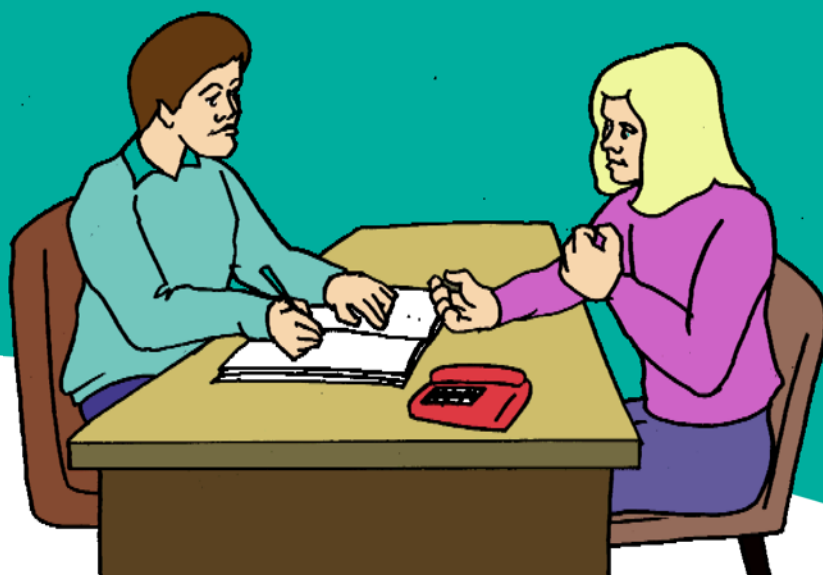
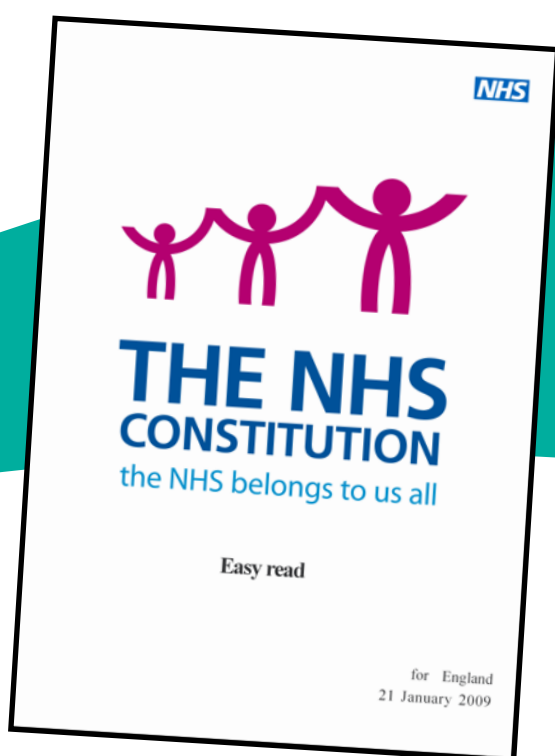


# The NHS and possible new rights for you

What do you think?



Easy Read version of  
**The NHS Constitution:**  
A consultation on new patient rights



# The NHS and your new rights



## What do you think?

This booklet has been written by the Department of Health. We are a government department in charge of the National Health Service (NHS) for England.

January 2009

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2		
5	6	7	8	9		
12	13	14	15	16		
19	20	21	22	23		
26	27	28	29	30		



Last January we wrote a paper that told you about your rights under the NHS and the things you could expect from your healthcare. This is called the **NHS Constitution**.



In this paper we are asking you what you think about some changes we want to make to the Constitution.

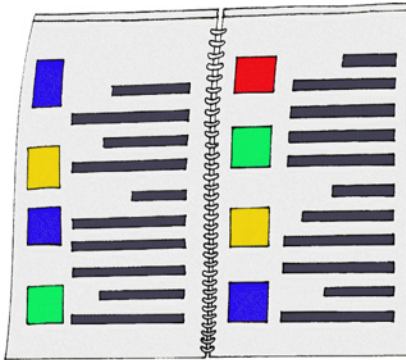


We have some questions we would like you to answer about the changes. These are in a separate answers booklet that you can fill in and send back to us.

