3 Control of Entry

The Health Bill requires PCT’s to use their PNA as the basis for determining market entry to NHS Pharmaceutical Service Provision. Control of entry is the system whereby Primary Care Trusts assess under the pharmaceutical regulations whether the grant of an application is necessary or expedient for a new pharmacy to dispense NHS prescriptions in order to secure adequate pharmaceutical services in a particular neighbourhood.

The control of entry system applies equally to urban and rural areas. However, where a PCT has determined that an area is ‘controlled’ (i.e. rural in character), provided certain conditions are met, doctors as well as pharmacies can dispense NHS medicines. GPs, may, in general, dispense NHS prescriptions only with NHS approval and only to their patients who live in such controlled localities and live more than 1.6km (as the crow flies) from a pharmacy. The main purpose is to ensure patients in rural area who might have difficulty getting to their nearest pharmacy can access the dispensed medicines they need.

There are four categories of pharmacy applications which are exempt from the control of entry test:

- Pharmacies based in approved retail areas (large shopping areas 15,000 square metres or more leasehold gross floor space away from town centres)
- Pharmacies that intend to open for at least 100 hours per week
- Applications from members of a consortium wishing to establishing new one stop primary care centres
- Wholly mail-order or internet based pharmacy services

Where an application is received by the PCT for entry on to the Pharmaceutical List through an exemption from the control of entry test, the PCT has determined that granting the application will be conditional upon the applicant agreeing to provide the current enhanced services commissioned by the PCT:

- Guaranteed provision of palliative care drugs
- Advice to Care Home Service
- Emergency Hormonal Contraception Service
- Needle & Syringe Exchange Service
- Stop Smoking Service
- Supervised consumption of methadone
- Directed Rota Service (this is only commissioned if there are gaps in provision at Bank Holidays)

Following applications for entry on to the Pharmaceutical List being approved by the PCT supplementary statements to the PNA will be made regarding the number and location of pharmacies within the PCT area.

3.1 Controlled Localities

Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural county. Regulation 31(7) (b) requires the PCT to publish a map detailing the boundaries of any controlled areas. Areas previously determined under the appropriate regulations are listed below and most relate to dispensing doctors. Maps are
available relating to decisions to determine controlled localities in respect of pharmacy applications. These are available in paper form at the PCT.


The PCT will continue to undertake determinations of an area when an application for a new pharmacy is received, and during the coming months the PCT will work with the Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC) and Local Medical Committee (LMC) to undertake an exercise to consider all determinations of controlled localities e.g. to assess if there has been any substantial development in the Oxfordshire PCT area since the previous determinations were made.