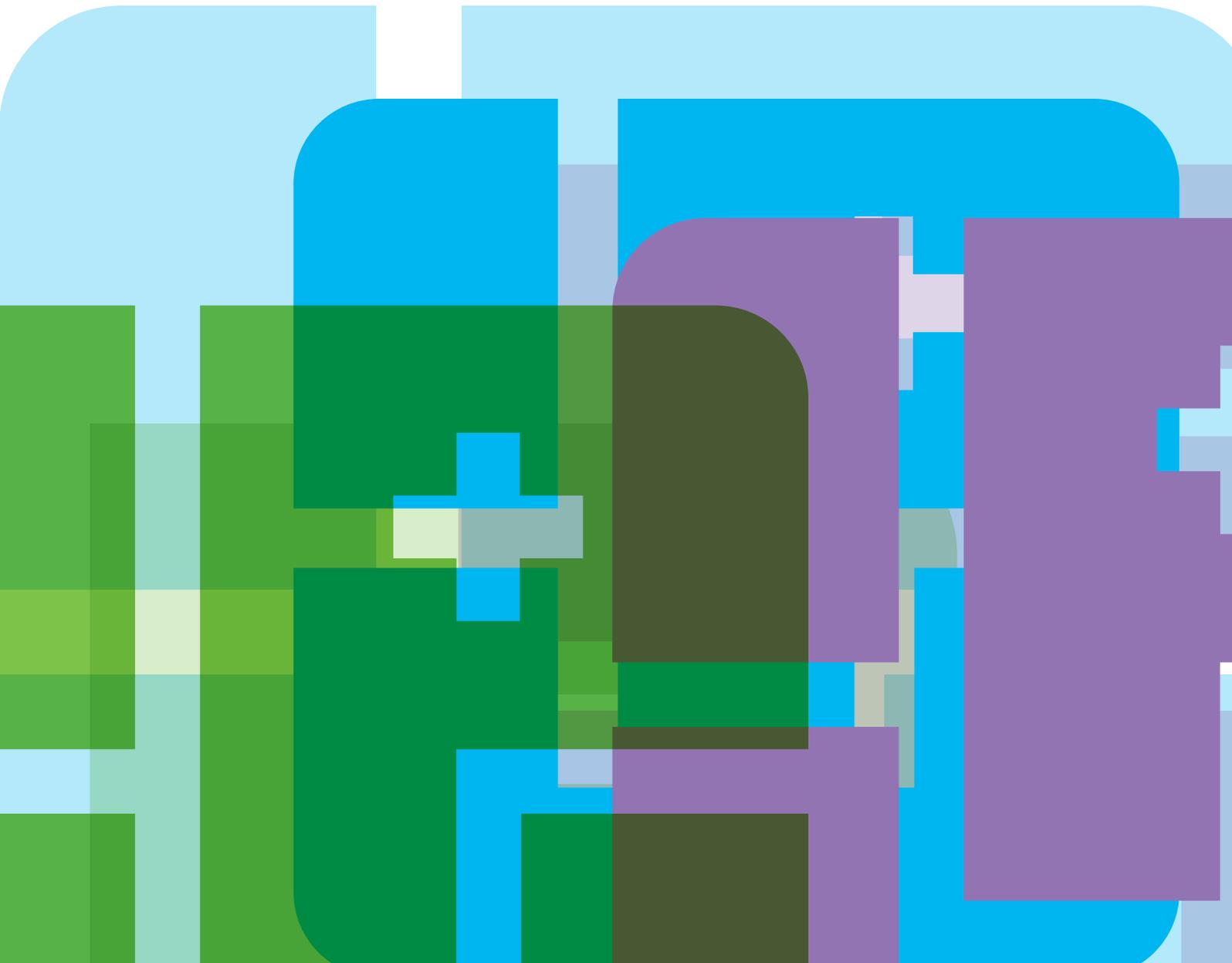


**IRISH
PHARMACY
UNION**

The voice of
community pharmacy

IPU Statement of Strategy **2017-2021**

PUTTING COMMUNITY PHARMACY AT THE CENTRE OF PRIMARY HEALTHCARE IN IRELAND



Contents

President's Statement	3
Challenges and Opportunities for Community Pharmacy in Ireland	4
The IPU's Strategy	5
IPU Vision	5
IPU Mission	6
Strategic Objectives	7
Monitoring Strategy Implementation	10
Appendix 1 Contributors to this Strategy Document	11
Strategy Review Group & IPU Focus Group	11
External Stakeholder Consultations	12



President's Statement

“It is the set of the sails, not the direction of the wind that determines which way we will go.”

