

SC Nat Health  
Scrutinies of the NHS,  
March 82

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister 2

You are already aware of Mr  
Fidler's initiative in extending the  
Scrutiny technique into the NHS; and  
carrying out a scrutiny of this  
particular area seems the best way  
of meeting the wishes of Cabinet.

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PRIME MINISTER

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ROAD ACCIDENT CHARGES

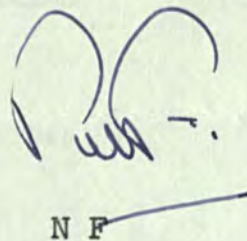
I was asked at the meeting of Cabinet on 18 February to review the present arrangements for charging motor insurers and drivers under sections 154 and 155 of the Road Traffic Act 1972, and to consider whether any administrative action was desirable to ensure that they are fully used.

It was clear that we would need as a first step to obtain some basic information about how payments are dealt with at hospital level. Our consideration of this coincided with the initiative we are taking on Rayner style scrutinies in the National Health Service. In January I agreed in principle with the Chairmen of Regional Health Authorities that a number of Rayner scrutinies should be carried out in the NHS and had invited them to propose subjects for scrutiny. At my meeting with the Chairmen earlier this month (which was also attended by Sir Derek Rayner), they proposed that the collection of payments under the 1972 Act should be one of the subjects.

Accordingly I have asked the Chairman of the South West Thames RHA, Mr Tony Driver, to propose terms of reference and a scrutineer. I expect to receive these very shortly. I will ensure that my Department is fully involved in setting up the scrutiny so that the information we have about the history of these payments, and the small proportion being recovered at present, is taken fully into account.

I am sure that this is the most satisfactory way of proceeding because it means there will be a detailed study of the way the system actually works in individual hospitals and of the scope for action to improve it at that level. I will let you and colleagues know what emerges and what steps are taken to give effect to the findings.

I am sending copies of this minute to members of the Cabinet, to Sir Robert Armstrong and to Sir Derek Rayner.

  
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2 April 1982

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