



Sir,

Your investigation, '*Hundreds of Villages Lose Local GP Surgery*,' is timely and most welcome as the 'party of rural England' is shortly to choose its next leader, and Prime Minister.

Many rural practices are permitted to dispense medicines to their patients, because a pharmacy is not economically viable. The income generated cross subsidises the provision of the GP service. Were it not for dispensing, your investigation would have shown that many more rural/coastal surgeries have closed.

The Telegraph should elicit specific pledges from the two leadership candidates that their administrations will explicitly support rural and dispensing general practices; Jeremy Hunt has several in his constituency. Current government policy for general practice is largely urban centric and NHS England's plans have nothing specific for rural communities. This must change and now is the best time to achieve that.

I hope that you, and my fellow readers, will join this call to arms to save rural and dispensing GP surgeries.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Richard West,
Chairman, Dispensing Doctors' Association
Woolpit Health Centre, Bury St Edmunds