

STATEMENT – Tuesday 1st July 2008

The Academy's response Lord Darzi's Next Steps Review

There is much to welcome in this long-awaited and thorough review into the way our healthcare is delivered and improved. We applaud Lord Darzi's proposed new direction for the NHS so that it truly focuses on patients' needs and recognises the essential role of the clinical professions in reshaping and delivering services to meet those needs.

The review makes a compelling case for enabling the NHS to deliver high quality care to everyone in every way. As the Clinical Leads remark, frontline staff have been at the core of an NHS Review for the very first time. Health and social care professionals have taken this opportunity to weigh priorities with patients and public and to develop a shared vision for their NHS.

And that brings challenges to all. The report is visionary, but it is not utopian; it is rooted in values that permeate our society and reflects the professional values of clinicians and the new roles required of them.

By offering what appears to be a new deal for clinicians - putting them at the heart of the decision making process, it shows an evident desire to draw a line under many of the difficulties that have emerged between government and the medical profession in recent few years. However, inevitably in a document so wide-ranging, there are aspects which, if not properly thought through, could stand in the way of the achievement of excellence.

The Academy believes that although the Review is big on ideas it is short on the detail of exactly how many of those ideas will be implemented. There is clearly more work to be done and we will work hard to influence that process to ensure patients, public and the professions enjoy the maximum benefit from the opportunities the Review presents.

While it must be for individual colleges and faculties to comment on specialty specific issues wherever they arise in relation to the quality of patient care, the Academy applauds the renewed emphasis on quality and safety, and standards that assure them.

We are glad that the Review takes up the chief recommendations contained in the report of Sir John Tooke's recent Inquiry. We recognise too that many of the proposals Darzi sets out bring challenges to the medical profession besides presenting a new opportunity to deliver world-class care for the next 60 years.

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