

PLEASE NOTE EMBARGO - Not for publication or broadcast before 1530 hours Monday 30 Jan 2006

Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt today announced a fundamental shift in focus that will provide integrated health and social care services in local communities and closer to people's homes.

The plans are outlined in *Our Health, our care, our say*: a new direction in community services - the Government's White Paper on improving community health and care services.

The White Paper aims to provide people more choice and say over the care they receive in the community, and much closer working and coordination between health and social care. This will include improved access to GPs by increasing the choice of practices for everyone and extending opening hours; more support for people with long term conditions; local partnerships between Local Authorities and PCTs to produce joint teams and common assessments; and a new generation of community hospitals and health centres that provide health and care services in the heart of the community.

Patricia Hewitt said:

"We have focused a huge amount of effort and resources into reforming the NHS and social care through extra capacity in hospitals, more facilities, and supporting more older people than ever before to live independently.

"Today's White Paper moves us on to the next stage of our improvements and signals a major change in how health and social care will work together in the future. Nearly 90% of patient contact occurs in the community and is trusted, but we still spend below the European average on primary care. Over the next ten years I want to see five per cent of resources shifted from secondary to primary care, which will help to make primary and community services more responsive to people's needs.

"Through the *Independence, Well-being and Choice* and the *Your Health, Your Care, Your Say* consultations, we heard the need for health and social care to work more closely together. We need to do this because people don't think about their health needs, their housing needs, their care needs and their transport needs separately. They are all inextricably linked.

"Closer working can have benefits for people and for health and social care. If adaptations are made to an older person's house that decrease their risk of falling, they are less likely to end up in hospital. If proper rehabilitation occurs after an operation, then an individual is less likely to be dependant on social care support. So we must ensure that health and care have a symbiotic relationship.

"This White Paper recognises that public services must work across organisational boundaries to meet people's needs. We are making this easier through changes to the way the NHS and Social Care will work, including how they commission services.

"During the *Your Health, Your Care, Your Say* consultation the public told us that they wanted three things from community services: to have more control of their own health and care; to enable and support people to maintain their health, independence and well-being; and rapid and convenient access to high quality, cost effective care.

"We have listened to the public and Our health, our care, our say will pave the way for many changes to the services people receive in the community. The plans will help people to access community services throughout all stages of their lives and in places and at times that suit them."

New measures outlined in Our health, our care, our say include:

- Shifting expenditure from spending on hospitals to spending on care closer to home and on preventative services
- New responsibilities placed on local councils and the NHS to work together to provide joined up care plans for those who need them.
- Bringing some specialties out of the hospital nearer to people including dermatology, ENT, orthopaedics and gynaecology
- Introducing a new generation of community hospitals that will provide diagnostics, minor surgery, outpatient facilities and access to social services in one location.
- Pilot a new NHS "Life Check" to assess people's lifestyle risks, the right steps to take and provide referrals to specialists if needed.
- Give patients a guarantee of registration onto a GP practice list in their locality and simplifying the system for doing this
- Introducing incentives to GP practices to offer opening times that respond to the needs of patients in their area
- Increasing the quantity and quality of primary care in under served, deprived areas through nationally supported procurement of new capacity with contracts awarded by PCTs
- Supporting people to self care by trebling the investment in the Expert Patient Programme
- Developing an "information prescription" for people with long term health and social care needs and for their carers, investing in professional education and skills development
- Providing a Personal Health and Social Care Plan as part of an integrated health and social care record
- More support for carers including improved emergency respite arrangements and the establishment of a national helpline for carers.
- Extension of direct payments and piloting of Individual Budgets for social care

Notes to Editors:

1. The Our Health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services White Paper can be found on the Dept of Health website:

www.dh.gov.uk/ourhealthourcareoursay

2. The results of the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say consultation

are published today on the Dept of Health website:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/WhitePaperHealthCareCommunity/fs/en>

3. For more details of the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say

consultation please go to:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/NewsHome/YourHealthYourCareYourSay/fs/en>

4. For more details of the Independence, Wellbeing and Choice consultation please go to:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/Consultations/ResponsesToConsultations/fs/en>

5. For media enquiries only please call Lisa Ward in the Dept of Health media centre Tel: 020 7210 4939.

6. For all other enquiries please call: 020 7210 4850.