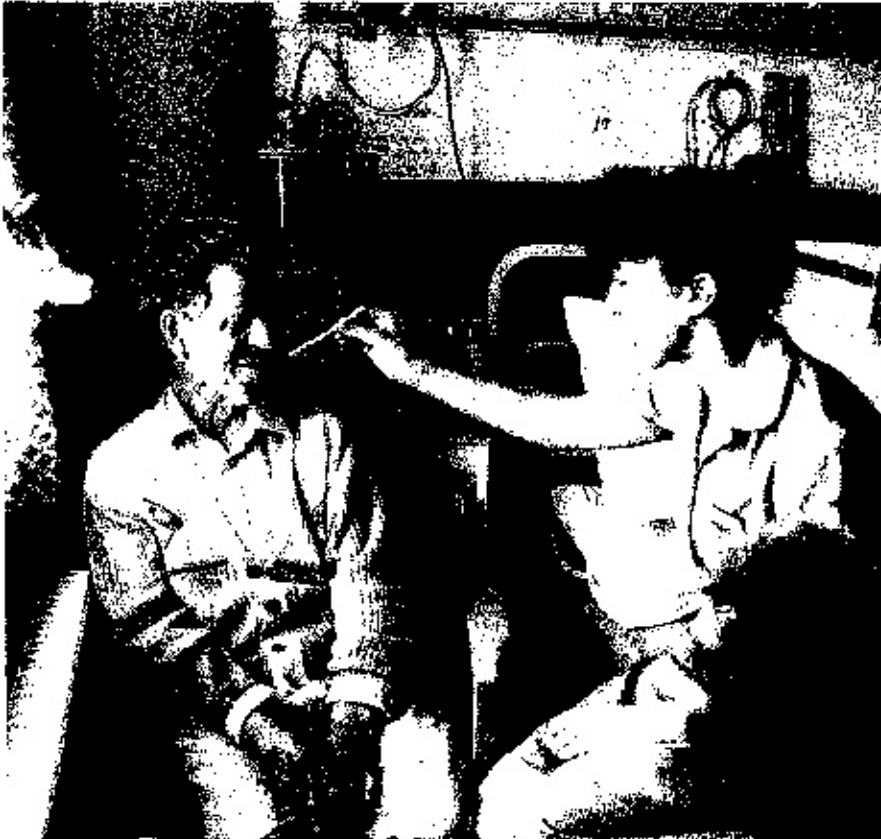


SETTING STANDARDS OF SERVICE



A CHARTER FOR PATIENTS

The NHS reforms

The aims of the Citizen's Charter lie at the heart of the NHS reforms. They provide for a wider choice for patients, improved responsiveness to their needs and specific standards for patient services. Health authorities must seek local citizens' views on their services.

We will build on the NHS reforms later this year by publishing charters in England, Scotland and Wales. These will spell out what the NHS should provide to meet people's needs. **The national charters will set out patients' rights to expect:**

- good quality care;
- clear information about the options available for their care or treatment and continuing information about how each case is developing;
- involvement, as far as is practical, in their own care and treatment;
- choice of GP, including the opportunity to change easily;
- control, with a right to give or withhold consent to medical treatment;
- freedom, with a right to decide whether or not to participate in medical research and student training;
- respect at all times for privacy, dignity, religious and cultural beliefs;
- consideration for relatives and friends visiting or enquiring after patients;
- ability to comment on the care they have received, and to make a formal complaint when they wish;
- access, with safeguards, to information held about them;
- satisfaction if these standards are not achieved.

Telling the public more – the local charters

At local level, and consistent with these national frameworks, health authorities will produce charters specific to their own services. Each health authority's charter will set out the main standards of service it has negotiated in its agreements with hospitals and others. These will be local documents which will inform people about what they can expect. They will be widely available, and displayed prominently in hospitals and other health premises so that people know what they are entitled to, the service targets set, and what has been achieved.