You need to tell us what you think by **Friday 5th February 2010.**

February 2010						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

We then read what everyone thinks and put it together in a new government paper that you will be able to see on our web site.



This is an EasyRead version.



For more details see the full version on our web site:

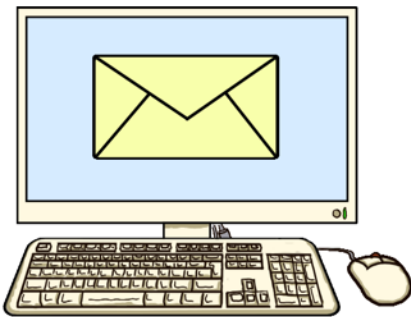
**[www.tinyurl.com/NHSconsult](http://www.tinyurl.com/NHSconsult)**

## Comments on this booklet



You can tell us what you think about this booklet or how we have helped you to have your say.

You can contact us by



Email:

**[consultations.coordinator@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultations.coordinator@dh.gsi.gov.uk)**

Post:



**Consultations Co-ordinator  
Department of Health  
3E58 Quarry House  
Leeds  
LS2 7UE**

# The NHS and your new rights

## What do you think?

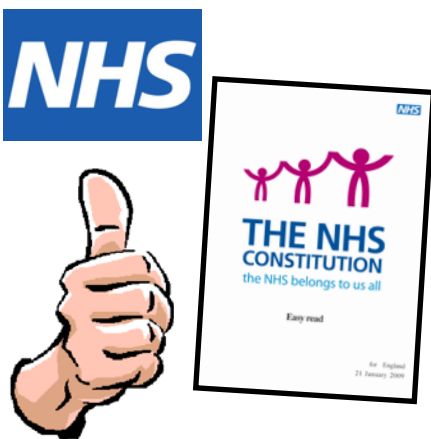


The NHS belongs to everyone so we want to know what everyone thinks about any changes. This is a chance for you to tell us how you think the NHS should be in the future.

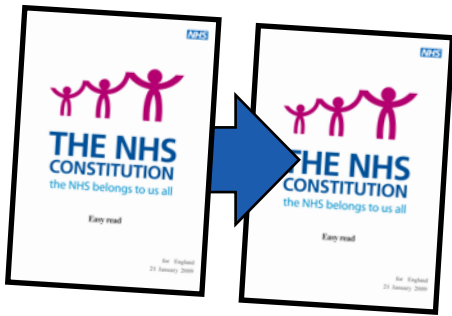


Early in 2009 we wrote a new Constitution for the NHS. The Constitution is a paper that tells everyone what the values of the NHS are and what they can expect from the NHS.

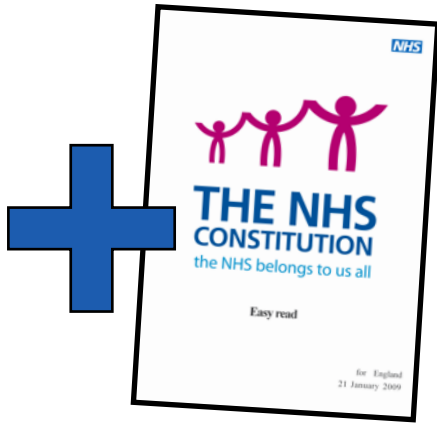
The Constitution brings all this information together for the first time.



We want the Constitution to help the NHS stay up to date and continue in the future.



We can do this by making changes to the Constitution when we need to but only when we know what everyone thinks about those changes.



This is one of those times. We want to add some new things to the Constitution.



This booklet tells you about our ideas for changes and asks you what you think.



First this booklet tells you more about the Constitution.



Then it tells you about our plans for changes.



Then it asks what you think about our plans for changes.

# About the NHS Constitution



The NHS belongs to us all. It is paid for by taxes and treats everyone equally and fairly.



We think the Constitution will help to give patients and the public more power. It will help everyone to make choices about their NHS.