Dear Member,

As pharmacists, it is only good practice to stand back and review how you are delivering for your patients, your staff and your community. How can you rise to the challenges your business and practice face? What is your strategy for continuing to deliver excellent healthcare through economically viable and sustainable business?

The role of Irish Pharmacy Union is to help you, our member, to rise to those challenges. We measure our progress as your representative body through our strategy. For strategies to remain relevant, they must have a timeframe and they must be updated. That time is now as we set our sails for the next four years.

Pharmacists in Ireland have faced many challenges in the last four years, too many to list here. We can be justifiably proud of the excellent healthcare we have delivered despite the headwinds we have faced. This excellence is not an opinion voiced by pharmacists but that voiced by our patients, the people who matter most to us. Year on year, our satisfaction ratings as a profession have hit the high 90s for quality of care, trustworthiness and accessibility. If only this were true of every other aspect of healthcare in Ireland.

Pharmacists are the cornerstone of delivery of quality, accessible, professional primary healthcare in Ireland. Our network of 1,800 community pharmacies is open an average of 56 hours a week and 85 million members of the public visit pharmacies every year. It is no surprise, therefore, that 92% of patients want us to deliver new services.

To maintain our exceptional ratings, we must challenge ourselves to do more and deliver better value for our patients and their health. There is a fallacy, seldom challenged by those outside our profession or those who rely on us, that medicines in Ireland are expensive. It is a battle for the truth that we are starting to win and it is a battle fought every day on your behalf by the IPU. Excellence in the delivery of quality primary care delivers fantastic value for money to our healthcare system and we demand to be paid properly for the value we deliver. Our new four-year strategy can set a course, not only to help you deliver expanded services as laid out in the programme for government, but to show that to do otherwise is to waste taxpayers' money. We can only accomplish that ambition by having a clear strategy, by being able to work collaboratively with other healthcare colleagues and by lobbying our elected representatives to honour their manifesto commitments to deliver better value and outcomes for patients. This strategy is the product of input from practising pharmacists and not some far-removed academic exercise. It is challenging, far-reaching and ambitious. We will not achieve these outcomes for patients on our own but, rather, by using our collective experiences and knowledge of everyday practicalities.

This strategy document is not the work of any one individual; it was very much a team effort. On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to thank all who contributed to its development for their time, effort and total commitment to the process.

The IPU is the voice of community pharmacy and community pharmacy is the heart of primary care. Let's keep working together through our shared goals to get to our destination – better patient care through expanded pharmacy services in viable community pharmacies.

**Daragh Connolly MPSI,
President**



Challenges and Opportunities for Community Pharmacy in Ireland

The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) is the representative and professional body for community pharmacists in Ireland, with a current membership of over 2,200 pharmacists and represents 95% of community pharmacies countrywide.

Against the backdrop of an ever-changing healthcare and economic climate, it is prudent for us to re-evaluate and ensure that our organisation continues to have a strategy that is fit for purpose, actionable and supported by our membership base. This strategy will serve as the guiding light in the development and safeguarding of a sustainable and patient-centered community pharmacy profession and sector in Ireland.

In order to best represent the interests of our members, this strategy was developed with both an awareness and an appreciation of the internal and external environment in which they operate.

At a broad policy-making level there are a number of factors that will impact the IPU and our members over the period of the next strategy including:

- Government policy to provide healthcare at the lowest level of complexity, i.e. the primary care setting, and to attain greater value for money in relation to healthcare expenditure as outlined in the Government's *'Future Health'* document;
- A Government-led shift to 'prevention rather than cure' as evidenced by increasing budgetary investment in the Healthy Ireland framework. This shift is paralleled by a drive to engender societal awareness regarding health and wellbeing and medication safety;
- An unprecedented re-structuring of the healthcare system is currently underway as the Health Services Executive devolves healthcare delivery to the hospital groups and the community healthcare organisations. A radical change in the manner in which healthcare is funded is also underway in both the hospital and community settings as activity based funding gathers momentum;
- The changing demographic profile in Ireland – a growing (3.2% growth from 2016-2017 alone) and ageing population that is living longer, with more complex pharmaceutical needs, will inevitably necessitate greater engagement with pharmacy services; and
- The ongoing reduction in the number of GPs operating in Ireland, particularly in rural communities, challenges the healthcare system to adapt in order to meet the needs of patients.

