

HEALTH ACT 1999

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Part I - the National Health Service

Section 21: Arrangements with the Audit Commission

205. This section provides for joint working by the Commission for Health Improvement and the Audit Commission. The consultation document *A First Class Service* made clear that the two Commissions would be expected to agree a joint programme of national work and to conduct national and local reviews in a way which made the best use of their particular expertise and their combined resources. Section 21 provides for the two Commissions to undertake joint reviews and to produce a joint report. The joint reviews will look at both health care issues (such as clinical governance, in the local reviews; and the provision and quality of health care, in the national reviews) within the usual remit of the Commission for Health Improvement and issues that are normally within the remit of the Audit Commission, such as economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the performance of functions (“value for money”), and the management of NHS bodies. In addition, section 21(2) provides for the Commission for Health Improvement to assist the Audit Commission in its wider value for money (VFM) programme of studies, conducted under section 33 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, where there is a need for informed clinical expertise.