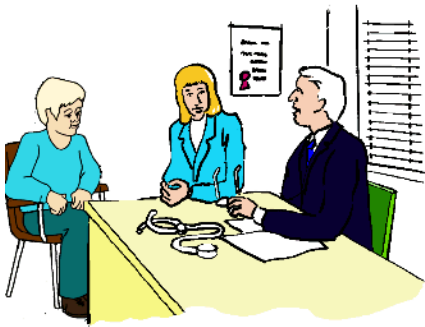
The Constitution is an agreement between patients, public, NHS staff and the NHS.

# What you can expect from the NHS

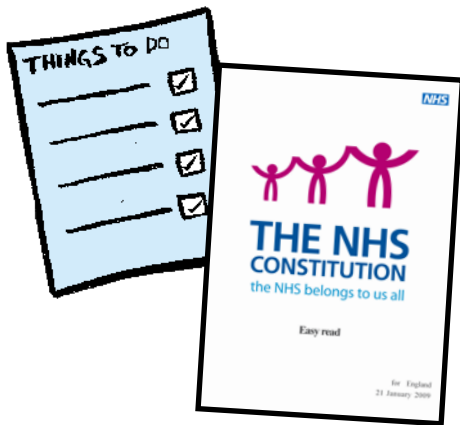
## Your rights



Your **rights** are the things you can expect. Your rights are protected by law.



You have a right to expect some services from the NHS. For example the Constitution says that everyone has the right to free, high quality healthcare.



## Pledges

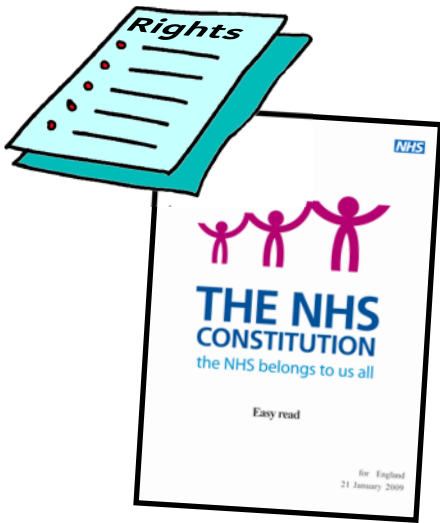
The Constitution includes things that it wants the NHS to do to make things better. These are called pledges.



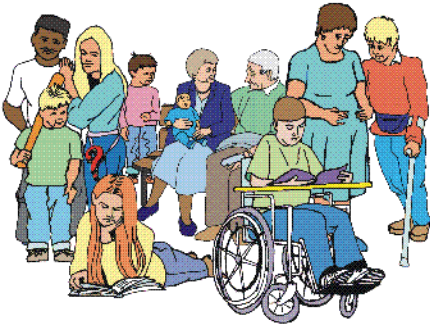
The NHS has got much better at doing some of these things.

Some of these pledges can now become rights.

# Adding new rights to the Constitution



The Constitution needs to stay up to date so it works for everyone. We want to create some new rights which will be added to the Constitution.



New rights will help patients because they mean everyone can have the same level of care. Rights would help to give power to patients.



We think if patients have more power they can help make the NHS better for everyone.

# The new rights

## Section 1: Shorter waiting times



### Shorter waiting times

When you are told you may need treatment, you may have to wait for an appointment to see a doctor or for an operation. This is your 'waiting time'.

<b>18 Weeks</b>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	
29	30	31				

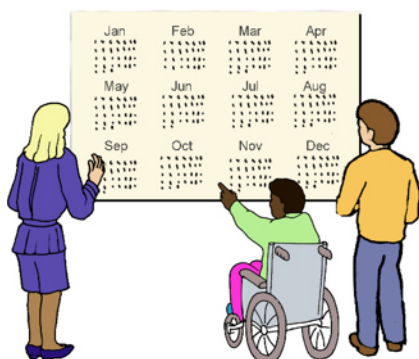


### 18 weeks

At the moment, in the Constitution the NHS makes a promise about how long you have to wait to start your treatment.



