

PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister 2
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INNOVATION IN THE CHELTENHAM HEALTH SERVICE

An example of NHS innovation appeared in a local Cheltenham newspaper on 21st July. (Attached)

The local health authority has formed a new company to sell a private health screening service to industry and commerce for their employees. The new service, Healthscreen UK, which has cost £20,000 to set up, is expected to make a profit of £100,000 a year. The surplus will be ploughed back into local health services.

This new company will not interfere with the day-to-day running of the NHS. Screening will take place at night when the lab is quiet.

This is an interesting concept which could be duplicated elsewhere. Perhaps a visit to the Cheltenham Pathology Laboratory may be worthwhile when you are next in the area.

Ian Whitehead

IAN WHITEHEAD

John Whittingdale

Gleam of profit from keeping firms fit

NHS lab. goes into health screening business

A TEAM of Cheltenham health managers have set up Britain's first NHS-run company which they hope will bring in hundreds of thousands of pounds for local health services.

Healthscreen UK which will provide private health screening for business and industry has cost £20,000 to set up but health service managers are confident that it will make a profit of £100,000 a year.

All the cash will be ploughed back into the local health services and used for top priorities including more hospital consultants and extra district nurses and health visitors.

Investment.

Marketing manager for Healthscreen UK, Mr. Leo Enright said they aimed to provide large companies with an early warning of illness among key-workers.

"A routine test which will cost £12.50 per person will provide an early warning of the three big killers — heart disease, cancer and strokes and other diseases."

"Considering that sick leave can cost a company up to £80 a day per person it is an extremely sound form of investment."

by
Julie Newing

Mr. Enright said the company had already landed its first major client — the brewery Whitbread Flowers — and he said: "I am currently working on a new deal which could provide us with an income far beyond my initial expectations."

The screening will all be carried out at Cheltenham's new £3 million pathology lab. in College Road where all the NHS samples are tested. But the district general manager Mr. James Hammond said that there was no danger that the private screening would jeopardise the NHS service.

All the private screening will be carried out at night when the lab. is quiet. Ane he said: "If we do need to take on extra staff to cope with the extra demand then we will do so."

Mr. Hammond said that the launch of Healthscreen UK was



CAROLINE BONK Scientific officer at work with blood samples

Pictures Paul France

tremendously exciting for the health authority. "It's the first company of its kind in the country," he said.

And Mr. Hammond said that it was thanks to the co-operation of all the lab. staff including the consultants that they had been able to set up the company.

He said they were now hoping to set up other schemes in other areas of the health authority to generate even more income for the NHS.



Launching the new blood screening service for industry are (from left) James Hammond, general manager of Cheltenham District Health Authority, Steve Edmondson, medical co-ordinator of the pathology lab., and Leo Enright, marketing manager of Healthscreen UK.