

PM visits state-of-the-art NHS clinic

30 August 2007



Gordon Brown visited a health clinic this morning ahead of the publication of new figures that will show the NHS is on a sustainable financial footing.

The Prime Minister was joined by Health Secretary Alan Johnson to tour the Riverside Medical Centre, a newly-opened NHS clinic in Vauxhall, south London.

The centre has four GPs and operates a number of clinics for a large diverse community.

During the half-hour visit, Mr Brown and Mr Johnson spoke to staff members and, in a short meeting, discussed the future of GP surgeries, and how services can be further improved.

They also asked for opinions on current social health issues such as smoking and obesity.

The visit comes ahead of the publication of figures for the first quarter of the current financial year, which will show the financial health of the NHS. The statistics are expected to show a surplus.

Speaking this morning, Mr Brown said the results would mean the Government is now able to put money into other areas of the NHS.

He said the report would mean more money to tackle hospital infections, and measures to ensure people get the best personal care.

The Prime Minister added:

"People know that the health service has 80,000 more nurses and 20,000 more doctors, we are building more hospitals. Some have already been completed.

"People do understand the health service is getting better but it is going to get even better."

During this morning's meeting, Mr Brown was told how GPs can do more at their own surgeries and ideas such as introducing ultrasound scans and testing blood were put forward as examples.

Speaking about today's figures, Mr Johnson said:

"We have trebled the amount of resources. We have to stay within budgets. This means we have got a surplus of 1.3 per cent of the total budget, which is just about where it should be.

"We can spend that money on additional services. That money belongs to the NHS."