

ALN/JSW

26th February 03

Ronnie Fraser
Scottish Executive, Primary Care Division
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

Dear Mr. Fraser

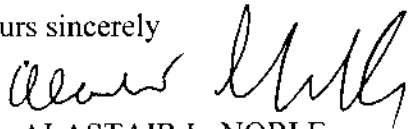
Office of Fair Trading Pharmacy Inquiry

I write this letter as a Lead Clinician for an LHCC.

We are well down the road of very close and integrated care with our local Pharmacies. The whole thrust of what we are trying to do as an LHCC is to give best possible patient care to all our patients so obviously it involves a tremendous amount of work and effort around prescribing and repeat prescribing and takes us into some of the really tricky areas like drug and alcohol abuse and longterm treatment of people with addictive problems. This is a really complicated area and relies on a great amount of trust and goodwill between the GPs, the Mental Health Teams, the Pharmacists and really the whole extended LHCC.

We are also looking at the effect the new GP Contract will have and the new Pharmacists' Contract. We are trying to move away from Pharmacists being paid for prescribing to Pharmacists being paid much more for their very valued and valuable prescribing input and their ability to try and make sure that people take the tablets that we are prescribing and the dose at the right time in the way we think they should be taking them. Again this calls for a lot of local co-operation and work. I therefore think that the Office of Fair Trading Inquiry is potentially very damaging. The last thing we need is this already complicated area being made even more complicated in not just in rural Scotland, but particularly in rural Scotland, we need to make absolutely sure that we do not end up without any Pharmacists or very limited pharmaceutical input, as the big Supermarkets cream off enough of the market to ensure that there is no profitability for the local pharmacist. This is totally contrary to what we are trying to achieve and we would object most strongly to any change in the relationship between ourselves and the local Pharmacists.

Yours sincerely



DR. ALASTAIR L. NOBLE