

PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister
Relevant to your
discussion with
11 April 1990
Mr Clarke
next week.

BHP
12/4

PRESENTATION OF THE NHS REFORMS

In January, the Northern Regional Health Authority commissioned a public opinion poll on the impact of the NHS reforms. The results of this confidential survey, based on a sample size of over a 1,000 people, is worth a read (Appendix).

Highlights in the report

- the two most important concerns are still waiting times for treatment and delays for patients in outpatient clinics;
- almost a third had never heard of the proposals. Another quarter had heard of them, but do not know what is being proposed. Of those who have heard of the proposals, 8% were favourable, 58% were critical and 30% were neither;
- almost three quarters of the sample believe that the main aim of the reforms is to reduce spending. Fewer than a tenth feel we are trying to improve care. While just over a tenth believe both are equally true;
- only 16 per cent think that self-governing hospitals will continue to provide free treatment and free services. Almost three-quarters believe there will be some charging;
- more than 80% of the sample would be prepared to travel to a more distant hospital for better or quicker treatment. This is very encouraging;
- Perhaps most interestingly, when the interviewer read out a list of 8 of the reforms with the related benefits,

in 6 cases a majority were in favour. (Question 26).
This demonstrates that people are far more positive
if we address their real concerns head on. (Trent
RHA have prepared 'A patients guide to NHS changes'
which attempts to achieve this (attached).)

Action

Kenneth Clarke will be 'relaunching' the reforms shortly, through presentations around the country. You could ask what approach he will be using to explain the benefits to patients.

Ian Whitehead

IAN WHITEHEAD

Northern Regional Health Authority

Sample size: 1041 Adults Aged 18+

Fieldwork 15-31st January 1990. Interviews conducted in home, face-to-face.

Telephone in Household: Yes 76
No 24

Sex %
Male 49
Female 51

Age %
18-24 12
25-29 14
30-34 10
35-39 8
40-44 8
45-49 8
50-54 7
55-59 7
60-64 8
65-69 7
70-74 6
75+ 5

Occupation of Head of Household

Position/grade
.....

Industry/type of firm
.....

Qualifications/degrees/apprenticeships
.....

Number of staff responsible for
.....
(PROBE FOR PENSION/CWE)

Social Class %
AB 11
C1 20
C2 28
D 21
E 20

Work Status %
Full-time (30 hrs/week) 41
Part-time (8-29 hrs/week) 7
Retired 17
Unemployed and seeking work 6
Unemployed and not seeking work 2
Not working (incl. housewife) 22
Full time education 2
Invalid/permanently 3

Tenure %
Owned outright 23
Buying on a mortgage 36
Rented from Council 33
Rented from Housing Association 2
Rented from Private Landlord 3
Other (WRITE IN AND CODE '6') 1

Household Composition

Children %
None 58
Age 0-5 years 23
6-11 years 17
12-17 years 14

Elderly (60+) in household

%
None 69
One 18
Two 12
Three + *

Ethnic Origin
(CODE FROM OBSERVATION)

%
Asian 1
Afro Carribean *
White 98
Other non white *

Length of Interview %
Under 10 minutes 3
11-15 minutes 17
16-20 minutes 47
21-25 minutes 25
26-30 minutes 5
over 30 minutes 1

Interviewer Name

.....
Interviewer Number _____
(24)(25)(26)(27) (28)

Date of Interview

.....

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is . . . , and I am from MORI, the opinion research company. We are doing a survey on the health service in this area and I would like to ask you a few questions about your views.

Q1 First of all, in the last 12 months, would you say that your health has on the whole been good, fairly good, or not very good?

	%	Base:All
Good	31	
Fairly good	29	
Not very good	20	
Don't know	-	

Q2 Do you have any difficulties in carrying out day-to-day tasks because of a physical or mental disability or because of problems with your eyesight or hearing?

Q3 Does anyone else in your household have such a problem?

Base:All	Q2 Self %	Q3 Other %
Yes	17	11
No	83	85
Don't know	*	4

Q4 Are you currently registered with a GP or doctor?

Base:All	%
Yes	99
No	*
Don't know	*

IF YES

Q5 Are you registered with this doctor on the National Health Service or privately?

	%	Base:All
NHS	98	registered with GP/doctor
Private	1	
Both	1	
Don't know	-	

ASK ALL

Q6 Some people these days have health insurance, such as BUPA, which pays the cost of private hospital treatment. Are you covered by any medical insurance of this kind?

