

News release

Tuesday July 12, 2011
For immediate release

Decision made on rural parishes

NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland trust board made a decision about which parishes should be classed as rural for the purpose of dispensing pharmacy services on the 7th July 2011.

Following consultation the draft map was modified so that a number of areas previously classed as non-rural will now be classed as rural. Patients in those areas will therefore be able to either continue to or potentially have their prescriptions dispensed by GPs if they live more than 1.6 km from a pharmacy.

The areas are:

- Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe, Moira
- Long Clawson
- Elmesthorpe
- Ravenstone and Snibston
- Swannington

The decision was made on the recommendation of the trust's Primary Care Panel, taking into account access, public transport, lack of facilities, demographics, and land use. The Panel also took into account the views gathered during a public consultation.

In the consultation, GPs, pharmacists and members of the public were asked to tell NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland if the Trust has got it right when determining which parishes should be classed as rural for the purpose of dispensing services. The PCT has a legislative requirement to determine rurality across Leicestershire and Rutland, to ensure there is an appropriate balance between who provides dispensing services and ensuring access for patients.

Depending on where a patient lives, medicines might be provided by pharmacies or GP surgeries, meaning patients can get their medicines from either their local pharmacy or in certain circumstances from their GP surgery.

There are 85 GP practices that operate from 118 surgeries across Leicestershire and Rutland. In total these practices provide medical services to approximately 679,000 people. All 85 practices provide patients with prescriptions for medicines, and the majority of patients take their prescription to their local pharmacy to get their medicines. Of the 85 practices 19 are dispensing practices who run a total of 44 surgeries. Out of these, 20 have a pharmacy in the same premises, adjacent or in the same village. The number of patients who currently receive their medicines from their GP surgery is approximately 60,500.

The map drawn up before the consultation would have meant that up to 5,500 patients would potentially no longer be able to be dispensed to by GP practices. Now that the map has been revised, the potential number of patients who would no longer be dispensed to by their GP practice has reduced to a maximum of 1500, and it is likely that the number will be lower.

Toby Sanders, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Commissioning Development at NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland, said: "We have made our decision on the basis of a number of factors, as required nationally, but I am pleased that we have been able to take into account the views of those who took part in our consultation, and I would like to thank them for their feedback.

"I am confident that the final map we have adopted balances sensitively the interests of providers of dispensing services with the importance of ensuring access for patients who live in our many rural communities."

ENDS

This press release was issued by Caroline Higgs at NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland. For more information, contact the communications office on 0116 295 7663.

Notes to editors: NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland is the operating name for Leicestershire County and Rutland Primary Care Trust (PCT).

The board paper and maps are attached.