

Following the election of the Coalition Government Andrew Lansley, the new secretary of state, despite pre-election promises to the contrary, embarked on a huge overhaul of every corner of the NHS. Management cuts, swingeing savings and a new commissioning model that looks, as we go to print, to be running into trouble with the Treasury. What does this mean for the NHS? We asked readers to analyse the future for us. This powerful, scenario-style approach takes up the story at the end of 2013.

The author is a senior NHS manager who has asked to remain anonymous

## It's December 2013.....

**Three years into the coalition government and Andrew Lansley remains as the Secretary of State for Health. The last two years have seen enormous battles within the government and the restrictive forces in the NHS.**

Nonetheless Lansley has managed to get through his flagship reforms around 'GP Led Commissioning', an Independent NHS Board and an enhanced role for Monitor as economic regulator for the NHS. These reforms became reality in April 2013.

The Independent Board chaired by, former Tesco boss, Sir Terry Leahy is packed full with private sector people who really understand commissioning with only a handful of NHS (former PCT CEOs) managers. They have set out a clear regime for GP Led Commissioning underpinned by robust performance management arrangements.

The DoH working with Monitor has identified a failure regime for hospitals who are not meeting their clinical, governance or financial objectives.

The DoH working with Monitor has identified a failure regime for hospitals who are not meeting their clinical, governance or financial objectives. Much of this information is in the public domain.

Prior to the new government in 2010 it was thought there were about 20 such hospitals, however, after two years of financial restraint this number has risen to 35. Indeed, the new accountability and assessment regime now names the 35 hospitals.

As the year draws to a close Cameron calls Lansley to No 10 to discuss:

- Why 20 GP commissioning consortia (about 3% of the total) have been identified as likely to be unable to meet their contractual and financial obligations by the end of the financial year (and some of these are in marginal inner city seats)
- Why 35 hospitals are 'failing' under his watch.

Lansley defends the position by saying that this is actually a good thing because for once in the NHS there is transparency around non-performing organisations and his reforms are flushing these out instead of the old fudge and fix approach.

Lansley defends the position by saying that this is actually a good thing because for once in the NHS there is transparency around non-performing organisations and his reforms are flushing these out instead of the old fudge and fix approach.

The problem hospitals, he argues, have been known about for years but never properly dealt with by the NHS.

Cameron sees limited opportunity to cast this situation as a legacy of the previous Labour government (who assiduously

avoided the word 'failing') and is worried how the situation is increasingly portrayed as a consequence of the reforms introduced by his coalition government.

Despite the pro-market and pro-transparency position of the Independent NHS Board, Cameron instructs Lansley to use whatever levers he can to intervene and make the problem go away before the election in around 18 months time (assuming the coalition – which is already showing signs of severe strain - can last that long).

Lansley goes back to the DoH and tries to begin a more interventionist approach through the local offices of the Independent NHS Board. Some members of the NHS Board resist this and there follows a row about where, under the new regime, the state's role begins and ends.

Several members of the Board threaten to resign, the BMA steps up its campaign against the private sector ideology "endemic in the DoH" and the unions continue to agitate NHS staff and the public through a targeted approach to 'local bad news stories'. The culture of status quo in the NHS begins to rise up once again....