

# DH consults on constitution

DOCTORS LEADERS fear government proposals for the NHS constitution could harm patients' interests and result in more NHS work going to private providers.

The Department of Health announced a consultation on the proposals this week. Ministers want the constitution to include legal limits on the time patients must wait between GP referral and starting treatment by consultants. The DH says the NHS should offer alternative providers if it fails to meet the commitments.

The BMA has warned of possible NHS destabilisation. And BMA central consultants

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and specialists committee chair Mark Porter said: 'If one group of patients gains a legal right by virtue of how long they have waited, there is a risk that others with more serious conditions will wait longer. We also have concerns that this will mean more NHS work going to private providers.'

The consultation runs until February 5. Other potential patient rights include the right to personal health budgets.

See [www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/index.htm](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/index.htm)