

STATEMENT

DATE: TUESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2011

COLEFORD PHARMACY APPLICATIONS

NHS Somerset's Pharmaceutical Services Committee has approved an application from Unicare Pharmacy Ltd to open a pharmacy in the village of Coleford.

The Committee received a large number of comments from residents of Coleford and the surrounding area about the application and considered them when making its decision. Many of these raised concerns about the impact of a new pharmacy on the services provided by the village surgery, Mendip Country Practice.

In approving the application, the committee decided that:

- the population of Coleford and the surrounding area is sufficiently large to support a pharmacy
- the presence of a pharmacy in Coleford should not prejudice the proper provision of medical or dispensing services by Mendip Country Practice – sufficient alternative funding is already given to the GP practice to provide medical services, and the practice will continue to be able to dispense medicines to patients living more than 1 mile from a pharmacy
- because there is not currently a pharmacy in Coleford, patients do not have sufficient access to the full range of services which community pharmacies provide, and so a pharmacy should be allowed to open in the village.

The decision has been made using Department of Health guidelines, the aim of which is to ensure patients and the public have both good access to pharmacy services and competition is encouraged when it is in the patient interest. When considering the adequacy of current pharmaceutical services, the guidelines require the committee to disregard the services provided by the dispensing GP practice.

The decision by the Pharmaceutical Services Committee may be appealed to the NHS Litigation Authority.

If a pharmacy opens in Coleford, the local GP surgery, Mendip Country Practice, will no longer be able to dispense medicines to anyone living within 1 mile of the pharmacy. The Committee decided that the GP practice cannot rely on 'reserved location' status to enable it to continue dispensing to patients living within 1 mile of a pharmacy.

However all patients will have access to a wider range of medicines in the village, as well as the other services provided by community pharmacies.

... More 1 of 2 ...

Mendip Country Practice will not see its dispensing rights reduced until a new pharmacy actually opens.

The successful applicant will now need to identify suitable premises in Coleford for a pharmacy. Planning permission may also need to be sought.

If a successful applicant does not open a pharmacy within 15 months of the initial approval (or the determination of any appeal) then the approval expires.

Ends

For more information contact:

Paul Courtney – NHS Communications (Somerset)
Tel: 01935 385241 / Mob: 0794 118 2175

Shaun Green – Chair of the Somerset Pharmaceutical Services Committee
Tel: 01935 384043

Information for editors:

- A copy of the full decision reached by NHS Somerset's Pharmaceutical Services Committee is being published on NHS Somerset's website at:

www.somerset.nhs.uk/welcome/whats-new
- A second pharmacy application, from John Ware Ltd, was turned down as the Committee felt that it was not necessary to have two pharmacies in Coleford.
- The nearest pharmacies outside Coleford are in Westfield (Radstock).
- A community pharmacy is run by a professional pharmacist. It can dispense prescriptions issued by GPs, provide patients with certain medicines which can only be sold under the supervision of a pharmacist, and also sell over-the-counter treatments. Pharmacists can also provide an independent clinical check on prescriptions, can undertake comprehensive reviews of the medicines which a patient is taking, provide support to patients with long term conditions that have been prescribed new medicines and offer a range of other services.
- Dispensing GP practices only exist in rural areas. They do not employ a pharmacist and medicines are dispensed under the supervision of the doctors. Dispensing practices cannot sell pharmacy-only medicines or over-the-counter items. They cannot dispense medicines to anyone living within 1 mile of a pharmacy.
- Both pharmacies and dispensing GP practices receive funding for dispensing medicines from the NHS, based on the number of prescriptions they dispense.