It says that if you are sent to see a specialist doctor you should have to wait no more than 18 weeks to start treatment.



This promise does not apply if you choose to wait more than 18 weeks, or if the doctor says it is better for your health to wait longer than 18 weeks.

8 Weeks						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



The NHS has been working to meet this promise. In most places you have to wait less than 18 weeks. Often patients only have to wait 8 weeks.

## 2 weeks

**Cancer** is a serious illness that can happen in different parts of your body.

2 Weeks						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



If you see your GP and they think you may have cancer, they will send you to see a cancer doctor or a member of a cancer specialist team.



In the Constitution the NHS makes a promise about how long you should wait to see a specialist cancer doctor or a member of a cancer specialist team.



Once your GP has asked a NHS cancer service to see you, you should not have to wait longer than 2 weeks.

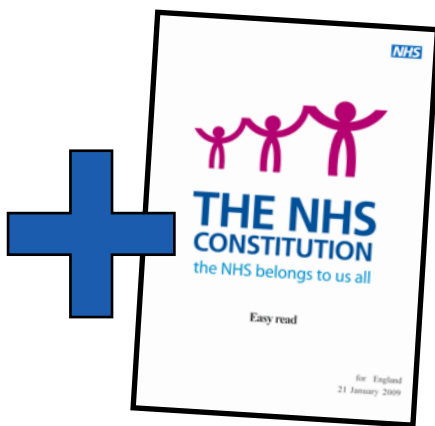


Nearly everywhere patients now wait less than 2 weeks.

### The new right



Now that the NHS is meeting its promises on waiting times, we could make them into a legal right for patients.



We would then add this right into the NHS Constitution.

### The right would say:



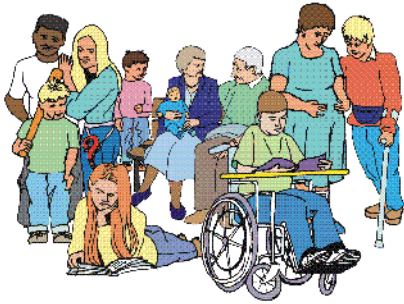
- you have a right to start treatment in 18 weeks



- you have a right for your GP to send you to see a cancer specialist in 2 weeks

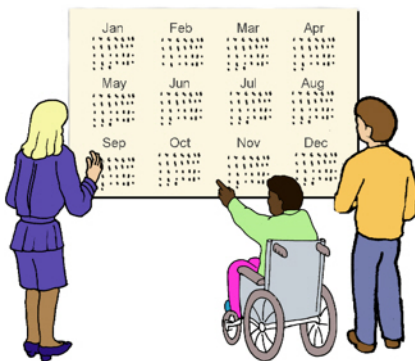


- if the NHS cannot give you your treatment in time, you can ask them to find you treatment somewhere else. This might be a different hospital or clinic.



This would mean everyone could expect these waiting times to be met.

### The right would not apply:



- if you choose to wait longer



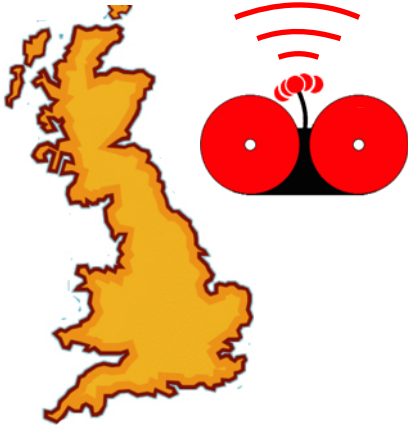
- if the doctor says it is better for your health to wait longer



- if you miss your appointments.



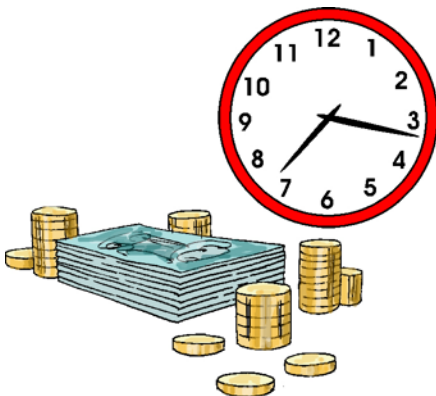
The right will not apply to you for that treatment.