Similarly, there are certain sector-specific issues that are capable of directly impacting on community pharmacy:

- The continued focus by the State and the media on the cost of medicines (including ingredient costs and pharmacy fees) in Ireland;
- Successive State cuts to the funding of drug schemes that challenge the viability of many retail pharmacies, particularly independent operators;
- The absence of an updated, fit for purpose contract that appropriately remunerates pharmacists for the provision of patient services and minimises unnecessary administrative burdens;
- The changing pharmacy landscape due to the ongoing consolidation and growth of buying groups, symbol groups and the multiples; and
- The make-up of the IPU's membership in terms of the percentage of contractors to employee pharmacist members and cognisance of the particular needs of both.

Over the lifetime of this strategy, the IPU is committed to overcoming these challenges and seizing the opportunities.

The IPU's Strategy

THE IPU'S VISION

Our vision reflects the overall ambition of the organisation – where do we envisage ourselves in the long term.

VISION

To be the authoritative voice of community pharmacy and the driving force in the evolution of accessible, equitable and patient-focussed primary healthcare

Our vision explained

Our vision is that we want the IPU to be a leader rather than a follower in shaping the future of primary healthcare. We want to be the driving force in shaping the environment in which our members practice. Additionally, our vision statement places the patient at the centre. All developments in primary healthcare should be to the benefit of all our patients with equality of access.

The IPU'S mission

This mission statement communicates our purpose and indicates who we are, what we do and who we serve.

The IPU exists to:

- + Advocate, advance and protect the role of the pharmacist at the centre of primary healthcare
- + Value and demonstrate the contribution pharmacy makes to our patients and communities
- + Promote, challenge and support our profession to embrace opportunity
- + Cherish our heritage and traditions
- + Mentor the next generation of pharmacists

Our mission explained

As a membership organisation, our primary aim is to promote the professional and economic interests of our members by assisting them in delivering the best possible service to their patients. Central to this is our ability to demonstrate the evidenced value it provides and communicate the contribution that our members make to individual patients, and indeed, to society at large. We also exist to drive the profession forward by challenging our member base to embrace new opportunities. However, we acknowledge that advancement of the profession should not be at the expense of our rich heritage and traditions, but furthermore we must also cater for the needs of new pharmacists to ensure the profession continues to evolve.

Strategic Objectives

In order to realise our vision, we have developed a set of interdependent strategic objectives, the achievement of which is essential to the success of this strategy.

Objective 1: Advance the long-term viability of community pharmacy

In order for us to thrive as a membership organisation, our members must have a reasonable degree of certainty about their futures and the future of the profession.

The core actions to deliver on Objective 1, which relate to income streams for our members, are:

1. Sustain existing pharmacy income and develop additional income streams;
 2. Enhance and support the development and delivery of innovative and sustainable professional pharmacy practices;
- and
3. Develop and negotiate a new, fairer, contract with the State that properly remunerates pharmacy services



Objective 2: Position the IPU as the leading influencer in primary healthcare

Given that pharmacists are the most widely accessible healthcare professionals in the community, it seems logical that we, as the representative body, would have a significant voice at any forum discussing primary healthcare.

The main actions to deliver on Objective 2 are based upon raising the profile of pharmacy within the primary healthcare debate to ensure we have a strong voice at the discussion table. The actions are:

1. Develop the future direction for community pharmacy in Ireland and use it to shape health policy;
 2. Demonstrate and promote the value of community pharmacy to the State in terms of patient safety and health outcomes;
 3. Build collegiate working relationships across the health sector;
 4. Achieve reasonable and proportionate enforcement of regulation and administrative requirements;
 5. Raise the profile of the professional role and expertise of the pharmacist;
- and
6. Position community pharmacy at the forefront of the eHealth agenda.

Objective 3: Enhance and develop membership services to support the evolving needs of all members

As a membership organisation, we are acutely aware of our role in providing the necessary services that will allow members to remain competitive and up-to-date on professional, clinical and commercial knowledge.

