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Dear Occupier,

**WE NEED YOUR HELP: THE DISPENSARY IS UNDER THREAT OF CLOSURE**

Because the Sedlescombe and Westfield practices are rural surgeries, we are allowed to dispense medicines to you. We do this instead of chemists, and provide an efficient, effective local service.

You may have heard of the government's Pharmacy White Paper, in which there are plans to change the provision of pharmacy services in the community. The consultation process over the plans has already begun. The White Paper's recommendations could have catastrophic implications for the surgeries at Sedlescombe and Westfield.

The government are looking to vastly expand the role of pharmacists. Whilst we welcome some of their ideas, they are looking to alter things, so as to allow chemists to open up branches in rural areas like ours. This will force us to close down our dispensaries. Incoming chemists are likely to be branches of the big national chains. Where they open, they will do so only to make a profit. You will have no choice in where you obtain your medicines; you will have to go to a chemist. This would severely affect the income of the practice. This will mean we will not be able to maintain the same high quality and efficient service. This will mean fewer staff including doctors, nurses, and other staff to help run the practice. **If the legislation goes through, we will need to consider closing one of our two surgeries, as a result of the reduced income.**

Around the country, it is estimated that 1100 dispensers, 400 doctors and many other staff will lose their jobs if the proposals in the White Paper go through. Our dispensers will lose their jobs, and will not be reemployed by pharmacies – their qualifications are different to those employed in Chemists.

Having a chemist will not make getting your medicines any quicker. In fact, it will lengthen the time taken. This is because the chemist will have to receive prescriptions, before they dispense the medicines to you. We will still need the two days to prepare prescriptions, as we do now. (Many non-dispensing doctors require three days to do this.)

A local chemist is not likely to stay open the hours that we do. Sedlescombe and Westfield Surgeries stay open longer than any other local practice. Should we lose our right to dispense medication, you would have to travel to find a chemist that is open. This might be especially inconvenient outside normal office hours.