

NHS chief reaffirms commitment to private primary care providers

March 12, 2008

The chief executive of the NHS has reaffirmed the government's commitment to introducing more private providers to primary care, and has spoken of the drive towards "personalisation" of patient services.

In an online blog to coincide with the World Health Care Congress Europe 2008 in Berlin – which began on Monday and ends today (12 March 2008) – David Nicholson spoke of changes taking place in the year of the NHS's 60th birthday.

He said that the NHS is "not just an organisation, it is a national social movement that is ingrained in our society and change is extremely fraught."

Mr. Nicholson said the government's major challenge was to drive "systemic change" in health services based on the needs of patients. He spoke of the need to "treat patients as partners – a drive towards personalisation".

"So we'll be delivering more choice, bringing more private providers into primary care and a lot of this comes out of our work with patients and staff," he said.

He also hinted at Lord Darzi's polyclinics, saying: "Another thing they [patients] want is integrated care – primary care and specialist care connected in the same building and with common IT infrastructure."

Mr Nicholson also spoke of a "journey to decentralisation", saying: "There's a limited number of things you can do topdown. We need to be radically devolving power to clinical teams so that people can work together on the ground and we need to engage clinicians in this process."