No ‘quiet life’ for Cameron as NHS debate rages on

Prime Minister defends NHS reforms, stating ‘we cannot afford not to modernise’, while resistance builds from medical associations

Last week Prime Minis- ter David Cameron, (pic- tured), gave his speech on NHS Reforms, arguing that “fundamental changes” were required for the UK to catch up with European health care stand- ards. The general feeling through- out his speech was that without change, children will be poorly educated, patients will be unhap- py with the NHS and public faith in law and order will be crushed. Adding that change should not be “put off any longer” Mr Cameron made it clear that “quietly stand- ing still” was no longer an option. Mr Cameron added that there will be “new powers for GPs, who can join together in consortia, take control of NHS budgets and directly commission services for their patients.”

“We are spreading choice, saying to any parent or pa- tient: you can choose where your child gets sent to school or where to get treated and we’ll back that decision with state money.”

Mr Cameron confronted the fact that although there will be rising pressure on funds, tech- nology and new medicine. “Put another way” Mr Cameron said, “it’s not that we can’t afford to modernise; it’s that we can’t af- ford not to modernise.”

There has however been some concern over the proposed changes, one of which we see GPs taking control of commis- sioning care. Commenting on the changes during a BBC interview, the Prime Minister said there was “enthusiasm” among the medical profession for the changes; how- ever, according to other reports, the Royal College of GPs, the British Medical Association and trade unions have insisted that the upheaval is unnecessary.

The underlying issue lies with the fact that Britain re- be done. Providing power to GPs to give greater choice to patients is just one option to deal with this issue. Mr Cameron aims to “free professionals from top down control and bureaucracy” and most importantly “give choice to the user.”

As further reports have sug- gested, this year will be a criti- cal time for the Coalition’s public service reforms, as they begin a process that will modernise pub- lic services, such as health, edu- cation and justice.

At this time of writing the Health Bill has yet to be pub- lished, however, what has been described as an “overhaul” of the health service will most- certainly come into practice as Primary Care Trusts will con- tinue to be scrapped, and power and financial control will be handled to GPs.

Many have reportedly vol- unteered to pilot the reforms, demonstrating the appetite for change.  ■