

**LONG TERM CARE ASSOCIATION:  
Connect, Issue 35, Autumn 2007**

***Quality Choices. Alison Hopkins Senior Policy Advocate, National Consumer Council***

Our research shows that what consumers really care about is getting a good service – things like being treated promptly, efficiently and effectively. When they do want choice, it's more often about choice of options within a service, not between providers. Consumers also want professional expertise and support to help them make decisions about treatment options.

***2 Time to cut the apron strings  
Nigel Edwards, Director of Policy at the NHS Confederation***

In a recent NHS confederation report ('From the Ground Up: how Autonomy could Deliver a Better NHS'), we argue that behavioural change, not more restructuring, is the solution to many of the current problems in the NHS. Greater autonomy tends to be associated with improved problem-solving, innovation, increased responsiveness and reduced stress levels for NHS staff.

To get the best from the current system, NHS boards must be able to take responsibility for their own fate rather than relying on external targets and scrutiny to drive improvement.

***3 Positive Moves to effective engagement  
Jonathan Tritter Chief Executive of NHS Centre for Involvement***

If you do *to* them rather than *with* them, the highly undesirable result will be increased rates of non-attendance, high rates of non-compliance with advice, and lower rates of overall engagement.

***4 Have the parties got the point? David Pink LTCA Chief Executive***

Politicians were asked to commit to three universal propositions – improved access to specialist advice; clear and comprehensive information; and a care plan to be drawn up and agreed – as part of support provided for all people with long-term conditions.

Politicians find it very difficult to resist the temptation to go for ideological fixes such as system reforms like choice or new flagship constitutional settlements.

***5 Speaking out....  
Duleep Allirajah, Policy Manager Macmillan Cancer Support***

In the planning stage, user involvement should not just be confined to local priority setting, but should also contribute to designing new types of patient-centred services. In the monitoring and evaluation stage, rather than just relying on customer satisfaction surveys, users could actively help to define outputs and outcomes.