Leadership and quality top NHS agenda

In December 2008 the Department of Health released the new operating framework for 2009/10 (DH 2008a). The framework highlights key principles around the provision of care for patients in the NHS and prime among these are the emphasis placed on leadership and quality. The theme throughout is that patient experience is the key indicator of success for the NHS.

The operating framework will further move power in the NHS to the frontline with clinicians being at the heart of the management process. This gives us all a stake in the future of the NHS and clinical professionals are urged to grasp the opportunity to take leadership roles.

Quality is described as the ‘organising principle’ behind the operating framework. The need for enhanced quality is specifically related to three areas – safety, effectiveness and the patient experience.

In relation to safety the key principle espoused by Hippocrates of ‘First do no harm’ is paramount and directly related to cleaner hospitals and better management of infection. Effectiveness will be measured by mortality rates and avoidance of ill health. The patient experience concentrates on the quality of care – not just in terms of outcomes but also focussing on compassion, dignity and respect.

As professionals we might regard all of these components as part of our day job and it is right and proper that we do.

Now that these key principles are advocated at the highest level we all have an opportunity to showcase our contribution to patient care and demonstrating the key influence we all have on enhanced potential outcomes.

Diane Gilmour
President AfPP


What do you think of the new operating framework? Email AFPP President Diane Gilmour at president@afpp.org.uk
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