Hospitals will be expected to set out for patients the standards of service they offer. This information should be readily available to all patients before and during their visit to the hospital, and to patients' families who wish to visit them on the wards.

Local circumstances vary. It would not be sensible to set centrally national standards that every health authority would be compelled to adopt.

Local initiative must be supported not stifled. As part of the Citizen's Charter programme, the NHS Management Executive will set out the main areas in which local standards of service must be set, monitored and published on a consistent national basis. Further details, including the list of indicators to be published, will be included in national charters.

The Government's health reforms put people first.

The Citizen's Charter will reinforce this. It will mean:

- *publication of national and local charters providing much more information for the public;*
- *comparative information on the performance of health services;*
- *specific and timed appointments for all out-patients;*
- *maximum waiting time for treatments within the NHS.*

Standards

In future, district health authorities (Health Boards in Scotland) will set standards for service in their contracts with hospitals. They will publish targets for how long their residents will have to wait for admission for treatment.

These targets may well vary between districts and between specialities. But this will be published information and all authorities will want to be able to come up to the standards of the best.

Hospital out-patients' appointments

We will require standards to be set and published for hospital out-patient appointments. The maximum time patients should normally have to wait will be displayed for everyone to see in hospital waiting rooms. Patients who have to wait longer will be told why. In order to deliver this, all hospitals will need proper appointment systems for patients. The practice of calling large numbers of patients for appointments at the same time will end.

Primary health care – ensuring GPs give good service to all patients

Under the health reforms, new GP contracts have been introduced. These make more specific the services that GPs are required to provide:

- a full time GP must be available for at least 26 hours a week at times convenient to patients;
- free health checks must be offered to all new patients;
- similar checks must be offered to anyone who has not attended for three years;
- pensioners over 75 will receive annual health checks if they want them.

Better information and more choice in primary care

The public should be given clear information about the precise services offered by each GP practice in order to help them choose a GP. These include important services for women such as well-women clinics and cervical cancer screening. All GPs must now produce leaflets on their practices and the facilities available. Such leaflets should be available in the surgery and also outside it on request. Changing doctors is now easier, too: the patient simply goes to a new doctor of their choice and asks to be registered. Information will be readily available telling patients how to change doctors.

Dentists' patients are entitled to clear information as well. All patients are now entitled to a treatment plan setting out what is proposed.



A CHARTER FOR PARENTS

The Government's school reforms have had three key purposes:

- to raise standards in education for all pupils;
- to promote parental influence and choice and widen accountability;
- to achieve better use of resources for pupils.

The Citizen's Charter reinforces these principles and carries them further. It will mean:

- **school reports** on the progress of all pupils, at least annually;
- clear publication of **results achieved** in schools;
- easier **comparison of results** between schools;
- **regular and independent inspection** of all schools with the results reported to parents;
- **more information** to parents to help them to exercise the choice that the education reforms have given them.

We believe that all parents are entitled to expect full information about their children's education in terms of the curriculum, achievements, and management of schools.



Reforms already in place give parents:

- *a national curriculum for their children that sets clear objectives backed by national tests showing what each individual child is achieving;*
- *fuller representation on the governing bodies of schools;*
- *the right to propose to run their own school, through grant maintained status, and a greater say, through local management, in how all schools are run. More of the management of resources and schools must be transferred from LEAs to within the schools themselves;*
- *more choice, through open enrolment, about what schools their children attend, and clearer routes to changing schools;*
- *more information to help parents choose a school; more information on how their children are performing, and about how it is possible to change schools.*

These reforms are having a beneficial effect on standards in schools and on parental choice. The Citizen's Charter will guarantee further progress.



More information

- i) **We will publish a parents' charter later in the summer.** This will set out clearly parents' rights within schools, the choices they can exercise, and the information about their own school's performance and the performance of other schools which they can obtain from their school, their LEA, and other sources.
- ii) **The Audit Commission will be empowered to publish comparative tables** on the efficiency of administration and support services in different local education authorities.
- iii) **From 1991/92 all schools, further education and sixth-form colleges will be required to publish their annual public exam results in a common format for each type of institution.** This information will be augmented by the results of tests under the

national curriculum as this information becomes available. They will also be required to publish information about placements in further and higher education, as appropriate, and the destination of leavers.

