

Equity and excellence:

# *Liberating the NHS*

## Background

The Government's ambition is for health outcomes and quality health services that are as good as anywhere in the world.

It is committed to the NHS' core values of a comprehensive service, available to all, free at the point of use, based on need not ability to pay.

The White Paper 'Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS', published on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2010, sets out proposals for the NHS to become a truly world-class service that is: **easy to access**, treats people as **individuals** and offers care that is safe and of the **highest quality**

# Liberating the NHS

## The Vision

## The vision is for our NHS to:

- Put patients at the heart of everything that we do
- Achieve outcomes that are among the best in the world
- Empower our clinicians to deliver results based on the needs of patients

## “No decision about me, without me”

- Patients will be put at the heart of everything that we do: that means giving them real choice about where and, in some cases, how they are treated
- They will be able to access comprehensive information on many aspects of health allowing them to rate hospitals and clinicians according to the quality of care they provide
- They will be given a stronger voice through the introduction of a new consumer champion, HealthWatch
- They will benefit from better health outcomes through a relentless focus on continuously improving the clinical outcomes that really matter, not on inputs or processes

## Healthcare outcomes in England that are among the best in the world

- We will achieve this by maintaining a clear focus on continuously improving clinical outcomes, rather than monitoring inputs or processes.
- Targets without clinical justification will be removed - quality standards will become the foundation for commissioning care, payment systems, and inspection processes.
- Our clinicians and scientists are as good as anywhere in the world and will help us to meet this challenge

## Empowering clinicians to deliver results

- Decision making about healthcare services will be given back to clinicians, in partnership with patients, for example through groups of GPs commissioning services for their local communities
- Clinicians will be set free to make decisions about care based on patients' needs and to achieve the best outcomes
- A new independent NHS Commissioning Board will allocate and account for NHS resources, lead on quality improvement, and promote patient involvement and choice
- NHS Trusts will become Foundation Trusts and be given more freedom
- Monitor will be developed into an economic regulator and the Care Quality Commission will act as a quality inspectorate across health and social care

What this means for you

Working in the NHS

## What this means for you

- The White Paper shows that the Government recognises the essential contribution that we as NHS staff make towards caring for our patients.
- The proposals set out in the White Paper represent challenges to the NHS but the financial pressures we face mean that change is necessary to ensure the NHS becomes more resilient and transparent in the future
- As NHS staff, you have a unique understanding of your patients and their needs. You will have more freedom to innovate, to improve productivity and deliver better outcomes for patients and their families.

## How will the changes be managed?

- We all need to be realistic about the challenges that lie ahead: the White Paper proposes considerable change to the structures of the NHS, particularly in SHAs and PCTs
- We need to continue to focus on improving quality and outcomes as we also find significant efficiency savings
- It will be a challenging time for us all and we will need to be honest, treat each other with respect and maintain a degree of resilience
- The changes will be carefully managed, building on the existing systems, utilising the expertise that is already there

## What will happen next?

- Documents will shortly be published seeking views on:
  - Commissioning for patients
  - Local democratic legitimacy in health
  - An Arm's Length Body Review
  - Freeing providers and economic regulation
  - The NHS Outcomes Framework
- Later in the year views will be sought on:
  - The NHS information strategy
  - Choice
  - Education and training
- Talk to your colleagues and patients about this vision, seek their feedback, give your response to the consultation and encourage others to do the same
- You can find out more at [www.dh.gov.uk/liberatingthenhs](http://www.dh.gov.uk/liberatingthenhs)