PRESS RELEASE

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NHS REFORM: Research evidence on whether the government's plans will make a difference to Britain's healthcare performance

David Cameron has today described the government's proposed changes to Britain's healthcare system as 'evolution' and 'not revolution' - and he has warned that the NHS will become 'increasingly unaffordable' if radical reforms are not implemented.

Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) healthcare expert Dr Zack Cooper comments on the likely impact of the plans:

‘The reforms aren't a revolution, as some have described them, but that alone doesn't make them good policy.

With their proposals, the coalition government runs a big risk of trying to turn a horse and buggy into an automobile and ending up with a car that's being towed by a pack of horses.

The government has outlined the challenges that they are trying to address - improving England lagging cancer survival and trying to get more value for money.

The problem is that it is just not clear precisely how giving GP's commissioning power will make a hint of difference to the problems the Prime Minister has outlined.’

In an article published in the latest issue of CEP's magazine CentrePiece, Dr Cooper assesses the healthcare reforms in the light of recent research: http://cep.lse.ac.uk/_new/publications/abstract.asp?index=3719

In particular, Dr Cooper outlines the research evidence on how NHS performance can be improved:

‘Better data and better management are the two keys to NHS performance. Neither is going to be helped by shaking up the structure of the NHS.’

‘It doesn't matter if there are 50 or 100 primary care trusts - or if we have strategic health authorities or not. If the NHS doesn't do a better job measuring performance and creating sensible incentives, these reforms won't succeed and given the financial constraints the NHS is facing, success is imperative.’

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For further information, contact Zack Cooper (z.cooper@lse.ac.uk) or Helen Durrant: Email: h.durrant@lse.ac.uk; Tel: +44 (0)20 7955 7395

Centre for Economic Performance
London School of Economics and Political Science
Houghton Street  London WC2A 2AE  UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 7955 7673  Fax: +44 (0)20 7955 7595
Web: http://cep.lse.ac.uk  Email: cep.info@lse.ac.uk