- iv) **Schools will also be required, starting with the 1991/92 school year, to publish information on levels of truancy in a common format in their annual reports to parents.** These requirements may later be extended to other items of indicative information about schools' and colleges' performance.
- v) **Comparative information on all schools will be required to be collected and published locally.** Parents must also have ready access to information about neighbouring areas so that they are not constrained in making informed choices when selecting schools for their children. The information to be collected and published will include all those items in paras iii) and iv) above.

- vi) **From 1991/92 all parents will receive a school report on their child's progress – at least annually. The Government will require all reports to be brought up to a minimum standard within 1991/92.** Subject teachers will assess children's progress in all national curriculum subjects. Head teachers will comment on general development. Reports will also have to say clearly that parents can discuss the contents of the report with a named teacher from the school, and make it clear how and when this discussion can take place. Reports should include results of tests under the national curriculum and enable parents to compare their child's progress with that of others. Reports will provide an opportunity to disseminate other information to parents, for example on curriculum matters, parents' rights and parents' meetings.

Information collected and published has not always reached the parents for whom it is intended. **We will lay a duty on LEAs to disseminate and publish information in accordance with a standard format and will in addition expect LEAs to publish summary comparative results from local schools in local newspapers.** Information on parents' rights and the curriculum should be distributed annually with reports. We will update and reissue the *Guide to the National Curriculum* before the end of this year.

A CHARTER FOR TENANTS

For tenants the Citizen's Charter will mean:

- an improved **Tenants' Charter** for local authority tenants;
- **opportunities for tenants** to transfer away from local authority control;
- a stronger **Tenants' Guarantee** for housing association tenants;
- extending **compulsory competitive tendering** into the field of housing management.



Services for local authority tenants

All housing tenants should benefit from the Citizen's Charter reforms. If your home is provided and maintained by a public sector landlord, it is particularly important that management should be effective and sensitive to your needs. Yet too often local authority housing has seemed remote, impersonal and out of touch with the day-to-day concerns of tenants. Slow and ill-co-ordinated responses to requests for repairs have also been a common source of grievance.

The Right to Buy

The policy of this Government has been to give every tenant who wishes it the right to buy their home. That right has been exercised by more than 1.3 million people in Great Britain since 1979/80. Tough action has been taken against local authorities who resisted or delayed. In the worst cases the Government has powers to take over and see the sale through.

An improved Tenants' Charter

We believe that those who prefer to remain as tenants, or cannot yet afford ownership, should be respected as the valued customers of local authorities. They have to sustain its costs. They have the right to be consulted, to expect high standards and to prompt action when performance is poor.

In 1981 the Government published a national Tenants' Charter. For the first time it set out tenants' rights on such matters as security of tenure, succession of tenancy, exchange, repair and freedom to take lodgers. The charter will now be updated. More streamlined procedures will be introduced so that tenants can enforce their rights under the charter more easily. The new Tenants' Charter will be published later in the year.

Strengthening tenants' rights

With the Citizen's Charter we will be carrying reform of tenants' rights further:

i) Improving the rights of council tenants to the repair of their homes.

