

Review into palliative care funding

A new review into the funding of palliative care has been announced by the Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley, in a speech to the International Carers Conference in Leeds.

The review, chaired by Tom Hughes-Hallett, Chief Executive of Marie Curie Cancer Care, will look at how Government can make sure that the money intended to help look after people who are approaching the end of life is spent in the right way.

This will better enable patients to choose how and from whom they receive their end of life care.

The review will make recommendations for a funding system that will cover care provided by the NHS, a hospice or any appropriate provider:

- which encourages more community-based care, so a patient can remain in their own home; and
- that will be fair and transparent to all organisations involved in palliative care.

The review will cover both adults' and children's services and will report back by summer 2011.

Secretary of State for Health Andrew Lansley said: "Having a terminal illness is a very distressing time for individuals and their families. People should be able to choose where they are cared for – most would choose to be cared for at home, surrounded by their friends and family – and be certain that the care they receive will be of the highest quality."

"This review will look at how we better deploy the money we spend on palliative care – so those in need are better supported. We intend that whatever care patients choose will meet their needs and wishes."

Jonathan Ellis, director of policy at Help the Hospices, said: "Hospices are a major provider of palliative care in the UK, but government funding for hospice care remains patchy and inconsistent, with some hospices receiving significant levels of funding while others get next to nothing."

"This review is a welcome first step by the government in delivering on its commitment to create a fair and sustainable per-patient funding system for hospice and palliative care services. We look forward to working with the government in the coming year to make sure that the views of local charitable hospices are incorporated into this review."

Mike Keel, Deputy Chief Executive at Keech Hospice Care, said: "We are very encouraged by the news that this review is being put in place by the government. It is a positive step towards ensuring that people feel more empowered and supported regarding how and from whom they will receive their end of life care."