



*'twin guarantee  
of consistency and  
responsiveness'*

## Acute and community nursing

The Government is particularly keen to extend the recent developments in the roles of nurses working in acute and community services. Expert nurses are taking on a leadership role, monitoring and educating nurses and other staff, managing care, developing nurse-led clinics and district-wide services. They work across organisational and professional boundaries ensuring continuity and integration of care. The Government is committed to encouraging and supporting the development of nursing practice in these ways.

6.7 Partnership will be dependent on sharing of information with other NHS organisations. The days of the NHS Trust acting alone without regard for others are over. As well as information on progress against service agreements, NHS Trusts will be required to make available their annual operating plans and regular reports on progress against them to local Health Authorities and Primary Care Groups. Key strategic investment decisions, for example in capital, equipment, or in a new consultant post, will need to be consistent with the local Health Improvement Programme.

## Focusing on quality

6.8 There will be a new focus on quality in NHS Trusts, so that patients get the twin guarantee of consistency and responsiveness from their local health services. Quality standards will be central to the new local service agreements between Health Authorities, Primary Care Groups and NHS Trusts. New national policies will build on the professional traditions of standard-setting and self-regulation and the good practice which already exists in so many parts of the NHS.

6.9 The Government will establish best practice through the national policies set out in chapter 7. It will strengthen continuing professional development. It will introduce a system of 'clinical governance' in NHS Trusts to guarantee quality.

6.10 In an NHS based on partnership it will be increasingly important for the staff of NHS Trusts to work efficiently and effectively in teams within and across organisational boundaries. Integrated care for patients will rely on models of training and education that give staff a clear understanding of how their own roles fit with those of others within both the health and social care professions. The Government will work with the professions to reach a shared understanding of the principles that should underpin effective continuing professional development and the respective roles of the state, the professions and individual practitioners in supporting this activity.

6.11 NHS Trusts will be expected to strengthen the contribution that nursing can make. To support them in this, the Government will be launching a national consultation on a strategy for nursing, midwifery and health visiting.