The core actions to deliver on Objective 3, which revolve around our offering to members, are:

1. **Strengthen the IPU's position as the primary provider of CPD, education and training for pharmacists and their teams;**
2. **Foster professionally rewarding working environments;**
3. **Consolidate and communicate the value of IPU membership;**
and
4. **Encourage greater engagement amongst the membership and between members and the IPU.**



Objective 4: Reinforce and promote the value of community pharmacy to patients and their carers

Patients and their carers who rely on pharmacists for advice, medicines and services understand and appreciate the value of community pharmacy. However, members of the public who are not yet patients are often unaware of the range of services available and the value the profession offers. This objective seeks to address this disparity.

The core actions to deliver on Objective 4, which relate to delivering value to patients and their carers, are:

1. **Support and empower patients in maintaining and improving their own health and wellbeing;**
2. **Improve patient awareness of the role and value of community pharmacy;**
3. **Advocate for improved access to healthcare for all patients in their local community;**
and
4. **Collaborate with patient advocacy groups to demonstrate the value of community pharmacy to patients**

Objective 5: Develop the IPU to enable it to support our future strategic direction

Central to delivering on this strategy is the requirement for the IPU to continually develop and improve as an organisation, with appropriately skilled staff and to ensure that internal processes are as efficient as possible to provide optimal representation of our members.

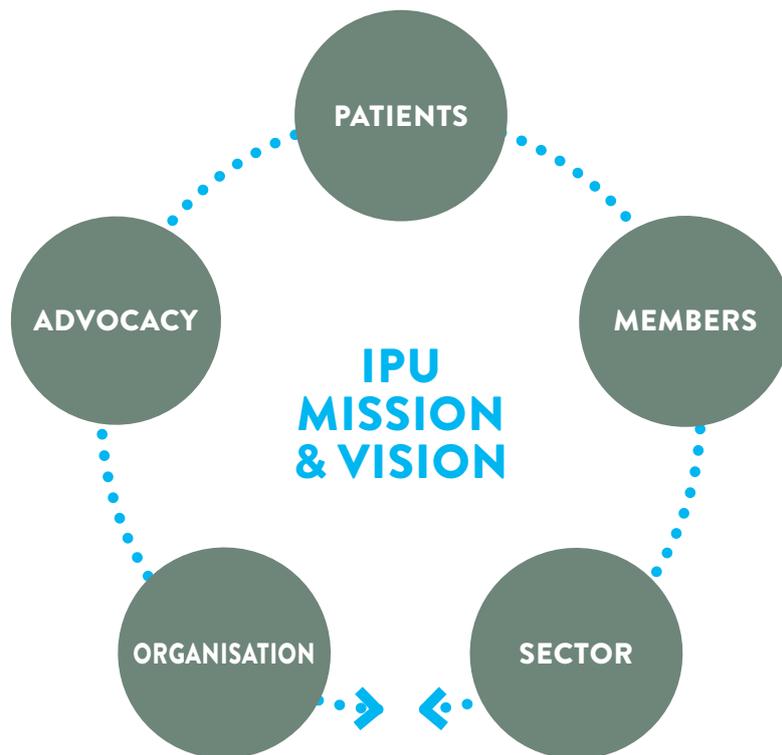
The core actions to deliver on Objective 5, which relate to our internal capability and skillsets, are:

- 1. Attract, retain and develop our people to ensure they fulfill their potential;**
- 2. Conduct a skills audit to ensure the organisation has the appropriate skills to support our strategic objectives;**
- 3. Develop our research and data analytics capability to support policy development & advocacy;**
- 4. Review governance at appropriate intervals;**
and
- 5. Review organisational structures on an ongoing basis.**



MONITORING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The diagram below illustrates the main areas that we will concentrate on in monitoring strategy implementation. This approach provides an organised and focussed structure for tracking progress on delivery of the five strategic objectives.



Building on these key focus areas, more detailed Performance Measures will ensure that the strategic objectives agreed are delivered upon. IPU management will identify measureable targets for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) aligned with the underpinning actions, as previously described, for each objective, which will ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

Conclusions

This Statement of Strategy has been formulated to guide the work of the IPU over the next four years. The statement is not an end in itself but provides direction and context for the organisation and our members. It also provides a very clear basis to monitor and evaluate our performance and progress over the lifetime of the strategy.

