

## **Relief for Essential Small Pharmacies**

PSNC is delighted to announce that contracts for Essential Small Pharmacies will be extended until March 2015 for all pharmacies that continue to meet the criteria.

Under the 'Essential Small Pharmacy Local Pharmaceutical Services' (ESP LPS) arrangements, pharmacies receive a modest guaranteed payment to ensure they remain viable, despite being located in areas that could not otherwise support a comprehensive pharmacy service. PSNC had been very concerned that arrangements for Essential Small Pharmacies could fall between the cracks as the NHS Commissioning Board takes over pharmacy commissioning.

The ESP LPS contracts were initially granted in 2006 for five years and later extended to March 2013. Because this termination date coincides with the changeover from PCT contracting to NHS Commissioning Board responsibility, there could be no discussions with the NHSCB before the contracts ended, and the services provided by these pharmacies could be lost as the contracts lapsed.

For several months, PSNC argued that we required an extension to the arrangements so that a meaningful discussion can take place with the Commissioning Board about future contracting arrangements. We are pleased, therefore, that the Minister has agreed that an extension is appropriate, and Directions have been issued by the Secretary of State requiring PCTs to formally extend all existing contracts until March 2015 for all those essential small pharmacies that continue to satisfy the eligibility criteria.

### **Steve Lutener, Head of Regulation at PSNC said:**

"This announcement will come as welcome relief for the 80 or so essential small pharmacies that operate under these arrangements. The decision has been hanging over those pharmacies for some time, and this announcement will give them the confidence to continue providing essential services to their local population. PSNC is pleased to have reached this agreement with the Department of Health, which will ensure that patients, particularly in remote areas, can continue to rely on essential small pharmacies for access to pharmaceutical services."

## **ENDS**

### Notes to editors:

- PSNC (The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee) is the body that represents community pharmacies in England and Wales on NHS matters.
- The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) is recognised by the Secretary of State for Health as the representative of community pharmacy on NHS matters. PSNC's main objective is to secure the best possible NHS service opportunities, remuneration, terms and conditions for NHS pharmacy contractors in England. PSNC represents and promotes the interests of 10,500 pharmacy contractors (pharmacy owners) in England. It is the role of PSNC to liaise with the Department of Health and representatives of the NHS in England to negotiate the contractual terms for the provision of NHS community pharmacy services.



- For further information, including links to the academic literature on the subject, please contact Amy Bourke or Sam MacAuslan on 020 618 9187 or [psnc@luther.co.uk](mailto:psnc@luther.co.uk).