

Elsenham Surgery

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Dear Patient

Re: The New Pharmacy White Paper and Loss of Doctor Dispensing of Medicines

The Government has recently published a consultation document (white paper) intending to reform the dispensing of medicines in England entitled "Pharmacy in England: Building on strengths-delivering the future-proposals for legislative change"

You can access the full document on the Internet at <http://tinyurl.com/5wg72g>.

The paper is long with several chapters, but the one most relevant to Elsenham Surgery patients is Chapter 4. In this chapter, there is a proposal to reform which doctors are allowed to dispense medicines directly to their patients. Were these proposals for change to become law, the Elsenham Surgery could lose its dispensary.

Some of you know that this year our neighbouring surgery (Newport) lost the right to dispense to their patients who live within 1 mile of a chemist shop when the village pharmacy opened. This has left anomalies about where their patients can obtain their medicines and this white paper seeks to consider if these should change. Following on from initial public meetings the Government has recently published a discussion paper with 4 options for change. Acceptance of options 2 to 4 of the four possibilities proposed could lead to the loss of our dispensary in Elsenham. This would have many consequences; some of those mentioned by patients so far are on the attachment to your medicines bag.

The Doctors' main concerns are these:

- The loss of a highly valued community service for our rural patients
- Removal of a much utilised and respected source of information for both dispensing and prescribing patients
- The loss of a convenient site where patients can make enquiries about repeat or acute medicines from appropriately trained staff
- Removal of a choice about where medicines are collected from, to those who can currently do so (a principal the Government strongly extols in the rest of the NHS)
- Reduction in funding for the surgery
- Redundancies for our Dispensing Staff

There is a consultation period until the 20th November 2008 and we urge as many of our patients who share our concerns to respond. The details about responding are on the leaflet attached to medicine bags, or you may use the Government form enclosed with this letter.

Your views as patients, voters and users of this important service are critical to influence the decision that will be made. Please make sure you respond and also inform as many others to do so as possible.

Thank you for your support.