

Pharmacy white paper

The Government Consultation on the Pharmacy White Paper has begun and you have an opportunity to respond. We are very disappointed that the style will not make it easy for most people to make their views known: there may still be a 'Listening Event' in Bristol, but that has yet to be confirmed and the other nearest events are in Birmingham and London; the written responses are via the Dept of Health website, and the text is complex and technical. Go to: <http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations> and look for the 'Pharmacy in England' section.

Have your say.

The consultation ranges over various areas: here are some of our thoughts:

We believe that any of the suggested changes to the rules allowing G.P.s to dispense to patients would prevent many patients receiving their medicines from local Surgeries.

Allowing all G.P.s to dispense drugs to their patients might seem attractive, however we consider this option would be destabilising and (very reasonably) be strongly opposed by the Pharmacy profession.

We consider allowing dispensing G.P.s to sell simple remedies and 'over the counter' products to their registered patients would reduce NHS prescription costs and enhance services to rural communities.

'Choice' is a buzzword and is clearly enhanced by Dispensing G.P.s: we believe they provide a safe, local, efficient and essential service that helps rural patients maintain their independence reduces wasteful extra journeys and maintains the viability of Branch Surgeries in areas where a Pharmacy would not be viable.

We urge you to write to your M.P., and to Alan Johnson, Sec. of State for Health, at the House of Commons, supporting your G.P. dispensing service and asking that no change should be made to the 'rules of entry' for dispensing G.P. Practices.

If you have found it difficult to participate in this public consultation, or have been unable to attend a 'Listening Event', let your M.P and the Sec. of State know.

If you would like further information, contact Matthew Stead, Chairman, C&IOS LMC, Sedgemoor Centre, St Austell PL25 5AS. 01726 627978