



The David Hume Institute

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NEWS RELEASE

Autumn Seminar Series 2004

6.00pm 27th October 2004

The Royal Society of Edinburgh, 22-26 George Street, Edinburgh

“Improving Public Services: targets, performance and other regulatory arrangements”

speaker:

**Professor Peter C Smith, Professor of Economics in the Centre for Health
Economics at the University of York**

Chair:

Mrs Sally Kuenssberg CBE, Chair, Yorkhill NHS Trust

Sponsored by



Professor Brian Main, Director of The David Hume Institute said "The Institute is grateful to the Economic & Social Research Council for its sponsorship of this seminar and we are delighted to welcome Professor Smith to Edinburgh to give this talk. The seminar will draw on the author's experience in research and policy across the public services, and will touch on the role of instruments such as performance indicators, inspection, user charges and user choice.

The movement towards the decentralization of public services in the United Kingdom is gathering pace. This can be seen in policy developments as diverse as devolution, privatization, foundation hospitals and local control of schools. A policy of decentralization offers the potential for many benefits, such as more closely aligning services to local preferences.

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However, it also carries the potential for adverse outcomes, in the form of inequalities and under-investment in local services.

Professor Smith's talk will be based on his recent paper which takes as its premise the general desirability of seeking to devolve public service decision-making to as local a level as possible. It then examines how this can best be ensured, through both regulation and financial control".

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Professor Peter C. Smith BA(Oxford), MSc(London)

Peter Smith is Professor of Economics in the Department of Economics at the University of York. His research interests include the financing, efficiency and performance management of the public services, topics on which he has published widely. He has been a member of many national policy committees and is an Audit Commissioner. He has also advised numerous international agencies, including the OECD, the World Health Organization and the World Bank, and he led a US/UK research initiative on incentives to improve clinical quality. He is currently funded by a three-year fellowship from the Economic and Social Research Council.

Notes to Editors:

The views that will be expressed by the speaker are his own and do not commit the Trustees or Officers of the Institute in any way.

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