

Pharmacy in England **Building on strengths – delivering the future**

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Recommendation: that the Council writes to the Health Minister Dawn Primarolo to draw to her attention the effect that these proposals will have on practices in Copeland and asking that West Cumbria be part of the communications programme.

BACKGROUND

The Government published on 3 April 2008 a White Paper on Pharmacy in England Building on strengths – delivering the future.

This White Paper sets out a vision for building on the strengths of pharmacy, using that capacity and capability to deliver further improvements in pharmaceutical services over the coming years as part of an overall strategy to ensure safe, effective, fairer and more personalised patient care.

It includes the Government's response to the Review of NHS Pharmaceutical Contractual Arrangements conducted by Anne Galbraith, former chair of the Prescription Pricing Authority, which the Government commissioned in 2007. It also considers as appropriate views put forward by the All Party Pharmacy Group's report The Future of Pharmacy (published in 2007) and considers the complementary but important work of dispensing doctors and appliance contractors.

CONTROL OF ENTRY SYSTEM

A small part of the White Paper looks at the complex "control of entry" system that regulates the provision of pharmaceutical services and, in particular, the right of a practice to dispense.

The suggested changes to the "control of entry" criteria are likely to mean that if there is a community pharmacy less than one mile from a dispensing practice, the practice will lose the right to dispense.

The relevant part of the White Paper that deals with this is at Appendix "A".

EFFECT ON COPELAND

In Copeland there will be two affected practices – Trinity House, Whitehaven and Seascale Health Centre.

The Seascale practise has been very active in generating opposition to these proposals as they would have serious consequences on the future viability of this practise particularly its branch at Bootle. Correspondence from the practise is at Appendix "B".

Cumbria Primary Care Trust (PCT) has also considered these proposals and is concerned at their effect on 17 practices across Cumbria. Correspondence is also at Appendix "B".

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Health minister Dawn Primarolo in a ministerial statement on 17 July 2008 stated that the consultation on the proposals in the White Paper would be published in August and would run until the autumn, accompanied by relevant impact assessments.

The Minister further stated that the Government plans to hold national events "to support comprehensive discussion and debate as part of that consultation". As part of this the Government will be commissioning further research to map the target audiences for a pharmacy public communications programme. This will particularly focus on those people with long-term conditions and who are most affected by health inequalities. The results, to be available later this autumn, will inform the next stages of implementation.

CONCLUSION

Clearly there are opportunities to influence the government on these proposals. At this stage it is recommended that the first approach should be to write to the Health minister Dawn Primarolo to draw to her attention the effect that these proposals will have on practices in Copeland and asking that West Cumbria be part of the communications programme.

The views of the County Council and the PCT are being sought and will be reported verbally at the meeting.

List of Appendices

Appendix "A" – Extract from White Paper on Pharmacy in England Building on strengths – delivering the future.

Appendix "B" – Correspondence from Seascale Health Centre and Cumbria Primary Care Trust

List of Background Documents:

None