	%	Base:All
Yes, covered	7	
No	93	
Don't know	*	

Q7 When did you last visit your GP?

Q8 Have you ever been treated by a casualty, accident or emergency department of a hospital? IF YES: When was the last occasion?

Q9 Apart from in an accident department, have you ever been treated as an outpatient in a hospital? That is where you were treated but did not stay overnight? IF YES: When was the last occasion?

Q10 Have you ever been treated as an in patient by a hospital? That is where you stay overnight or for several days? IF YES: When was the last occasion?

	Q7 GP %	Q8 Accident %	Q9 Out patient %	Q10 In patient %
In last week	13	*	2	*
Over 1 week, less than 1 month	22	1	3	1
Over 1 month, less than 6 months	29	5	9	6
Over 6 months, less than 12 months	14	6	7	6
Over 1 year, less than 3 years	14	13	12	15
Over 3 years, less than 5 years	3	7	8	9
Over 5 years less than 10 years	2	8	7	12
Over 10 years	2	13	11	24
Can't remember when	2	4	5	3
Never	*	42	37	23

Q11 SHOWCARD A In which three or four of the areas, on this list do you think that NHS hospitals most need to make improvements?

Waiting times for treatment or to see specialists	48
Time patients are kept waiting in waiting rooms	38
Explanations given to patients on what is wrong with them	32
Speed with which results of medical tests are provided	22
Recruitment of nursing staff	19
Quality of food provided to patients	18
Ability to treat patients in hospitals near to their homes	13
Recruitment of hospital doctors	11
Information provided on services available	10
Efficiency of their administration	9
Facilities provided in waiting rooms	8
The way receptionists treat patients	8
Repair and decoration of buildings	7
Controls over spending on drugs	6
Hygiene and cleanliness of hospitals	6
Quality of medical treatment	5
Choice patients offered in treatment options	5
Quality of nursing care	4
Availability of phones and other extras	3
Availability of private rooms	2
Use of computers	2
None of these	12

Q12 SHOWCARD B And in which, three or four, of the areas on this second list, if any do you think that GPs, that is local doctors, most need to make improvements?

	%
Willingness to make appointments at short notice	27
Explanations given to patients on what is wrong with them	26
Time patients are kept waiting in waiting rooms	24
The way receptionists treat patients	22
Visiting people at their home	22
The amount of time doctors spend with patients	17
The ability to see your own doctor rather than a deputy	17
Doctors arriving for surgeries on time	12
The convenience of surgery times	10
Over prescribing of drug	9
Ease of getting through to the Surgery by phone	9
Facilities provided in waiting rooms	5
Information provided on services available	5
The availability of toilets in surgeries	4
Quality of medical treatment	4
The quality of medical equipment in GPs Surgeries	3
The decoration and appearance of waiting rooms	2
Efficiency of their administration	2
None of these	21

Q13 SHOWCARD C The government has recently introduced proposals for the reorganisation of the National Health Service. Could you tell me, from this card, how much you feel you know about the changes the government is proposing to make to the National Health Service?

	%
I know a lot	2
I know a fair amount	12
I know a little	30
I've heard of them but don't know what is proposed	26
I've never heard of the proposals	29
Can't remember	1

Q14 IF HEARD OF
Where have you heard about these proposals?

Base:All heard of proposals	%
TV	79
Radio	8
Newspapers	40
Magazines	1
Local GP	2
Local Health Authority	3
Other medical people	5
Local council	1
Leaflets	2
Posters	1
Other	7
Can't remember	3

Q15. In general, is what you've heard favourable to, or critical of the proposed reorganisation, or was it neither favourable nor critical?

Base: All heard of proposals	
Favourable	8
Critical	58
Neither	30

Q16. What specific changes are you aware of that the government is trying to introduce in the organisation of the National Health Service. PROBE What others are you aware of?

