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Authored article

Jeremy Hunt: message to NHS staff about the future NHS

From:

[Department of Health](#) and [The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP](#)

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The Secretary of State for Health talks about his speech yesterday where he set out his vision for the NHS over the next 25 years.



Yesterday I set out [my vision for the NHS over the next 25 years](#). I know there was a lot of news coverage, with a big focus on 7-day working, but I wanted you to hear about another part of my speech and how, with your help, we can make the NHS the safest, most patient-centric health system in the world.

From conversations with NHS staff across the country, it is clear to me that, too often in the past, you have been asked to focus your attention on targets. Many targets have worked well in improving standards - particularly the 4 hour Accident and Emergency target and the 18 week waiting time standard. But sometimes they have unintended consequences and make it harder to focus your attention on providing the best care and support possible for patients.

What I argued in my speech was that if we are prepared to be brave on transparency and be open about the standards of care in every part of the system, it isn't necessary to have so many targets. People naturally want to do a better job if they know how they compare to their peers. And of course this transparency is a vital part of the Francis agenda to make sure we never have a tragedy like Mid Staffordshire. Get this right and we can turn the NHS into the world's largest learning organisation - a big ambition for which there is a long way to go, but one really worth aiming for.

I announced a number of measures to help make this vision a reality. There will be a new Independent Patient Safety Investigation Service, which will be a central hub of expertise to advise trusts when they need to investigate something quickly and with a wholly independent team. This will be based at NHS Improvement, the new body that will bring Monitor and the Trust Development Authority together.

I want you all to have someone you can speak to if you have concerns that you are not being listened to or feel unable to raise with your line manager. Every trust will therefore have Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, as recommended by Sir Robert Francis, and a new Independent National Officer for whistleblowing will be based at the Care Quality Commission to keep an eye on how these processes work. To engrain this in our NHS culture, the importance of being able to raise concerns will also become part of all staff education, training, and personal development.

I want the NHS to be somewhere where you are able to focus on patient care and where you can challenge, learn and improve. I also know it has never been more pressured on the frontline and so this will not always be easy. But I hope that my announcements yesterday, combined with the financial support the government is giving to the NHS England Five Year Forward View, will help to empower you to make that happen.

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