

THE NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

THE NHS CONSTITUTION - CONSULTATION

Report Purpose:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision / Approval	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Brief description of the item and any significant issues:

This paper describes the principles and values underlying the proposed NHS Constitution, along with the timetable for responses to the current consultation.

The Trust has sought to engage with its Membership in a cost-effective manner through the use of an “e-broadcast” (mass emailing), seeking views on the Constitution and which will help to shape the formal response by the Trust.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Health launched consultation on the proposed NHS Constitution in June 2008. Governors received a copy of the document at the 17th July meeting.

The Constitution brings together for the first time the rights and expectations of patients and NHS staff in one document. The consultation closes on 17th October 2008 and focuses on what should be included in the document and how to put the Constitution into practice.

2. PRINCIPLES, VALUES AND RIGHTS

The proposed NHS Constitution seeks to:

- Safeguard the future of the NHS and restate the commitment to provide a health service to everyone, without discrimination, free at the point of need
- Bring together in one place, for the first time, the rights of patients, so that everyone knows what they are entitled to and what to do if they do not get what they should
- Explain the responsibilities of the public, patients and staff, and how they link to the values of the NHS
- Recognise that staff are the key to quality services.

Key rights proposed for patients include:

- A right to NHS approved drugs, if recommended by a doctor
- A clear and rational explanation about all decisions around funding of treatment
- A right to make choices – based on good information and involvement – about NHS care
- A right to have a say in the planning and development of local services.

3. CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Department of Health encourages responses to the consultation by individuals as well as NHS bodies. Further information is available from the Department of Health website. Individuals or groups may also provide feedback via the NHS "North of Tyne" body and, of course, the Trust welcomes views which can help to shape the formal response of the Trust.

To this end, in week commencing 8th September an "e-broadcast" (mass emailing) was commenced by Computershare on behalf of the Trust, addressed to all Members who had a registered email address, either at home or at work. Some 3,693 such email addresses have been contacted in this manner. Responses can be made either to the Trust Secretary, or directly to the Department of Health.

The Board of Directors will be considering the draft NHS Constitution on 24th September.

4. RECOMMENDATION

To i) note progress to date ii) comment as appropriate and iii) receive a briefing on outcomes at the next meeting.

Steven Reed
Trust Secretary
15th September 2008