



**NHS Support Federation
News release**

For immediate use: 21 January 2009

NHS constitution is no defence against commercialisation

Responding to the signing of the new NHS constitution, the NHS Support Federation is warning that it is too weak to protect the core ideas behind the NHS against the impact of commercialisation.

“Government lawyers will have been working long and hard to ensure that the NHS constitution cannot be used to stop its commercialisation programme, but it is this precisely which is the greatest threat to the values and principles of the health service.

“The first test for the NHS constitution will come quickly as the plan to extend competition and patient choice will in fact bring greater unfairness, poorer care for some patients and waste public resources.”

The Federation believes that the terms of the constitution are at odds with the impact of government policy. The NHS constitution states that "The NHS is an integrated system of organisations and services bound together by the principles and values now reflected in the Constitution". In reality the NHS is becoming more fragmented as more commercial providers are contracted to run NHS services.

However the public cannot use the constitution to defend the core values of the NHS unless it counts in law. The Federation is calling on MPs to look at this aspect as the new Health Bill passes through Parliament.

“The current economic crisis shows that we cannot rely on commercial companies to act in ways which protect the public interest. Yet the government is placing commercial values at the heart of the NHS. It is doubtful that the NHS constitution will be any match for the large corporate interests currently looking to run NHS services.”

- Paul Evans, director of the NHS Support Federation

The NHS Support Federation is an independent organisation that works to protect and promote a comprehensive NHS, with equitable access and active public involvement. Our supporters and affiliated organisations are drawn equally from the health profession and the general public.

More: Paul Evans - 07798922199/ paul@nhscampaign.org/ www.nhscampaign.org