

## Press Release



*20 March 2003*

### **NPA AND PSNC DELIGHTED AT DTI RESPONSE TO OFT**

The two organisations representing community pharmacy welcome today's announcement by Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and are delighted that the Government recognises the validity of the arguments presented by them regarding the threat to delivery of pharmacy services by the OFT's recommendation.

John D'Arcy, Chief Executive of the National Pharmaceutical Association (NPA), said:

"We are encouraged to learn of today's announcement by Patricia Hewitt. It is our view that the current regulations work well in underpinning a widespread pharmacy network, that assures ready and easy access to pharmacy services and also provides a platform from which to launch enhanced pharmacy services envisaged by Government and the profession. Healthcare services – including pharmacy services, have to be planned and managed. We are pleased to see that Patricia Hewitt recognises this and also the risk to local pharmacy services should the OFT's stark recommendation be implemented.

"We acknowledge that there is always room for improvement and we look forward to working with the Government in ensuring that patients enjoy full access to the best in pharmacy services."

Sue Sharpe, Chief Executive of the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC), commented: "We are pleased to hear that Patricia Hewitt has today expressed doubts about the wisdom of deregulation the community pharmacy sector as proposed by the OFT. We are glad she agrees with our view that there is a need to balance competition with primary healthcare policy. As we have said throughout, pharmacies are not the same as other retailers. They are essential local healthcare providers. PSNC is keen to continue to work with the Government to ensure good access to local pharmacy and the delivery of new and improved services for patients."

#### **Notes to editors**

1. The National Pharmaceutical Association (NPA) ([www.npa.co.uk](http://www.npa.co.uk)) 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 85 86 87, ext 3340 or 3227 or visit [www.npa.co.uk](http://www.npa.co.uk) .
3. The PSNC ([www.psnc.org.uk](http://www.psnc.org.uk)) is recognised by the Secretary of State for Health and Government as the representative of community pharmacies on NHS matters.
4. For further information, contact: Simon Whale or Andrew Lynn at Luther Pendragon on 0207 618 9100 or visit [www.psnc.org.uk](http://www.psnc.org.uk)