

NHS WHITE PAPER

‘Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS’

(This briefing document is meant as a guide to the White Paper and some of its key messages and not as a comprehensive summary.)

What’s this about?

The Government is proposing to completely restructure the NHS and has set out its plans in this White Paper. Every part of the NHS will be affected by these changes. The Coalition government has emphasised that this paper sets out its core vision for the NHS and it will not be producing another long term plan. However, this is being introduced as the NHS faces the biggest financial challenge in its history – including needing to find £20 billion in savings.

A consultation is now being held inviting comments on these proposals until **5th October 2010**. Some of the proposals will require a change in the law, while others will not - meaning that changes will happen in stages between April 2011 and 2013.

It includes proposals which intend to put patients at the centre of health care outcomes, empower healthcare professionals and reduce bureaucracy. If all the proposed changes are made this would transform how health care is commissioned, with around £80 billion being transferred from the NHS to new GP groups (referred to as ‘consortia’). It also includes steps to increase choice and competition.

Some of the Key Messages:

- To support the existing Government commitment to an NHS that is available to all, free at the point of use, based on need and not the ability to pay.
- To promote equality and implement a ban on age discrimination in NHS services and social care by 2012.
- An NHS that is centred on patients and carers, achieves quality and outcomes that are amongst the best in the world.
- Efficiency savings of £20 billion, with up to 45% reduction in NHS management costs.

- Extending patient choice over who provides your treatment.
- Shared decision making – “no decision about me without me”.
- Establishing an independent NHS Commissioning Board.
- Giving all health trusts greater freedoms (relates to hospitals).
- Focus on personalised care that reflects needs, and support for carers.
- Your right to choose to register with any GP practice with an open list.
- Patients to be given management of their own health record.
- Ending of Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities to reduce bureaucracy.
- Transferring the public health budget to local authorities.
- Local authorities will promote the joining up of local health and social care.
- Patient access to increased information about treatment choices, providers and quality scores to be made widely available.
- Consortia of GP practices (currently every practice must be in one) will decide and buy in the great majority of NHS services for their patients. To do this they will work with other health and care professionals, and in partnership with local communities and local authorities.

This does not include health services like dentistry, pharmacy and ophthalmic (eye) services. These will be the responsibility of the NHS Commissioning Board (above).

If you would like further information you can get a paper copy of the full document by writing to: White Paper Team, Room 601, Department of Health, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS.

Alternatively it can be downloaded for free from:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/LiberatingtheNHS/index.htm>