Base: All who've heard of proposals	
Privatisation/privatisation of hospitals	18
Doctors to work to a budget/introduction of budgeting for G.P's	15
Reducing spending on drugs/buying cheaper drugs	6
Opting out for hospitals	5
Hospitals being responsible for their own budget	5
Cutting back on spending	5
Paying for treatment	4
Cut backs (general)	4
Making a more efficient service	3
Closure of hospitals/smaller hospitals	3
Trying to abolish N.H.S.	2
Giving them a budget/control spending on budget	2
Making the service cost effective	2
Travelling further for treatment/to hospitals	2
Hospitals to manage themselves	2
Reducing staff	2
Encouraging people to take out private health care	2
Worse for the patients	2
Quicker treatment/cut down waiting time	2
Being run as a business	2
None	7
Don't know/no answer	22
(Factors mentioned by less than 2% are excluded)	

ASK ALL

Q17. How important is it to you to have more information on the changes that the government is proposing for the organisation of the NHS. Would you say . . . READ OUT

Base: All	
very important	56
fairly important	28
not very important	8
not at all important	3
Don't know	4

Q18. SHOWCARD D If they are introduced, what effect, if any, do you think the government's proposals for reorganising the NHS will have on the quality of service patients receive from their local GPs?

Base: All	
Improve a lot	3
Improve a little	14
No difference	19
Get a little worse	20
Get a lot worse	21
Don't know	22

Q19 SHOWCARD D AGAIN And if they are introduced, what effect, if any, do you think the government's proposals for reorganising the NHS will have on the quality of service patients receive in local hospitals?

	%
Improve a lot	3
Improve a little	12
No difference	16
Get a little worse	20
Get a lot worse	25
Don't know	24

Q20 Do you have any concerns about how the proposed reorganisation of the NHS will affect you, your family or other people. IF YES What concerns do you have. PROBE What other concerns do you have. PROBE FULLY THIS IS A KEY QUESTION

Base:All

	%
Worse treatment/quality of patient care/treatment	9
Longer waiting list	7
People with money get best treatment/people on low incomes elderly/infirm will suffer	6
Having to pay for treatment	6
People/families could not afford to pay	5
Cut back on spending	4
Not at the moment	3
Travelling further for treatment/to hospitals	3
Should not be privatised	3
Less efficiency/service will suffer	3
Elderly may suffer	2
Give cheaper drugs/reducing spending on drugs	2
Trying to get people to take out private cover	2
Cut down on nurses/staff	2
Want good service for my children/the young	2
Don't know/no answer	51
(Factors mentioned by less than 2% are excluded)	

Q21 SHOWCARD A AGAIN If the government's proposals for reorganising the NHS were introduced, in which, if any, of these areas do you think the NHS hospital service would improve?

	%
Availability of private rooms	13
Efficiency of their administration	12
Waiting times for treatment or to see specialists	11
Controls over spending on drugs	10
Speed with which results of medical tests are provided	8
Use of computers	7
Time patients are kept waiting in waiting rooms	7
Choice patients offered in treatment options	7
Recruitment of hospital doctors	6
Recruitment of nursing staff	6
Explanations given to patients on what is wrong with them	5
Quality of medical treatment	5
Information provided on services available	5
Quality of food provided to patients	5
Quality of nursing care	5
Ability to treat patients in hospitals near to their homes	5
Repair and decoration of buildings	4
Hygiene and cleanliness of hospitals	3
Facilities provided in waiting rooms	2
The way receptionists treat patients	2
Availability of phones and other extras	2
None of these	44

Q22 SHOWCARD A AGAIN And if the government's proposals for reorganising the NHS were introduced, in which, if any, of these areas do you think the NHS hospital service would get worse?

	%
Quality of nursing care	19
Recruitment of nursing staff	19
Quality of medical treatment	18
Ability to treat patients in hospitals near to their homes	17
Waiting times for treatment or to see specialists	16
Recruitment of hospital doctors	15
Controls over spending on drugs	11
Hygiene and cleanliness of hospitals	10
Choice patients offered in treatment options	9
Repair and decoration of buildings	9
Speed with which results of medical tests are provided	8
Time patients are kept waiting in waiting rooms	8
Quality of food provided to patients	7
Efficiency of their administration	6
Information provided on services available	4
Explanations given to patients on what is wrong with them	3
The way receptionists treat patients	2
Availability of private rooms	2
Facilities provided in waiting rooms	2
Availability of phones and other extras	2
Use of computers	2
None of these	38

Q23 SHOWCARD B AGAIN And if the government's proposals for reorganising the NHS were introduced, in which, if any, of these areas do you think that the service provided by GPs would improve?