Council tenants already have a 'right to repair' which allows them to get certain repairs costing up to £200 done where their landlord fails to do so. We are reviewing this right to see how procedures can be

simplified and strengthened for the most urgent types of minor repair affecting health, safety or crime prevention.

ii) **Ensuring that all tenants receive information about the standards and performance** of their local authority in housing management. From this year, information will be provided directly to tenants and will cover such key areas as repair times, rent arrears and management costs. This will allow tenants to identify the standards of service they can properly expect, and create pressure for improvement and action where performance is unacceptable.

iii) Encouraging tenants to exercise their right, through a ballot, to **transfer to a new landlord**, such as a housing association.

iv) **Tenants' bids for Housing Action Trusts.**

We already make resources available within the public expenditure plans to allow local authorities, exceptionally, to bid for Housing Action Trusts to take over the ownership and management of the very worst run down estates. In future, where the local authority is reluctant to bid, we will also consider bids for the resources available from tenant groups directly.

v) Encouraging local authorities to introduce **refurbishment contracts**, where contractors and direct labour organisations who exceed the agreed completion date would face financial penalties under the contract.

vi) Encouraging more local authorities to **delegate management to tenant bodies**.

The job of councils is to choose the best way of providing what people want. Some councils still patronise their tenants, apparently believing that only the council itself can provide the required service. But other authorities have shown that aspects of housing management can be performed best by those outside the council's employ. **Compulsory competitive tendering will be introduced into the field of housing management** to extend this process more widely. It will be framed to accommodate tenant participation in management.



The Housing Corporation: a stronger Tenants' Guarantee

Housing associations will be the principal providers of new subsidised housing for the 1990s. The associations have extensive freedoms to run their organisations in a way which makes sense in relation to local needs. But they also take on responsibilities towards their tenants, and towards the taxpayer who funds them.

As part of the Citizen's Charter, the Housing Corporation will issue a stronger Tenants' Guarantee. Like the present guarantee this will set benchmarks for assessing the quality of service on rents, allocation, maintenance and repair. But it will add three new principles of accountability:

• performance information is to

be produced and made directly available to tenants;

• structured and regular consultation with tenants through satisfaction surveys;

• more active promotion of tenant representative organisations, including provision of facilities and involvement in policy reviews.

The Tenants' Guarantee requires associations to provide their tenants with a contractual right to carry out repairs. It gives them the right to have the cost refunded in certain circumstances when the association has failed to carry out its obligations. We will ensure that all housing association tenants are fully aware of these rights.

TRANSPORT

Rail in Britain: a new start

For all the efforts of staff and management, British Rail's performance too often falls short of what the public has a right to expect. We are determined to restore the status of the railways and the pride and confidence of those who work on them. But this can only be achieved if the way is opened to innovation, private investment, and competition. That is why progress towards the privatisation of the railways is integral to the Citizen's Charter.

Putting passengers first

But privatisation cannot take place immediately. In addition to further improvements in performance, passengers look to progress in three main areas from BR. They expect:

- more and clearer **information** about service targets, timetables and performance;
- simple and effective **complaints** procedures;
- a straightforward system of **redress** in cases where the level of service is unacceptable.

The Citizen's Charter addresses all these issues.

- **BR will publish its passenger's charter in the autumn.** This will set out clear commitments by BR to its passengers, including targets for performance, what to do if things go wrong, and what compensation is available.

Better service to passengers

Every three years, the Secretary of State for Transport sets BR clear objectives for the quality of its service to passengers. The last set was published in 1989. For example, they include the following targets for Network SouthEast.

- **punctuality** – 92 per cent of trains are to arrive within five minutes of the published time all day (88 per cent in the morning and evening peak);
- **reliability** – 99 per cent of trains should be run;
- **cleaning** – 100 per cent of trains should be cleaned inside and out every day;
- **telephone enquiries** – 95 per cent of calls should be answered within 30 seconds;
- **waiting time at booking offices** – passengers should not wait for more than three minutes (five minutes in the peak).

- **BR will also reform its 'Conditions of Carriage'**, which have been widely criticised. The guts of the current conditions are at least 40 years old. We expect the new conditions to be simple, fair and easy to understand. They will be published in November.

BR now displays daily at some stations figures for their performance on punctuality and reliability of local services. This is welcome. BR will extend this service throughout its network.



BR's performance against the service objectives directly affects the pay of BR's Chairman and Executive Board members. Pay increases for over 11,000 of BR's staff, including junior management grades, are also directly related to performance.