We will continuously review the strategy to ensure that it is fit for purpose and takes into the account the evolving needs of our membership and the ever-changing economic and sociopolitical landscape within which community pharmacy operates.

Ultimately, the IPU's reason for existence is to support our members and the services they provide.

APPENDIX 1

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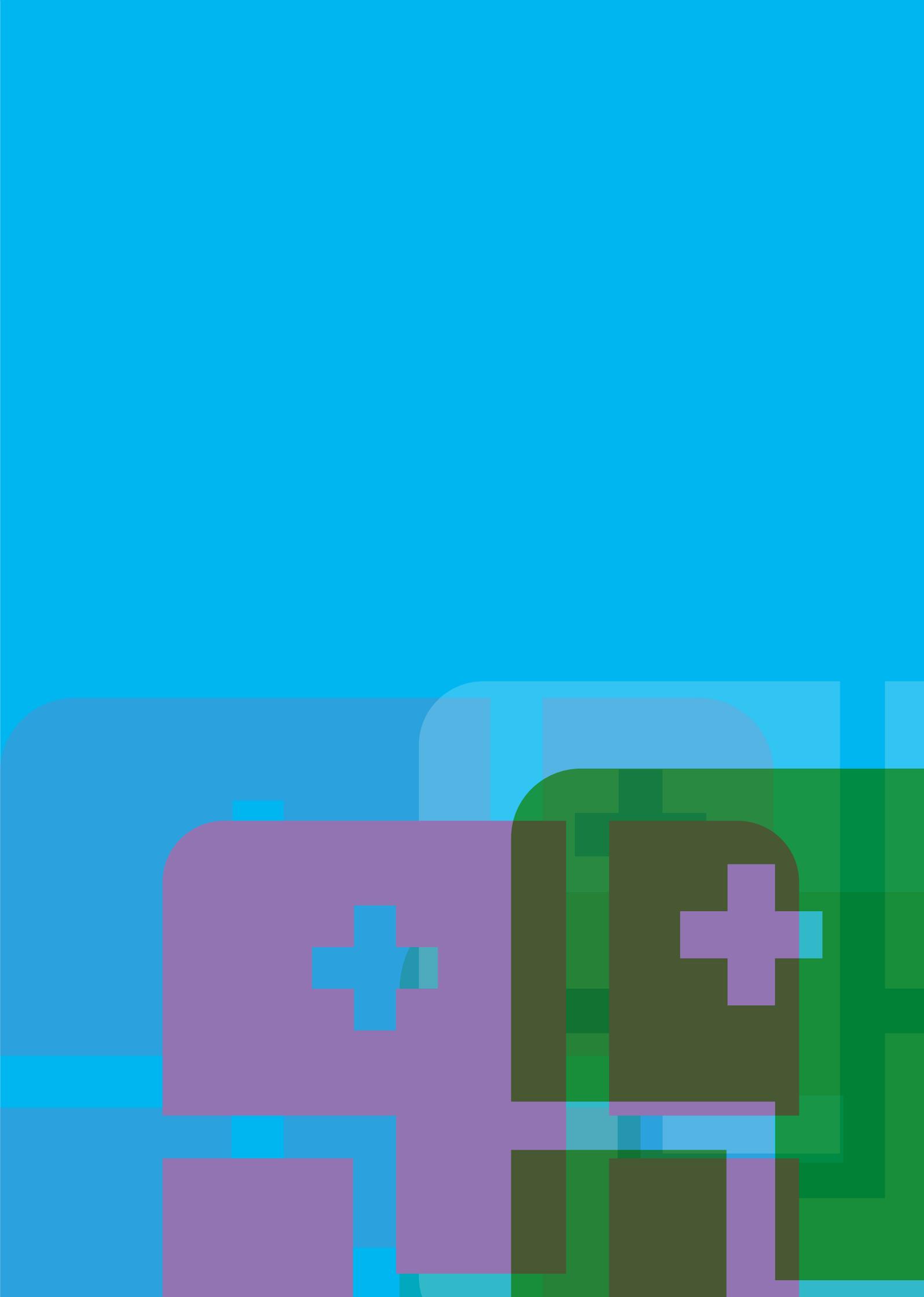
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