	%
Over prescribing of drug	11
Efficiency of their administration	9
Visiting people at their home	8
Willingness to make appointments at short notice	8
Doctors arriving for surgeries on time	8
Time patients are kept waiting in waiting rooms	7
The amount of time doctors spend with patients	7
The convenience of surgery times	6
The quality of medical equipment in GPs Surgeries	6
The ability to see your own doctor rather than a deputy	6
Information provided on services available	6
Explanations given to patients on what is wrong with them	6
Quality of medical treatment	4
The way receptionists treat patients	4
The decoration and appearance of waiting rooms	3
Facilities provided in waiting rooms	3
Ease of getting through to the Surgery by phone	2
The availability of toilets in surgeries	1
None of these	50

Q2 SHOWCARD B AGAIN And if the government's proposals for reorganising the NHS were introduced, in which, if any, of these areas do you think that the Service provided by GPs would get worse?

	%
The amount of time doctors spend with patients	22
Visiting people at their home	19
Quality of medical treatment	18
The ability to see your own doctor rather than a deputy	12
The quality of medical equipment in GPs Surgeries	11
Willingness to make appointments at short notice	11
Time patients are kept waiting in waiting rooms	9
The convenience of surgery times	6
Doctors arriving for surgeries on time	5
Efficiency of their administration	5
Information provided on services available	5
Explanations given to patients on what is wrong with them	5
Over prescribing of drug	5
Ease of getting through to the Surgery by phone	4
The way receptionists treat patients	4
The decoration and appearance of waiting rooms	3
Facilities provided in waiting rooms	3
The availability of toilets in surgeries	1
None of these	42

Q25 Some people say that the government's main aim in reorganising the NHS is to improve the quality of care that patients receive, others say that its main aim is simply to reduce government spending on the NHS. Which, if either, of these views do you feel is closest to the truth?

Base:All	%
Trying to improve care	7
Trying to reduce spending	71
Both are equally true	11
Neither true	1
Don't know	10

Q26 Had you heard of the proposals to . . . READ OUT PROPOSAL BELOW. ASK FOR ALL EVEN IF NOT HEARD OF Do you approve or disapprove of this proposal? REPEAT FOR EACH PROPOSAL BELOW

Base:All

	%	Heard of		Approve		Don't Know
		Yes	No	Yes	No	
Allow some hospitals to be self governing outside the control of their local health authority	%	65	34	21	58	20
Reduce waiting times in hospitals by introducing a stricter appointments system	%	28	72	78	14	7
To give larger GPs' practices more control over their spending and allow them to buy certain treatment for their patients from any NHS or private hospital	%	36	64	49	31	19
To control GPs' spending on drugs by setting target budgets they should try to keep to	%	49	51	29	56	13
To allow patients to change GPs at will without having to get the approval of their existing GP	%	31	68	69	21	10
To introduce regular reviews of the quality of medical decisions made by doctors	%	14	85	65	14	20
To have nurses take on some of the routine jobs that are now performed by hospital doctors	%	23	77	47	42	11
To provide funds to enable hospitals to introduce more computers to help improve their administration	%	20	79	64	23	11

Q27 SHOWCARD E If local hospitals opted to become self-governing, which of the options on this card best describes what you think will happen to how services will be paid for?

Base:All

- Continue to provide free hospital treatment	%	16
- mainly provide free treatment, but charge for some services	%	35
- mainly charge for treatment but continue to provide some free services	%	21
- Charge for all treatment	%	16
- Don't know	%	11

Q28 Do you think that the proposal for hospitals to become self governing means they will remain part of the National Health Service or do you think they would stop being part of National Health Service?

Base:All

Remain NHS	%	29
Stop being NHS	%	55
Don't know	%	16

Q29 SHOWCARD F I am going to read out to you a number of statements that have been made about the government's proposals for reorganising the NHS. for each one, could you tell me, from this card, to what extent you agree or disagree with this?

		Agree strongly	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
The governments proposals will make the NHS more efficient	%	4	19	24	33	20
The NHS cannot be properly reorganised within the timescale set by the government	%	15	27	39	13	5
If doctors think more about the cost of medical treatment then the quality of care will improve overall	%	3	20	19	34	25
The changes to the NHS mean that patients will have to travel further for treatment	%	16	37	24	18	4

Q30 Would you be prepared to travel to a more distant hospital for treatment if READ OUT

Base:All		Yes	No	Don't know
. . . . Your doctor felt the treatment would be better	%	83	14	3
. . . . You would be treated more quickly	%	81	13	6

Q31 Do you or do any of your relations work for the National Health Service, in any capacity?
IF YES Who is that?

Me	%	3
Wife/husband/partner		3
Children		4
Other relative		19
No		72

Q32 Do you have any close friends who work for the National Health Service in any capacity?

Yes	%	27
No		73