The restructuring of the conditions of employment of BR signal and telecommunications engineering staff has paved the way for the introduction of direct links between pay and performance for these grades, and BR is discussing with the unions further restructuring of packages for drivers, station platform staff and other key groups. The Government believes these should directly relate to recorded levels of punctuality and absenteeism wherever relevant.

BR will seek to make its service to the public friendlier and more personal. Station managers and train conductors already wear name badges, and we wish to see this practice spread to all who deal with the public.

Competitive tendering improves both quality and value for money. BR already contracts out some catering and cleaning services, and will be extending this to other activities. We will encourage BR to go further and faster with its contracting-out programme.

London Underground

Investment on a massive scale is now taking place. In the next three years alone, some £2.5 billion of capital expenditure is planned. New trains have been ordered for the Central Line and refurbished trains are being introduced on the Circle, Metropolitan, Victoria, Bakerloo and Northern Lines. The Central Line is being totally transformed. It all adds up to what is probably the biggest programme of modernisation London Underground has ever known.

London Underground has been set formal quality of service targets for achievement by April 1992. These include:

- **mileage** – 98 per cent of scheduled mileage will be run;
- **reliability** – no more than 7 per cent of passengers will wait more than one and a half times the scheduled interval;
- **cleaning** – trains will be cleaned internally every day and externally every three days;
- **ticket purchasing facilities** – no more than 2 per cent of passengers will wait more than three minutes for their tickets.

Other targets have also been set and services are being improved. Overall availability for lifts is now 94 per cent against a target of 86 per cent, compared with 75 per cent in 1988/89. For escalators, availability is 85 per cent compared with 75 per cent in 1988/89 (1 per cent below target). These targets are to be achieved by April next year.

But there is much more that can be done. Train services are still far less reliable than they should be. This leads, on the busiest lines, to acute overcrowding. Poor passenger information compounds the problem. **We will therefore be setting and publishing tough new quality of service targets and will publish London Underground's performance against them.**

These objectives will include customer satisfaction with the cleanliness of trains, the courtesy of staff and the quality of passenger information.

We will encourage London Underground to accelerate its contracting-out programme, especially cleaning and maintenance, to improve quality and value for money.

The pay for Board members of London Transport is linked to the achievement of quality of service objectives. **We will link a larger proportion of Board members' pay to the achievement of these objectives.** All London Underground managers participate in a performance bonus scheme. London Underground will be expected to increase the proportion of managers' pay which depends on performance. We want to see performance-related pay extended to drivers, guards, signalling staff and other grades whose standard of performance most directly impacts on the public. **As with BR this should relate wherever relevant to levels of punctuality and absenteeism.**

Each station displays a sign showing who is in charge and explaining how to make complaints. Information on the service targets set and standards achieved by each line will be displayed prominently and revised monthly at all stations.

The Secretary of State for Transport has statutory powers to set both BR and London Underground specific service targets. He is satisfied that these powers are adequate to enable the objectives of the Citizen's Charter to be achieved, including the development of compensation schemes.

Driving tests

Delays in obtaining driving tests used to be a chronic problem. The average waiting time was 13 weeks in 1988. It is now under eight weeks, partly through using mobile examiners where waits were longest. And the Government has set the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) the target of reducing this to six weeks by next March.

In addition, to make the arrangements more flexible, the DSA is seeking customer views on revised working methods. Depending on the results of this survey, we will expect the agency to introduce the following measures by mid-1992:

- telephone booking;
- payment by credit or payment card;
- tests on summer evenings and Saturday afternoons;
- explore the feasibility of Sunday tests in some areas.



Motorway service areas

The growing motorway system needs a full network of motorway service areas. At present the Department of Transport selects and tenders sites. The Government now intends to introduce a new system, under which private developers would select the site and build a service area, provided they obtain planning permission and a simple licence. Legislation will be needed. This further deregulation should deliver more service areas more quickly.