Your guide to the NHS
The NHS Plan, which the Prime Minister launched in July 2000, describes how increased funding will be used to improve the NHS in England. This guide helps explain how these changes will affect you. It will take time - not least to train the extra doctors, nurses and other staff the NHS needs - but extra resources will produce better services for patients.

It sets out what you can expect from the NHS today and what you can expect in the future as improvements to health services are made.

We aim to answer the main questions you may have, and at the back of the Guide, we tell you how you can get more information about the NHS.

Your local health authority will be able to tell you more about the plans to improve health services in your area.
Our commitment to you - we want the NHS to be a high-quality health service. These are our aims as set out in the NHS Plan.

The NHS will provide a universal service for all based on clinical need, not ability to pay.

The NHS will provide a comprehensive range of services.

The NHS will shape its services around the needs and preferences of individual patients, their families and their carers.

The NHS will respond to different needs of different populations.

The NHS will work continuously to improve quality services and to minimise errors.

The NHS will support and value its staff.

Public funds for healthcare will be devoted solely to NHS patients.

The NHS will work together with others to ensure a seamless service for patients.

The NHS will help keep people healthy and work to reduce health inequalities.

The NHS will respect the confidentiality of individual patients and provide open access to information about services, treatment and performance.
Your commitment to the NHS

The NHS will work better if you use the service responsibly.

Do what you can to look after your own health, and follow advice on a healthy lifestyle.

Care for yourself when appropriate. (For example, you can treat yourself at home for common ailments such as coughs, colds and sore throats.)

Give blood if you are able, and carry an organ donor card or special needs card or bracelet.

Listen carefully to advice on your treatment and medication. Tell the doctor about any treatments you are already taking.

Treat NHS staff, fellow patients, carers and visitors politely, and with respect. We will not accept violence, racial, sexual or verbal harassment.

Keep your appointment or let the GP, dentist, clinic or hospital know as soon as possible if you cannot make it. Book routine appointments in plenty of time.

Return any equipment that is no longer needed.

Pay NHS prescription charges and any other charges promptly when they are due and claim financial benefits or exemptions from these charges correctly.

Use this Guide to help you find the services you need.
10 simple tips to help you stay healthy.

1. Don’t smoke. If you need help to give up, call the NHS Smoking Helpline on **0800 169 0 169**.

2. Eat a balanced diet, and aim for at least five portions of fruit and vegetables every day.

3. Aim to be physically active for a total of half an hour a day, five days a week (or an hour a day for children).

4. If you are 65 or over, you should ask for a free flu jab each autumn.

5. If you drink alcohol, do not drink too much.

6. Cover up in the sun, and protect children from sunburn.

7. Practise safer sex.

8. Take up cancer screening opportunities.
