



Department of Health

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Mr Peter F Dodds
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24 JUL 2013

Dear Mr Dodds,

Thank you for your further letter of 4 July, copied to Earl Howe about the 2012 NHS Pharmaceutical Services Regulations. I have again been asked to reply.

I was sorry to read that you were dissatisfied with the Department's previous responses and I have noted your comments about patient representation on the Advisory Group.

With regard to your concern about the statements made in the House of Lords on 16 May, Earl Howe said:

My Lords, there is a balance of interests here, not least the interests of the patient. We therefore need a set of rules which reflects those interests. Patients who live in a rural area can be dispensed to by their GP if there is no pharmacy within 1.6 kilometres of where the patient lives, or within 1.6 kilometres of the GP practice. Without these rules, it would rarely be viable for new pharmacies to open to serve rural areas. That would deprive people living in rural areas of the opportunity to benefit from the more comprehensive health service that a combination of a GP practice and a pharmacy can provide.

In reply to the Countess of Mar's questions on 5 June, Earl Howe said:

The objective of moving to a system whereby the provision of NHS pharmaceutical services and the determination of pharmacy applications were primarily judged against Pharmaceutical Needs Assessments (PNAs) was to provide a more rigorous assessment of local needs and a more objective framework for determining contractual arrangements and entry to the market than existed prior to September 2012. The question of economic benefits to pharmacies was not a material consideration in the development of this policy.

These two statements, in response to a subsequent question from the Countess of Mar and from which you quote in your letter, are reconcilable as Earl Howe made clear.

I am sorry if this is not the reply you were hoping for but there is nothing further I can add to the answers already given by the Minister

Yours sincerely,



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Tim Marshall
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries