

Cross Party MSPs  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

16 July 2010

## **REQUEST FOR SUPPORT REGARDING PHARMACY APPLICATIONS**

Dear MSPs,

We the Leuchars Community Council would like to request your assistance in the matter regarding the degradation of Dispensing Doctors services in rural Scotland, by means of aggressive applications by pharmacists made under current flawed regulations. These regulations are currently under review, due to recent public controversy and the considerable numbers of protests made by patients, Councillors and Cross - Party Politicians.

Despite numerous protests to the Scottish Government, Nicola Sturgeon refuses to act to suspend the pharmacy application process until the regulations have been amended. This failure to act continues to allow hostile applications for pharmacy licences in areas where dispensing Doctors provide a valuable service to a large number of patients – applications perceived to be made to provide a better profit, not necessarily a better service.

The current regulations have allowed a speculative application to be made to NHS Fife by UNICARE, an English based company. Details of this application were sent to this Community Council for public comment (as per amendment to the regulation of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009) even though the applicant had failed to specify an address, and blatantly lied on his application. This application would have had to have gone to a PPC hearing, had these glaring omissions not been highlighted by Leuchars Community Council to NHS Fife primary care division.

Fife Area Health Board has failed in their duty to carry out a mandatory Impact Assessment under the current Disability Equality Legislation 2006, as is the case in Leuchars where NHS Fife also failed to answer a request made under the FOI Regulations.

The Leuchars Community Council has no qualms with those pharmacists who wish to open a pharmacy, whose services will compliment those of the local GP's. We do however, object to those who wish to make a profit at the expense of GP services, as has happened in Leuchars, Fife and Tarves, Aberdeenshire where the GP service is more than likely to disappear completely.

The dispensing practice in Millport, Cumbrae, is the latest Practice under threat and there is evidence a further 70 rural Practices could soon be targeted and may lose their dispensing service. We have attached an email from the Leuchars and Tarves Pharmacy applicant to the Dispensing Doctors Association, which clearly shows that

his company will stop at nothing to achieve financial gain in cherry picking the most profitable GP dispensing Practices. Indeed, it makes veiled threats against those remaining practices should the DDA continue with its support for Practices under threat.

This illustrates quite clearly the difference between a dispensing GP service, which ploughs the profits from dispensing back into the practice to improve patient services, compared to a commercial business which is only concerned with profit margins. This fact has been recognised by the Westminster Parliament, who dismissed a White Paper which would have had a detrimental effect on dispensing Doctors in England and Wales - the very same detrimental effect being felt in Scotland.

The Scottish Government insists on pursuing its Community Pharmacy Policy regardless of public protest and pressure which is extraordinary, given the fact that it has been proved categorically that dispensing Doctors dispensing costs are far less than those of pharmacists. In today's economic climate of cutbacks & savings, why is a Cash - Strapped NHS not playing its part.

The Leuchars Community Council graciously ask you to give this your utmost support and to take all possible steps to bring pressure to bear on the Scottish Government in the Debating Chamber, to suspend all current and future Pharmacy applications until such time as new Control of Entry Legislation is agreed and brought into force.

Yours Faithfully

**Mark Sharp**

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**Attachment:** Copy of email sent by Vice Chairperson Community Pharmacy Scotland to Dispensing Doctors Association

**COPY OF EMAIL SENT FROM VICE-CHAIR CPS TO DDA**

----- Original Message ----- From: "James B Semple" <>  
To: <Allan.Tennant@dispensingdoctor.org>  
Cc: "Brendan Semple" <>  
Sent: Friday, March 05, 2010 1:49 AM  
Subject: Leuchars / Balmullo

Hi Allan

We were slightly concerned to see the following link:

<http://www.dispensingdoctor.org/content.php?id=1294>

suddenly disappear.

Is this a boring technical issue, or is it because the DDA has decided to dissociate itself from Mr Allan Kennedy and his ridiculous campaign?

You won't be alone - the local GP was most keen to wash his hands of him at the recent PPC hearing on an application to open a PHARMACY at his premises in Balmullo.

(Personally, I thought it was a bit cruel - but then they maybe know Mr Kennedy better than I do...)

As a supporter of GP dispensing in Scotland, I was (ironically) concerned to hear the arguments of the pharmacist applicant: "pharmaceutical services to the village of Balmullo (population 1200) are inadequate, as there is only GP dispensing and that doesn't count. The size of the community is irrelevant." (That was paraphrased - not a direct quote, but as good as...)

The thing is, for complex historical reasons, we in Scotland have never had 'Dispensing Doctors' in the same way as you guys south of the border. We only have doctor dispensing in communities where a pharmacy isn't viable. Like, for example, Balmullo - but usually more isolated.

I have a list of about 70 dispensing doctor practices in areas where - ordinarily - a pharmacy would not be viable. Well - not viable if they didn't receive an Essential Small Pharmacy allowance. (ESP).

I support doctor dispensing in these communities. If some idiot gets a pharmacy contract granted and subsequent ESP allowance, he'll suck a disproportionate amount from my global sum - and none of us want that to happen. My Global Sum gets diluted, your dispensing doctor loses some income. We all lose.

You guys were absolutely right to support your dispensing colleagues in Leuchars/Balmullo when I applied to open in Leuchars. As far as \*Scottish\*

government policy is concerned, your support was futile - but worth a go.  
Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

However, I would caution you against your continued support for a  
PHARMACY in village with a population of 1200, currently served by a  
dispensing doctor practice.

If such an application were to be granted - with the blessing of the local AMC  
\*and\* the DDA - then I'm going on a spending spree.

Can you see what I'm getting at here?

Support a pharmacy in Balmullo, and your 90% 'safe' dispensing practices are  
no longer safe.

It's a bugger, ain't it?

Regards

James

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