

Prof Sir Mike Richards
National Cancer Director

Gateway reference: 14527

7th July 2010

Dear Colleague

Re: REVIEW OF THE CANCER REFORM STRATEGY

Significant progress has been made on cancer since the publication of the Calman-Hine report in 1995, with the NHS Cancer Plan (2000) and the Cancer Reform Strategy (2007) contributing to this progress. Cancer mortality has fallen, survival rates are improving for many cancers and patients' experience of their care has improved. The Coalition Government now want to concentrate on what is most important to patients and their families – cancer outcomes.

The Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley MP, and Minister of State for Care Services, Paul Burstow MP, have therefore asked me to review the Cancer Reform Strategy (CRS) to ensure that we have the right strategy, subject to the Spending Review, to deliver improved survival rates. In addition to focusing on outcomes, the review will set the future direction for cancer services based on the ambition which will be set out in the forthcoming White Paper. It will also set out how the Coalition Government's commitments to enable patients to rate hospitals and doctors according to their quality of care, and putting patients in charge of making decisions about their care, will be achieved for cancer. The review will be undertaken in the context of the wider NHS reforms, and will not pre-empt the work of the NHS Commissioning Board.

The Coalition Government have paid tribute to the stakeholders who helped shape the CRS and continue to work with me to deliver improved cancer services. We will work with as wide a number of key stakeholders as possible to review the existing strategy to set the direction for cancer services up to 2015, with the aim of having cancer outcomes amongst the best in Europe. We aim to publish the report of the review in the winter.

A range of issues for discussion are outlined at Annex A. For any queries or comments on the review please email: crsreview2010@dh.gsi.gov.uk. This mail box will be closed on the 24th of September 2010.

I look forward to continuing to work with you all as the review goes forward.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Richards', written over a light grey grid background.

Professor Sir Mike Richards
National Cancer Director

ANNEX A:

As part of the update of the Cancer Reform Strategy the Department of Health is particularly interested in hearing the views of the cancer community on the following issues:

- Are there particular priority areas for action which need to be addressed if cancer outcomes are to be improved?
- What opportunities are there for delivering efficiencies or saving money in cancer care?
- How best can quality and outcomes in cancer care be measured?
- What further action is required to improve patients' experience of treatment and care?
- Are you aware of examples of good practice in cancer service delivery which could be replicated?
- What developments in prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment or after care can be expected which will impact upon the way in which cancer services need to be commissioned or delivered?
- Looking at the plans set out in the White Paper and associated consultation documents (to be published shortly), what are the issues and opportunities for delivering cancer services and improved outcomes?
- As we develop work to improve cancer outcomes, how can we make sure that we continue to try and tackle inequalities in cancer care?