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 Minister David Cameron, (picture), gave his speech on NHS Reforms, arguing that “fundamental changes” were required for the UK to catch up with European health care standards.

The general feeling throughout his speech was that without change, children will be poorly educated, patients will be unhappy 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 standing 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 patient: 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, technology 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 afford not to modernise.”

There has however been some concern over the proposed changes, one of which we see GP’s taking control of commissioning care. Commenting on the changes during a BBC interview, the Prime Minister said there was “enthusiasm” among the medical profession for the changes; however, 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 continues to spend £103bn on the NHS and yet it has fallen behind other European countries which spend similar amounts on healthcare, so surely some change was necessary.

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

Many have reportedly volunteered to pilot the reforms, demonstrating the appetite for change.

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