

11 September 2009

The policy background to information prescriptions

Here is a list of the various policy documents and strategies developed by the DH that have been published in recent years. They all highlight how important it is for professionals to be able to offer high quality comprehensive sources of information and support to their patients and carers as part of their care.

We have listed these in date order:

The consultation paper [Building on the best: choice, responsiveness and equity](#) – December 2003 - generated 110,000 individual responses. 90% of those responding wanted to be provided with better health information.

[Care Quality Commission](#) (previously the Healthcare Commission) Obtaining feedback from patients and taking account of their views and priorities is vital for bringing about improvements in the quality of care, and keeping the patient at the centre of health services. Patients and carers responding to these surveys want to be provided with more comprehensive and reliable information about their healthcare.

[DH Better Information, Better Choices, Better Health](#) –published December 2004. This guidance puts information at the centre of health and sets out a single national approach to information. The guidance states that all NHS organisations have a duty to provide a range of quality information to their patients and allows them to plan and commission information with confidence and without costly duplication.

There are a number of national work-streams that provide the framework for underpinning this policy guidance and these have the potential for providing local organisations with much of the infrastructure they need to help them introduce patient information prescriptions locally.

[Department of Health – Creating a Patient-led NHS – Delivering the NHS Improvement Plan – March 2005](#) - This document explains how the NHS Improvement Plan will be delivered. It describes the major changes underway and how some of the biggest changes will be carried forward for a patient-led health service. Chapter 1 includes sections on:

- A patient-led NHS
- What it means to be really patient-led
- Choice and information
- The NHS commitment to patients
- Listening, understanding and responding
- Patient preferences and experiences
- Patient and public involvement

[Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services](#) – published by the Department of Health in January 2006, explains in detail the improvements the Government is going to make to health and social care services, why it feels these changes are necessary and the steps it's taking to make sure they happen. This White Paper made a commitment to improving access to appropriate information for people with health or social care needs. More people will be better signposted to [NHS Choices](#) and [NHS Direct](#) as the gateways to health information.

From 2008, information prescriptions will be offered to everyone with a long-term condition or social care need, in consultation with a health or social care professional. Information prescriptions will guide people to relevant and reliable sources of information to allow them to feel more in control and better able to manage their condition and maintain their independence. Information prescriptions will be nationally recognised as a source of key information on services and care that is seamlessly and formally integrated into the care process.

[High Quality Care for All – NHS Next Stage Review](#) (July 2008) - Lord Darzi was asked by the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Health to lead the NHS Next Stage Review in July 2007. The aim was to create a fairer, more personalised, effective and safe NHS, acknowledging progress made so far and the vision for the future. The Review has been led locally by clinicians in each NHS region looking at the clinical evidence and engaging with their local communities. They have developed improved models of care for their regions to ensure that the NHS is up to date with the latest clinical developments and is able to meet changing needs and expectations.

[Leading Local Change](#) - published in May 2008 - sets the context for these local visions and the principles which will guide their implementation. SHAs are now developing their local plans for improved clinical pathways that provide patients and carers with better choice and more personalised care that is tailored to their needs. Providing better patient information and offering information prescriptions will be key in delivering these objectives.

[The NHS Constitution](#) (January 2009) is about safeguarding the core principles and values of the NHS for the next generation, whilst setting a clear direction for the future. It brings together the rights, pledges and responsibilities for staff and patients, including the right to make choices about NHS care and to receive information to support these choices. Information Prescriptions support choice, involvement and empowerment, helping to deliver the vision of the NHS Constitution.

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