

Get rid of the Bill, former vice chair of Local Commissioning Group tells Lansley

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With news of the Health and Social Care Bill facing further challenge in the House of Lords, Cambridgeshire GP Dr Peter Bailey asks the Health Secretary Andrew Lansley to "Get rid of the Bill" in an article published today in the *British Medical Journal*.

Dr Bailey is a former chair of the Local Medical Committee and former vice chair of the Local Commissioning Group in Cambridge, a place he describes as "Lansley's back yard".

He speaks of the work the group and the Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) undertook as recognition grew that the NHS ("of which I was so proud"), faced [financial crisis](#) in the coming years. Through collaborative work on pathways, PCT managers, GPs and hospital consultants showed how costs could be contained. They met with the [Health Secretary](#) to explain how local practices were working to improve efficiency and reduce spending in the NHS.

When the Health and Social Care Bill finally arrived, says Dr Bailey, the proposal that PCTs should be abolished altogether came as a surprise, especially in the light of the successes that had been achieved within the existing structures. GPs were invited to become pathfinders while the Secretary of State's role was to be reduced to becoming a "promoter of the provision of health services rather than responsible for them".

Dr Bailey writes that GPs are "being set up" as they are asked to take over jobs previously done at PCTs without sufficient skills or time to do

so, whilst simultaneously trying to save £20bn.

He says that "setting the NHS free was the slogan, but what it was really about was setting the politicians free". Having visited Downing Street to meet with the Prime Minister, Sir David Nicholson and Andrew Lansley, Dr Bailey feels that his suggestions that the reforms were unworkable fell upon "deaf or reluctant ears".

He writes: "By the time the professions really understood the Bill much of the damage was already done" with PCT managers looking for other jobs and those who remain hoping for continuing employment in advisory groups. He says that now, he and his colleagues stand "baffled in the wreckage".

In a final statement, Dr Bailey concludes: "Let us put down the sledgehammer. Get rid of the [Bill](#). And bring in a structural engineer to stabilise our finest institution."

Provided by British Medical Journal

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