

THE questions which Government ministers need to answer are during the last 13 years of Conservative rule, has there been an increase in the number of people seeking and acquiring private treatment

and thus jumping ahead on the waiting lists? Has the delay in acquiring treatment encouraged people to look at alternative methods of acquiring faster treatment? The motivation to think about alternative methods of treatment should be viewed as an indicator of lack of confidence in the NHS.

On the issue of gaining faster access to health treatment, neither the Prime Minister, Mr Waldegrave or Mr Patten have denied that it is possible for people willing to pay to gain faster access to treatment. The last government's tax incentives relating to private health insurance were targetted at encouraging individuals who could afford it to seek alternatives health care facilities. Why didn't the Government put those tax incentives directly into the NHS to help reduce waiting lists?

The NHS reforms during the last decade have highlighted how the system has moved away from the principle of providing national health with free access to all giving priority to those in greatest need to a two-tier system where private wealth is the driving force.

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