If there was a big health emergency in the country the right could be stopped for everyone.



For example if lots and lots of people get flu at the same time, the NHS would have to look after those people first to control the problem.



The NHS would have to give more time and money to that problem.

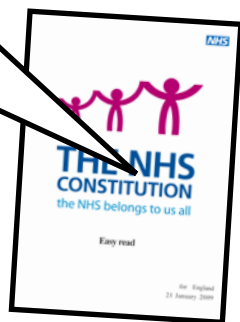


That means that the right to short waiting times could stop until the emergency has finished. Then the right would start again.



## Some things you should do as a patient

The NHS has to respect your rights. But you should also do some things to help the NHS.



The Constitution says you should go to your appointments, or tell the NHS if you cannot go. If you miss appointments you might not be able to get treatment quickly.

## When would the new right start?

April 2010						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

If we put this new right into the Constitution, it would start in April 2010.

## What happens if you have to wait longer?



Your PCT is in charge of healthcare in your local area. Your PCT has to make sure that they are able to give you your right.



If you have to wait longer, you can ask your PCT to find you quicker treatment somewhere else.



They should try to get you treatment at the same place you were waiting at.



If they cannot give you treatment quickly, they need to look for somewhere else that can.



If you get treatment somewhere else, it must be the same standard as the treatment that the first place would have given you.



They must try hard to find somewhere else to give you treatment. But it might not always be possible.



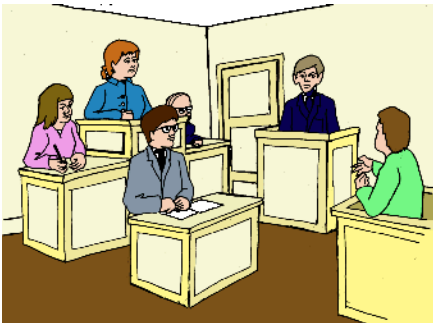
## Fixing problems

If there is a problem, we want to fix it so that patients can get the treatment they need.



If you are not happy about anything the NHS does there will be local support services to help you. You can also make a complaint.

You can use the NHS complaints system.



If you still feel that your PCT is not following the law you can go to court.



## How would we make it work?

We are planning to make a law to create the new right. We will then add the waiting times right to the Constitution.



We need to make sure the NHS can give everyone this right.



## Better communication with patients

The NHS needs to make sure that patients know about their rights.



You need to know when your waiting time starts and stops. The NHS can give you information to make this clearer for you.



Staff also need to be able to explain the waiting times to you. We need to make sure the information is accessible to everyone.



You need to know what to do if you have to wait too long. This will help to give patients power and make the NHS better.

PCTs would need to tell you who to contact if you are waiting too long.

## Two week urgent cancer referrals



If you see your GP and they think you might have cancer, they will send you to see a cancer doctor or a member of a cancer specialist team.

You should see the specialist in less than 2 weeks.



Not all patients who are seen by a cancer specialist will be found to have cancer and sometimes GPs do not tell patients they think they may have cancer.

This is because they do not want the patient to be worried.



We think it would help patients if they knew that they should attend a cancer service urgently.

Here are the questions, please write your answers in the answers booklet.



### Question 1

Do you think patients should have a right to short waiting times?

18 Weeks						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



### Question 2

Do you think it should include the right to start treatment in 18 weeks?



### Question 3

Do you think it should include the right to be seen by a cancer specialist in 2 weeks?

2 Weeks						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



### Question 4

Do you think GPs should provide special information to patients about what it means to be seen by a cancer specialist in 2 weeks?

## Section 2: The right to NHS Health Checks

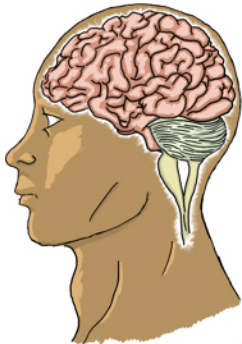


NHS Health Checks started in April 2009. A Health Check is for older people aged 40-74 who are not ill.

