Skin Disorders and the NHS White Paper: A Position statement for Peers from the British Association of Dermatologists (BAD)

The BAD has submitted responses to the government consultations and to the Listening Exercise. There remain a number of areas where patient care will suffer. These include:

Choice and Competition:
- **Do people have enough information?** People should know the details of the experience, qualifications and outcomes of those who are treating them.
  
  *Choice is only useful if it is informed choice.*

- **Can we be sure that competition is fair and transparent?** Many GPs have financial interests in organisations which may benefit from allocation of public funds under their control.
  
  *There must be no conflicts of interest in competition*

- **Will patients with complex cases be disadvantaged?** The elderly, those with chronic illness, the disabled may be disadvantaged because their cases are seen as unprofitable.
  
  *Providers must not be able cherry pick only the cases that provide profits.*

Accountability and Patient Involvement:
- **Will people with rare diseases be ignored?** The large number of people with the thousands of rare diseases must not be ignored simply because they don’t have a big enough voice.
  
  *All patient voices must be heard in decisions about commissioning.*

Education and Training:
- **How can we ensure that training of NHS staff is not compromised?** It is essential that providers that offer NHS staff education and training should be remunerated appropriately.
  
  *We need to ensure a level playing field for those who support the NHS by providing training.*

- **How can we ensure that we maintain sustainability despite short term financial problems?** Short term financial priorities should never dictate training numbers which should be determined by the Centre for Workforce Intelligence (CFWI), Deaneries and SACs.
  
  *We need to make sure that training numbers aren’t dictated solely by short term financial considerations but pay heed to future needs.*

Advice and Leadership:
- **How can we be sure that local services still have appropriate levels of local expertise?** The white paper still disenfranchises local specialists.
  
  *Lack of involvement of LOCAL experts make quality, integrated services less likely.*

- **Expertise is needed if those with less common conditions are to receive appropriate care.** Excluding experts from commissioning will disadvantage those with less common conditions.
  
  *Without experts’ input, commissioning decisions may be based on incomplete information.*

- **Is the NHS Commissioning Board effectively representing all patient and public interests?** All medical specialties should be represented on the NHS Commissioning Board including dermatology to avoid local inequalities (25% of GP consultations relate to skin disease and 1-2% of the population are referred yearly to secondary care dermatology with over 2000 different skin diseases.).
  
  *Unless the NHS Commissioning Board is fully representative of all patient and public interests it risks delivering services with major local inequalities throughout England.*