

PA - NHS

Prime Minister
of background interest for tomorrow's
NHS Review meeting.

PRIME MINISTER

4 January 1989

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GALLUP POLL ON THE NHS

Gallup have just completed a poll for Central Office of the views of consultants, GPs and general managers on the funding of the NHS.

Its major conclusions are interesting: the perception of lack of funding is disappointing but on structural change there is a good deal of support for the direction in which the Review is moving.

Key conclusions

Four out of five general managers believe that the quality of care in the NHS has improved in the last ten years, but only one in three consultants and GPs hold this view.

All three groups agree that in real terms the level of funding of the NHS has declined over the last decade.

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Apart from insufficient government funding all three groups recognised that increased demand for health services, developments in the medical field, the ageing population, and higher public expectations were factors influencing the shortage of financial resources in the NHS.

For all three groups, only one in three believe that more money is the solution to the problems of the NHS. A majority recognise that reorganisation and more efficient resources is needed, as well as an increase in funding.



Apart from increased taxation as a method of increasing funding, there was substantial support for a national lottery and patients paying for "extras" such as a better room and a choice of food. There was some support for tax relief for private health schemes, but there was strong opposition to health voucher schemes, charging for out patient attendance and routine treatments.

Two out of three general managers believe the Health Service to be efficient. Consultants and GPs are fairly evenly divided on their views and are concerned about waste and administration costs.

Whereas more than two out of three general managers believe that the NHS is as efficient as the private sector, only a minority of consultants and GPs believe this.

There was considerable support for generating more funds for the NHS through increased co-operation between the public and private sectors.

The selling of laundry, pharmacy and pathological services, as well as providing screening and x ray facilities to the private sector, were strongly supported as methods of increasing resources for the NHS.

There was also considerable support for leasing spaces in hospital shopping mall, offering franchises, and selling catering and laundry services. A majority of general managers and consultants approved of private beds and amenity beds.

A majority of all three groups thought the NHS should be administered at the district level, but one in four consultants favoured regional administration and one in five consultants and GPs favoured hospital level administration.

More than two out of three of all those surveyed supported the notion of a much greater degree of self government to be given to individual hospitals, and two out of three consultants favoured taking responsibility for their own budgets.

B.G.

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