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Dear Mr Fraser

I am a Community Pharmacist who has been practising in Craigmillar for the past 19 years, and at no time in this period have I been more concerned than by the recommendations of the Office of Fair Trading that the access to a NHS contract should be totally Deregulated.

Since 1987 the granting of an NHS contract has been at the discretion of the Local Health Boards who by and large found the legislation adequate to enable them to meet the needs of their populations. Prior to this date you did not have to have the consent of the Health Board. This meant that the phenomenon of Leap Frogging was wide spread which lead to clusters of Pharmacies around Doctor's Surgeries.

I have been tasked with a scoping exercise within Lothian to establish the current picture with regard to Out of Hours Access to Pharmaceutical Services, which was a key indicator of the Publication The Right Medicine. This exercise is in the final stages and promises to provide the foundations for future service development.

If Total Deregulation is adopted and with the free for all that will inevitably ensue this will make it impossible for Health Boards to provide rational location of Pharmacies and thus services within Communities.

The OFT has made its recommendations based only on what effect the relaxation of entry to an NHS contract would have upon the potential savings in medicines that could be purchased without a prescription the public would have by the increased competition that would be generated .The OFT estimate this to be in the region of £30 million, which can be seen as a substantial saving however when put as 50p per person per year for the population of the UK, is this worth destroying the wonderful distribution of Pharmacies that are being heralded as the Gate Way to the NHS in Scotland and are being earmarked to role out the contents of The Right Medicine? I think not.

The OFT has not taken into account the prescription element of Community Pharmacies which in many cases account for 80-90% of their income. The OFT have chosen to listen to the lobby from the large Supermarkets who would like to have in store Pharmacies within their units to attract customers and increase foot fall.

This echoes the demise of the Community based Bakers, Butchers and Greengrocers who are no longer in Communities, but are in the Supermarkets in out of Town sites, requiring a car to access them.

I would strongly urge you to make representations to the Scottish Health Ministers, by the deadline of 28<sup>th</sup> February, putting the case for control of entry to NHS contracts to remain within the powers of Health Boards and thus provide some stability within this sector to allow the fruits of The Right Medicine to grow on firm foundations.

Yours Sincerely

Alan J Glauch