It looks at these problems:



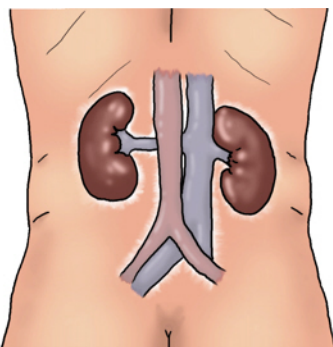
- **heart disease:** if your heart has problems that stops it working properly



- **stroke:** this is when blood suddenly stops going to part of your brain which can stop your brain working properly



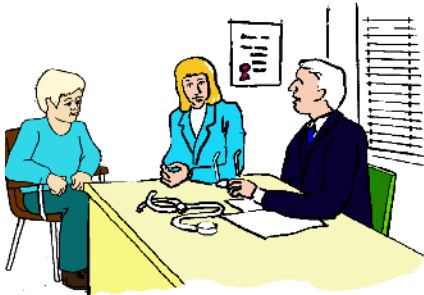
- **diabetes:** an illness where your body cannot deal with sugar that you eat



- **kidney disease:** if your kidneys have problems that stop them from working properly



Health Checks are not to find out if you have these illnesses now. They are checking to see if you are likely to get these illnesses in the future.

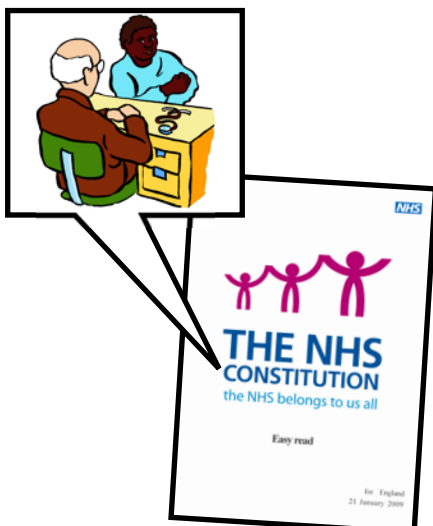


If you are likely to get these illnesses, the NHS can help you to stay well. They can give you advice on keeping healthy or taking some medicines.

## The right



We think that Health Checks are important to help keep older people healthier. We want to make it a legal right for you to have a Health Check.



We would then add this right to the NHS Constitution.



The right would say you could get a check:

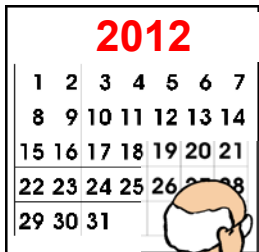
- if you are aged 40-74



- if you don't have any of these illnesses already

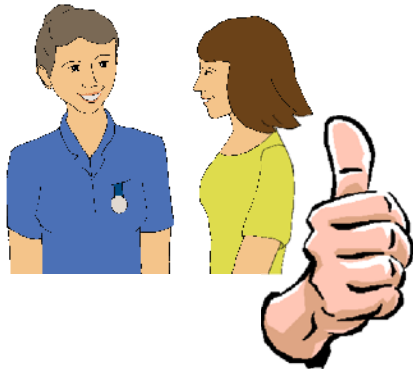


- if it has been 5 years since your last Health Check.



## How could we make it work?

Health Checks have just started. By 2012 the NHS should be offering everyone aged 40-74 Health Checks. A new right to a Health Check could start in 2012.



By 2012 the NHS should have the right services to help everyone who had the Health Checks.



Your PCT would make sure there are people who can do the checks.

If the first person you ask for a Health Check cannot give you a check your PCT would need to find someone else who can.



The right would say that everyone who meets the rules could have a check by 2017 and another check every 5 years after that.

