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'THE NHS: A SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT'

Tory MPs urge reform of NHS

A publication on the reform of the National Health Service by the 'No Turning Back' group of Conservative MPs is published today by the CPC.

The group came to prominence in 1985 through its original publication 'No Turning Back', followed the next year by 'Save our Schools', which many regard as the precursor of the Education Reform Bill'.

The Group endorses the principle that, for the foreseeable future, the significant proportion of health care will be provided by a tax-funded public service free to patients at the point of treatment. The group, which submitted its findings to the Prime Minister and to the Health Secretary as part of the NHS Review, argues for greater information for patients and GPs to permit more choice of treatment.

District health authorities would compete for patients and be credited with the cost of treating those they attracted. This approach, known as the internal market, with money following the patient, would provide the benefits of choice, flexibility and competition within the reformed NHS.

Health authorities would also have to be both performance and cost-conscious, as well as accountable and free to shop for treatment for wherever it is effective and economical to do so.

The group advocates limited tax relief on private health assurance for those of retirement age only, arguing that this targeting approach would limit cost and maximise effectiveness.

A 'Patients' Charter' would lay down maximum periods of waiting time for treatments, with patients entitled to go to different districts, or the private sector, if their local health authority cannot provide the treatment within the specified time.

The Group stresses that its proposals involve improving the effectiveness, performance and responsiveness of the NHS and believes that its analysis and conclusions are likely to be reflected in the outcome of the Government's NHS review.

'THE NHS : A suitable case for treatment' is published by
The Conservative Political Centre, 32 Smith Square, London SW1
price £2.95 + 25p. postage.

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