

Press Release



28 January 2003

NPA QUESTION 'FAIR' IN THE OFFICE OF FAIR TRADING

The National Pharmaceutical Association (NPA) has condemned the recent recommendation by the OFT to open up the community pharmacy market at will to the supermarket chains.

In light of the latest media revelations of the director general of fair trading's awkward conflict of interest as a former paid 'merger advisor' for various supermarkets, and his decision to withdraw from overseeing the Safeway take-over, the NPA has questioned whether he should equally have withdrawn from overseeing the OFT's inquiry into Control of Entry.

NPA Chief Executive, John D'Arcy, said: "Mr Vickers considers that he has a conflict because of previous work with supermarkets. The OFT recommendation in the Control of Entry Report is based heavily upon the impact supermarkets will have as new entrants to the market. It seems to us that against this background, Mr Vickers should have declared an interest and recused himself in the matter. There is now a big question mark over the objectivity of the Report"

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Notes to Editors:

1. The National Pharmaceutical Association (NPA) is the trade association that represents the professional and commercial interests of the owners of around 11,000 community pharmacies in the United Kingdom.
2. For more information, please contact the NPA Press Office, on: 01727-858687, ext 340, 265, 227, 311.