



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

24 MAR 2005

21 March 2005

Eve Richardson  
Chief Executive  
The National Council for Palliative Care  
The Fitzpatrick Building  
188-194 York Way  
London  
N7 9AS

Dear Eve,

Thank you for sending me a copy of the National Council for Palliative Care's Manifesto. As you will be aware, the Conservative Party has been finalising its policy on palliative care and, further to the recent discussions I have had with your colleagues Peter Tebbit and Simon Chapman, I thought it may be helpful if I set out our official response to your Palliative Care Manifesto 2005 and the full detail of our proposals for Action on Palliative Care.

In the first instance, I fully endorse the three principles behind your manifesto:

- That everyone has a right of access to palliative care services appropriate to their need;
- That everyone should be able to exercise choice about their place of care at the end of life; and
- That everyone is entitled to a good death.

Secondly, with regards to the four manifesto pledges, taking each one in turn -

**1. To invest an additional £100 million annually in palliative care**

Conservatives are committed to additional investment in the health service, an extra £34 billion to 2009/10 over and above the level we inherit from Labour. In addition, we will ensure that the Department of Health leads a resource implementation assessment to ensure the effective delivery of palliative care services at NICE standards. We estimate that this will result in an additional £40 million a year funding for hospices and £60 million for palliative care services. As a result, however, we do anticipate seeing a reduction in the number of hospital admissions.

**SHADOW SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH**

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**2. To introduce full cost recovery by 2006/07 for providers who deliver palliative care services for NHS patients.**

A key element of the Conservative Party's Right to Choose policy is to give palliative care providers, whether NHS, independent or the voluntary sector, wishing to offer NHS standards of care, a Right to Supply to NHS patients. Therefore, any provider, so long as they meet the appropriate standards of care, will be eligible to receive the same level of financial support for each patient that is available to the NHS.

**3. To introduce monitoring of care of the dying as a key element of performance management for NHS organisations.**

Under Conservative proposals, organisations will be responsible for their own performance management, which will be assessed by the Healthcare Commission against NICE standards of care.

**4. A national training programme in palliative care.**

I welcome and endorse your call for a national training programme for all health and social care providers who care for patients with advanced progressive illness. Under the next Conservative Government, I will ask Skills for Health to initiate this work and will make sure that it is accounted for in the resource implementation assessment.

**Conservative Action on Palliative care**

Conservative action on palliative care is based around the principle of patient centred care. We want individuals to be able to exercise choice, based on information and advice, which will enable them to directly influence their care and will incentivise care providers to meet the highest standards. This I believe is in tune with your own manifesto.

I understand, however, that you raised the issue of the Conservative Party's proposals to increase the level of funding available to hospices from 35% to 40%, your concern being that it could deter some hospices from continuing closer collaborative working with the NHS.

I agree that we should encourage, wherever possible, that the palliative care movement works in collaboration with the NHS. I believe that the Conservative Party's Action on Palliative Care will help to achieve this. By giving palliative care services a Right to Supply NHS services to NHS patients, we will ensure greater involvement of a more diverse plurality of suppliers to NHS patients, funded through the NHS. Not only will this will increase choice available to the NHS but it will improve the effectiveness of services in meeting individual needs. However, whilst we wait for the development of the NHS tariff for palliative care, I am keen that palliative care services are given the resources they require to provide high quality standards of care.

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To ensure that the money is spent effectively, providers will be held accountable through assessment by the Healthcare Commission against the clinical standards set by NICE.

By ensuring that there are evidence-based standards, which are adequately resourced, and by embracing the energy and expertise of the independent and voluntary sector in palliative care, I believe that the Conservative Party's action on Palliative Care will ensure the availability of high-quality services, tailored to individual needs for all those who have an advanced, progressive and terminal illness.

*Yours faithfully,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Lansley', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Lansley CBE MP

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