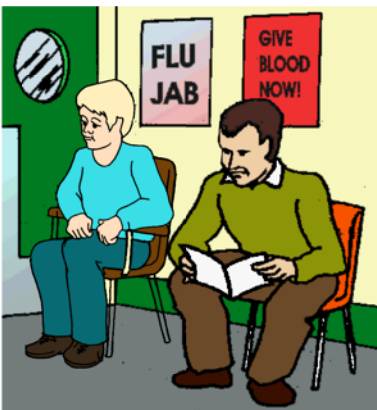


## Would I have to have a Health Check?

The right would say that you can ask for a Health Check. Or your doctor can ask you if you want a Health Check.



You do not have to have a Health Check.



If you do not have a Health Check and you get ill later, you can still get treatment for your illness.



### Question 5

An NHS Health Check is to find out if you might have illnesses in the future. It is for everyone aged 40-74. It would happen every 5 years.

Do you think there should be a right to an NHS Health Check?

## Section 3: More new rights in the future



We think other NHS services will get better in the future.



We can then give you the right to these services as well:

- seeing GPs in the evenings and weekends



- treatment by NHS dentists



- getting a personal health budget



- choosing to die at home



- having some tests within 1 week of seeing a GP.



These services are not ready to be rights in the Constitution yet but we would like to know what you think now. This will help us plan these services in the future.

### **Seeing GPs in the evenings and weekends**



Patients and the public would like to see their GP in the evenings and weekends. It would make their lives easier.



Thanks to the hard work of GPs and staff, nearly all surgeries try to open some evenings or weekends.

We are also opening more health centres with longer opening hours.



We need to keep talking with GPs and staff to work out the best way to make things even better.



### Question 6

Do you think we should start to look at having the right to see GPs in the evenings and weekends?

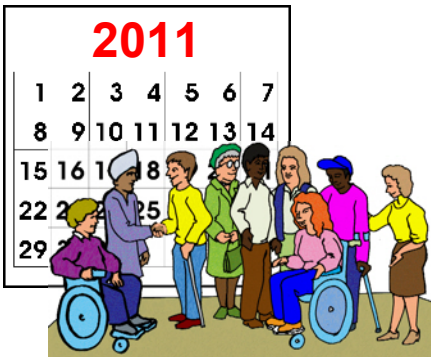


## NHS dentistry

There are now more NHS dentists giving more treatment.



We want to make sure that everyone who needs to can get treatment by an NHS dentist.



The Constitution has a promise about NHS dentists. PCTs will try to make sure that everyone who wants to can have NHS dentistry by 2011.



## Question 7

Do you think we should look at giving people a right to see an NHS dentist?

## Personal health budgets

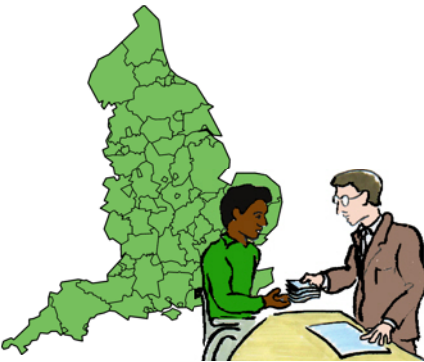
Personal health budgets give you control over the money that is spent on your healthcare.



You can choose how the money is spent and what healthcare services it is spent on.

## How would it work?

This is a new idea. We are trying this out in a few areas to see how it works. Then we can make changes before it happens all over the country.



In the future we want personal healthcare budgets to be a right. Everyone who could get a better life and care from a personal health budget could have one.



## Question 8

Do you think we should start to look at having the right to personal healthcare budgets?





## Choosing to die at home

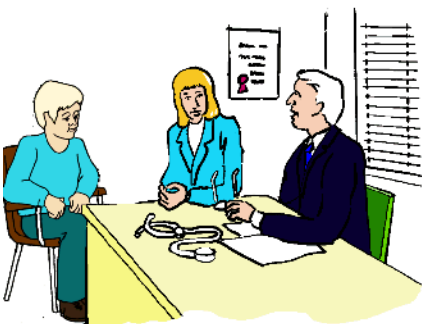
When people are very ill and they are going to die, they may wish to die at home or in their care home, not in a hospital. We want more people to have the choice to die at home.



