

Foreword from the chair



The past year has been extremely challenging for our members as the NHS has faced unprecedented financial pressures and simultaneously responded to health reforms that, if implemented, will lead to the biggest reorganisation in its history. The

NHS Confederation has worked hard to support its members during this period of change and uncertainty and I would like to take a moment to highlight a few key areas.

More than 300 of our members fed into and helped shape our response to the *Liberating the NHS* white paper consultation in summer 2010. We also worked extensively with our members to respond to the proposed public health reforms. We have provided evidence on behalf of our members to a range of health select committees over the past 12 months, and generated questions and fed into a number of debates in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. We published a suite of briefings and reports to help our members keep up to date with and make sense of the reforms and, most recently, during the 'pause' in the reform programme held an event to bring members together with key individuals from the Government's NHS Future Forum.

While we have been working hard to respond to the reform agenda, we have not lost sight of the key issue affecting our members – how to maintain the quality of services while experiencing severe cuts in budgets. We have been frank in highlighting our concerns to Government and policy-makers and have provided a number of briefings and reports for members to help share experiences and highlight practical examples of improving patient care while driving efficiencies. We know from the feedback we have received from members that they have found our work in these areas particularly valuable.

While the NHS reforms have presented many challenges for our members, they have also presented some challenges for the NHS Confederation to ensure

we can effectively support and represent our members within an increasingly fluid and diverse healthcare system. In January, we consulted with members about how we could best serve their needs, and I would like to thank everybody who took the time to respond. The results of the consultation led to a number of changes within the NHS Confederation, most notably the Foundation Trust Network (FTN) becoming an independent organisation. We are continuing to work closely with an independent FTN and support and engage our foundation trust members on system-wide issues.

In response to member feedback, we have refocused on our core purpose – influencing healthcare policy, bringing people together to tackle issues of shared concern, and helping members make sense of the whole health and social care system. We have been working to re-engineer the NHS Confederation so we can fulfil these functions more efficiently and effectively on behalf of our members, offer a more flexible range of services, and provide better value for money. I believe that the NHS Confederation is a stronger and more effective organisation as a result of having gone through this process.

I would like to express deep gratitude to Nigel Edwards who has played such a crucial role in helping steer the NHS Confederation through this period and ensure that it has continued to provide outstanding work on behalf of members. Nigel has been a leading thinker in the NHS over the past decade and the NHS Confederation has been privileged to benefit from his exceptional knowledge and expertise. On behalf of the NHS Confederation, I would like to thank Nigel for his years of commitment to the organisation and for the invaluable work that he has delivered for the NHS Confederation and its members.

Finally, I would like to welcome Mike Farrar as our new chief executive. Mike is an outstanding leader who knows healthcare inside out. He has a clear vision of what the NHS Confederation should be in the future, and I believe the organisation will go from strength to strength under his leadership. I look forward to working alongside Mike to support our members in 2011/12.

Sir Keith Pearson JP
Chair, NHS Confederation