

National Health Service. As a matter of law, "prescription-only" medicine must be supplied in accordance with the prescription of a doctor. A nurse may not, therefore, dispense such drugs on her own initiative even under the general supervision of a general medical practitioner. This legislation has been enacted by Parliament as a protection for the consumers of medicines and drugs.

Homeless Persons

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the number of unsettled homeless people who are not registered with general practitioners and the cities in which they are concentrated; what information he has of any difficulties they face in getting health treatment and the nature of these difficulties; and if he has any proposals, including greater use of nurse practitioners, to improve their access to National Health Service provision.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Information about the numbers of unsettled homeless people who are not registered with general practitioners is not available.

The Government sponsored report "Single and Homeless" (HMSO 1981) provides an indication of the nature of problems encountered by homeless people in gaining access to primary health care. I announced in June 1984 that the Government were allocating a further £2 million over the next two years to help primary health care in the inner cities, £1.2 million in 1984 and £0.9 million this year. This is part of the £9 million announced in 1983 following the publication of the Acheson report to improve inner cities health services.

As I explained in my other reply to the right hon. Member today, nurse practitioner is not recognised as a definition of a professional group in the National Health Service. The care of such patients is for general medical practitioners as part of their services to the wider public.

Drug Dependence

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to receive advice from the medical working group on drug dependence on the extension of licensing restrictions to all opioids.

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
<i>Disallowances</i>						
<i>Great Britain</i>	902,100	930,300	1,241,700	1,156,000	1,174,300	*1,180,300
Total	2,700	2,900	3,400	3,300	4,000	5,100
<i>Seasonal workers</i>						
<i>South East</i>	217,600	222,700	289,000	291,000	305,000	303,000
Total	200	300	400	300	400	500
<i>Seasonal workers</i>						
<i>East Anglia</i>	31,200	34,800	30,800	23,000	22,700	33,100
Total	300	300	300	300	300	400
<i>Seasonal workers</i>						
<i>South West</i>	64,700	68,900	103,100	89,300	91,900	89,000
Total	600	700	1,000	800	1,100	1,300
<i>Seasonal workers</i>						
<i>West Midlands</i>	84,800	90,200	142,300	145,600	125,500	108,400
Total	—	—	—	100	100	100
<i>Seasonal workers</i>						
<i>East Midlands</i>	66,400	67,900	108,900	102,000	94,100	87,600
Total	200	300	300	300	300	500
<i>Seasonal workers</i>						

Mr. John Patten: I understand that the Medical Working Group intends to submit its advice on licensing shortly.

AIDS

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what facilities exist in Coventry, the west midlands and nationally for the screening of acquired immune deficiency syndrome; and what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken to increase the availability of screening facilities.

Mr. Bendall asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will now make it compulsory for blood donors to be tested for acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Tests to detect the presence in blood of antibodies to the HTLV III virus have been developed both here and abroad. At present they are available only for research purposes. We hope that tests will be released for general use later this year. We shall thoroughly evaluate the tests on offer to see which is most suitable for use in the National Health Service. In anticipation of these developments we have advised regional health authorities to set aside funds in 1985-86 to enable blood transfusion centres to test all blood donations as soon as this is possible.

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the reply of 1 February, *Official Report*, column 387, concerning the number of seasonal workers disallowed unemployment benefit between 1978 and 1983, if he will now provide an analysis of (a) the total disallowances and (b) the seasonal workers disallowances broken down by standard regions.

Mr. Whitney: The information requested is given in the table. The regions are administrative regions of Department of Employment, who operate the unemployment benefit system as agents for this Department.