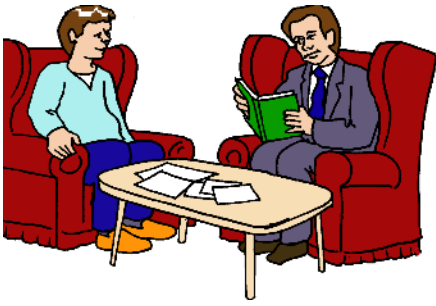
We need more services to help people if they want to die at home or in their care home.



When people are very ill and they are going to die, we need to help them make plans.



We need to help patients and their families, professionals and carers.



## How would it work?

We are helping people to find out about the issues around death and dying, and to talk about them and make plans.



We have written down what good care looks like, wherever it is given. That could be at home, in hospital, or in other places like care homes.



We have given some help to professionals and the public about how to make plans.



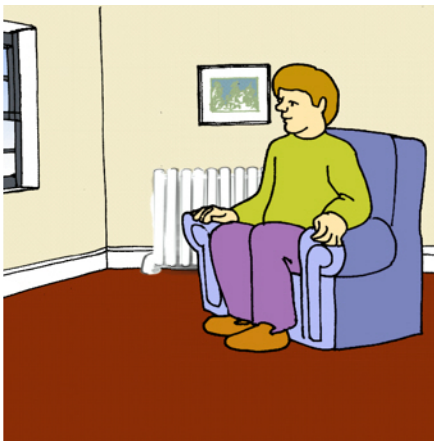
Before we make any more big changes we want to allow some time for things to get better, so that they are closer to what we think good care looks like.



In 2013 we will check how things have changed.



If the services have got much better we can think about having a right to choose to die at home and a right to have the medical care you need to die at home.



### Question 9

Do you think we should start to look at having the right to die at home?

### Waiting times for cancer tests



Right now GPs should send patients to see a specialist cancer doctor or a member of a cancer specialist team in less than 2 weeks. In this paper we have said we want that to become a right.



In the future we want patients to have the right to be sent to have important cancer tests carried out in 1 week.



Getting tested and treated quickly means you are more likely to get well.



We want this to get better in the next year or two. More people should be sent to have tests in 1 week.

Then we will ask everyone about making this a new right in the Constitution.



### Question 10

Do you think we should start to look at having cancer tests in 1 week?

## Section 4: Constitution champions



We want someone in each area who makes sure the constitution is working. We call that person a **constitution champion**.



Their job would be to help NHS staff and patients:

- understand their rights



- know how they can ask for their rights to be met



- know what to do if their rights are not met.





The champion would work with services that are already there to help patients.

The champion's job will be different in each area. They will need to meet the needs of each different local area.



The champion could look at some of these things:

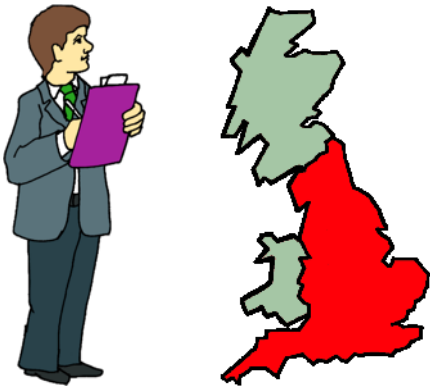
- making sure the PCT has plans for how to meet the rights and promises in the NHS Constitution



- working with staff groups to make sure they are thinking about how to use the Constitution



- making sure patients, their carers and the public know about their rights in the Constitution



- finding out how the Constitution is working in the local area



- helping the PCT work out how to spend their money to meet the promises in the NHS Constitution.

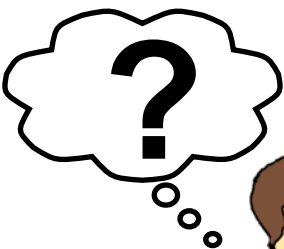


A champion's job is to make sure the Constitution works in their area.



### Question 11

Do you think each area PCT should decide what the champion should be doing?



### Question 12

What do you think are the most important things the champions should be doing?

## Credits



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