

**Professor Ara Darzi KBE, HonFREng, FmedSci**  
**Professor of Surgery**

13<sup>th</sup> July 2009

The Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA  
United Kingdom

Dear Prime Minister,

Two years ago, you appointed me with the task of leading the NHS Next Stage Review. Over the course of a year, we brought together thousands of clinicians and patients to determine the way forward for the health service, and in June 2008, we published our final report, *High Quality Care for All*.

For the past year, I have overseen implementation of the report's conclusions, and as I recently reported to you, the NHS has taken great strides forward. This progress was only made possible through the tireless work of the Labour Government that secured the massive increase in investment and guided through the difficult but necessary reforms of the past decade.

Raising the quality of care for patients is what has driven and inspired me throughout my career – as a surgeon and as a Minister. Making quality the organising principle of the NHS has revitalised professional pride, created great appetite for improvement, and built enormous momentum.

The NHS is now the first health system in the world to systematically measure, record and openly publish the quality of care that it achieves. Perhaps more than that, however, has been the tremendous change in the level of ambition for what is possible. We set the goal of high quality care for all; under your leadership, the NHS now has the investment and the depth of clinical talent to achieve that ambition.

I believe that it took great courage to appoint a frontline doctor to undertake a fundamental review of the future direction of the NHS. I am deeply grateful to you for having given me the privilege of serving in your Government, the freedom to make tough but important decisions, and the support to make change happen.

As you know, I have maintained my busy clinical practice and research contributions during my time as a Minister. The time has now come for me to return to care for my patients, lead my academic department, and continue my research on a full time basis. I will, therefore, be stepping down from my post as Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the Department of Health when parliament goes into recess for the summer.

The NHS is the greatest expression of social solidarity found anywhere in the world: it is as much a social movement as it is a health system. It is not just that we stand together but what we stand for: fairness, empathy and compassion. It is for these reasons that we all care so deeply about its future; and it is why I stand ready to contribute to ongoing efforts to invest in and improve the NHS, in any way I can.

My thanks and best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Darzi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Ara Darzi**

**Professor the Lord Darzi of Denham KBE  
Professor of Surgery**