

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting:	ADULT SERVICES AND HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL
2. Date:	2 October 2008
3. Title:	Consultation on NHS Consultation
4. Programme Area:	Chief Executive's

5. Summary

This report explains the background to the current consultation on the new NHS Constitution.

6. Recommendations

That the Panel's comments be submitted to the Department of Health by the consultation deadline of 17 October 2008.

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Coinciding with Lord Darzi's review of the NHS and the 60th anniversary of the setting up of the NHS, the Department of Health has published a draft NHS Constitution. It outlines the NHS's core principles and values for the next generation, whilst setting a clear direction for the future. It reaffirms rights to NHS services, free of charge and with equal access for all, and it enshrines patient rights to choice and to NICE-approved drugs recommended by clinicians.

7.2 The draft Constitution has been developed from the bottom up, with the active engagement of staff, patients and the public. The next step in the process is a public consultation on the draft Constitution's contents and how to put it into practice. It runs until 17 October 2008.

7.3 The Constitution itself is a concise document which aims to provide clear statements of how the NHS works and what patients and staff can expect from it for the next 10 years. In addition there is a draft Handbook that describes what underpins each of these statements. In the case of rights, this will usually be a legal basis; in the case of pledges, this is in the form of a set of actions or commitments which the NHS will strive to achieve. It is suggested that the handbook be revised every three years.

A summary document is attached as an appendix to this report, together with a leaflet that gives the main points.

7.4 Although consultees can comment on any aspect of the proposals, responses are specifically invited on the following questions:

7.4.1 *Should all NHS bodies and NHS-funded organisations be obliged by law to take account of the NHS Constitution?*

7.4.2 *Do you think that the Government should have to renew the Constitution every 10 years?*

7.4.3 *Are there any important principles missing?*

7.4.4 *Should values be included in the Constitution?*

7.4.5 *Is it useful to bring together all the key patient rights and pledges?*

7.4.6 *Are responsibilities and expectations of patients and the public appropriate?*

7.4.7 *Is the list of staff pledges right?*

7.4.8 *Is the description of staff responsibilities right?*

7.4.9 *How should all this be communicated to patients, the public and staff once it becomes law?*

7.4.10 *How can we all make sure it leads to better NHS services?*

8. Finance

None.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

None.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Healthcare provided by the NHS falls within the Alive Community Strategy priority area.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- A consultation on the NHS Constitution, Department of Health, 30 June 2008

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