Question time for Tory policy

Addressing an audience of general dental practitioners at Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge, Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley, outlined the Conservative Party’s policies on NHS dentistry. Neel Kothari reports

Firstly, wherever possible, people should have equal access to NHS services. Although NHS dentistry has always been different in that dentistry has not always been free at the point of delivery, in general, we believe NHS dentistry should be part of a service funded through general taxation, and wherever possible, people should expect to have equal access to NHS dental services. This does also mean that we do not want to go down the path of separating NHS dentistry into two parts, for those people who cannot afford private dentistry and for those people who cannot access NHS dentistry, we firmly would like to give everybody a sense that they do have access to NHS dentistry.

Secondly, we want have a service centered around patients and address what they are looking for, their expectations and their needs. We want to move away from an NHS designed from the centre and then handed out to public and move towards a service designed around the public’s needs.

The next principle is that we should, wherever possible, seek to maximise beneficial health outcomes. Where dentistry is concerned like other areas in the NHS I want us wherever possible to move away from what the new contract would look like (not the one we currently have), I had met with many dentists involved with PDS pilots and it seemed to me on the face of it the new contract was designed to be based on the experience of the PDS pilots.

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