



The Heart Rhythm Charity

Arrhythmia Alliance
PO Box 3697
Stratford upon Avon
Warwickshire
CV37 8YL
+44 (0) 1789 450 787
info@heartrhythmcharity.org.uk
www.heartrhythmcharity.org.uk

A-A Policy Article

On 12th July 2010, the Department of Health published its anticipated White Paper, 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS', setting out a blueprint for some of the most radical reforms to the NHS since its creation.

The White Paper lays out the Coalition Government's plans to put patients first, through greater choice, involvement and control, and a more important role for clinicians in deciding health priorities. Central to the paper is the idea of placing a greater focus on improved health outcomes, and further away from process-led targets, which have dominated the health system over the past decade.

One of the most notable proposals set out by the Government, is the change to commissioning of NHS services. GP consortia, consisting of local GP practices grouping together, will commission health services on behalf of their patients. These services will include planned hospital care; rehabilitative care; urgent and emergency care; most community health services; and mental health and learning disability services. These GP consortia will manage their own budgets, decide on commissioning priorities and allocate resources based on the needs of their patients. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) will develop Quality Standards that will be reflected in commissioning contracts and financial incentives.

To ensure the delivery of effective services, these new GP consortia will be held to account by a new NHS Commissioning Board which will look at the extent to which they are improving the health of their patients and helping to achieve national outcomes, set out in a new NHS

Outcomes Framework, as well as looking at how effectively the GP consortia are managing their budgets and making the best of resources.

Under the new proposals, NHS services will be regulated through a dual-licensing system, under the direction of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Monitor, the economic regulator for providers of health and social care.

The White Paper also sets out plans for Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) to be replaced by a new local 'HealthWatch'. Local HealthWatch will act as patient champions, helping people to exercise choice, as well as providing health and social care services. These local HealthWatch will feed information into a national organisation, 'HealthWatch England', to identify poorly performing services.

The Government is currently seeking the views of organisations and the public on these radical new proposals through a set of consultations. We have produced a factsheet on the White Paper and will be making a submission to the consultations, copies of which will be posted on our website.