

The Health White Paper

This week the government published “Working together to improve health and social care”, a White Paper sketching proposals for reorganisation of the NHS and the wider care sector.

It set out three aims.

- 1, Better health and wellbeing for all
2. Better quality health service for all individuals
3. A sustainable use of NHS resources.

I have no problems with these very general aims. 2 and 3 should be the main drivers of NHS care, whilst 1 of course will entail individuals and the private sector to continue to apply our energies to the task which is so wide ranging.

The main reorganisation entails creating two new bodies in each local government area. The first will be an Integrated Care System (ICS) NHS body to control, procure and direct local NHS services and to supervise capital budgets of the local NHS Trusts. The second will be an Integrated Care System Partnership to work with local government and presumably with private sector care providers to ensure good services and relevant procurement.

The White Paper envisages removing some of the competition provisions in current health regulations, to take away powers to control trust mergers, and to limit competitive tendering. They wish to go over to a more collaborative model. NHS England will be merged with Monitor and the NHS Trust Development Authority. The Clinical Commissioning groups are absorbed by the new ICS bodies.

I need to know more about how joint working will take place between Councils and the NHS under these arrangements. I also want more detail over what additional powers the NHS will have over private sector care providers, and how if at all the relationship between care homes and the NHS will alter.

As I consider my response more fully I would be interested in any comments.