

WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Government response to NHS Future Forum

Tuesday 14 June 2011

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr Andrew Lansley): As I informed the House on 7 June, the listening and engagement in relation to the Health and Social Care Bill and related issues has been very successful. The NHS Future Forum has now reported to the Government.

I am today publishing a list of the key changes the Government intends to make as a result of the NHS Future Forum's report. Some, but not all, of these changes require amendments to the Health and Social Care Bill.

These changes follow the Government's decision on 6 April to take advantage of a natural break in the legislative process to pause, listen and reflect on the National Health Service modernisation plans and to make any necessary improvements to the Health and Social Care Bill. The NHS Future Forum, a group of 45 senior professionals from across health and social care, was established to help drive an intensive eight-week period of engagement, beginning on 6 April and ending on 31 May.

Members of the NHS Future Forum attended around 250 events and heard opinions on the Government's plans for modernisation from over 8,000 people, including some 250 stakeholder organisations. Following a period of reflection, the Future Forum yesterday published their report; a copy of this has already been placed in the Library.

The Future Forum confirmed that the principles underpinning our plans for modernisation are the right ones, but also set out where we could make improvements, for patients and the NHS.

The Government has accepted the core recommendations of the report from the NHS Future Forum and will now make improvements to its modernisation plans. A document listing these improvements has been placed in the Library and we will provide more detail on exactly how we plan to implement these changes, including amendments to the Health and Social Care Bill, shortly.

The fundamental principles of our plans remain the same as those we set out in our white paper, *Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS*. The Government is committed to creating a modernised NHS that achieves amongst the best healthcare outcomes in the world. Our proposals are rooted in the principles of empowering, focusing on healthcare outcomes and quality, and giving front-line professionals more capacity to design and deliver services around the needs and expectations of patients.

The Government remains firmly committed to the ideals of the NHS - a comprehensive health service, funded from general taxation, based on need and not ability to pay.

I would like to give my thanks to all of the Future Forum's members and to its chair, Professor Steve Field, for their work, as well as those who contributed to the engagement exercise. I have asked the Future Forum to continue to advise on the way that our proposals are developed and put into practice.

In order to ensure that Parliament is given sufficient opportunity to scrutinise the Government's proposed changes, I can confirm that our intention is to recommit the relevant parts of the Health and Social Care Bill to a Public Bill Committee. Exact details will be announced in due course.