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Susie Braham  
Scottish Executive  
Health Department  
St Andrews House  
1ER  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

27 May 2004

Dear Ms Braham

### **Modernising NHS Community Pharmacy in Scotland – Consultation Paper**

Asthma UK Scotland acknowledges the crucial role played by pharmacists in the care of people with asthma, and the potential for further development of that role. Pharmacists are an important source of information about how people with asthma manage their condition and can play a vital part in influencing better self-management in the people affected.

Asthma UK Scotland welcomes this consultation document and the opportunity to comment on the proposals. We would like to concentrate our comments on three main areas:

- Additional and core services – paragraph 2.7 onwards;
- Training for pharmacists – 2.10; and
- Repeat prescribing – paragraph 8.7 onwards

#### **Additional and Core Services**

We would like to particularly welcome the emphasis that will now be given to the “clinical management of an individual patients condition(s) or wider health care needs”, paragraph 2.5. This increasingly ‘holistic’ approach will be of great benefit to people with asthma.

Paragraph 2.7 states that the expectation is that core services will include “pharmaceutical care for certain specified conditions”. We would encourage the Executive to include asthma as one of those specified conditions. Asthma affects 400,000 people in Scotland and a recent report from the Global Initiative on Asthma found that Scotland had the highest rates of teenage asthma in the world.

We understand that additional services are to be negotiated within individual health boards, and would like to ask the Executive whether they will be giving guidance to health boards as to what is included as an additional service?

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## Training for Pharmacists

The clear commitment to training, accreditation and continuing professional development (2.10 onwards) is welcomed. We hope that the detail of the contract will outline more about the training and accreditation requirements that will be necessary for the provision of additional services. If we are to encourage people with asthma to use pharmacy services we need to be confident in the abilities of pharmacists that provide them.

In 2003 Asthma UK Scotland carried out a survey of asthma care in Scotland, including the work of pharmacists. When we asked about specialist training not one of the NHS Board areas could hit the 50 per cent mark when it came to providing pharmacists who had specialist asthma training. Only Tayside, at 42 per cent, came close. Pharmacists provide a vital role in medication information, particularly in inhaler technique and it is important that they have training in these areas.

## Repeat Prescribing

Asthma UK Scotland supports pharmacy led repeat prescribing and see this as having the potential to make a major, positive impact on asthma care. In long-term conditions such as asthma, repeating prescriptions are a way of life that can become routine and suffer from lack of review. Our research into the needs of people with asthma - *Greater Expectations* (2000), indicated that some people had not seen their doctor for three years despite the BTS/SIGN guidelines advocating a minimum of annual review. These people were also missing out on new therapies such as combined inhalers and leukotrine inhibitors which have proved extremely helpful to many people with asthma. If pharmacists are to have an increasing role in repeat prescribing it will be important to ensure that there are strong lines of communication between pharmacists and GPs so that the person with asthma receives the best possible care.

Therefore, we would stress the importance of incorporating into any such scheme the best practice guidelines for different chronic conditions and underline that asthma should be reviewed at least once a year.

Asthma UK Scotland is involved in the establishment of model schemes in pharmaceutical care and continue to press for an increased role for pharmacists in the care and management of chronic conditions.

We welcome this consultation as an opportunity for moving this initiative forward.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Shona Haslam'.

Shona Haslam  
Campaign Manager, Asthma UK Scotland.