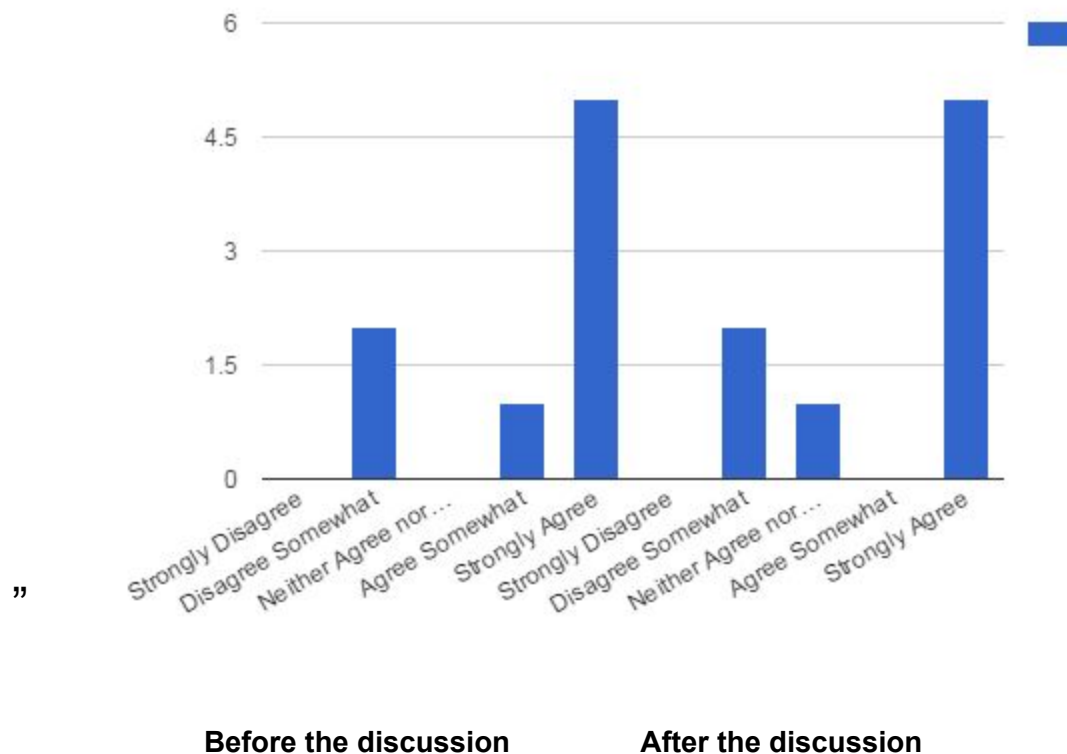


Political Thinking

Meeting No 5.1

Topic.” Current policies with respect to the National Health Service are not working and need a major re-think.”

Participants opinions	Before discussion	78%	agreement,
	After discussion	75%	agreement



Before the discussion views were polarised with the majority strong view that current policies with respect to the NHS were not working and needed a major re-think, and a minority were in disagreement.

The proportion of views in agreement reduced slightly as a result of the discussion.

Principal points made during the debate

By those tending to agree that **“Current policies with respect to the National Health Service are not working and need a major rethink”**

- Demand for NHS services has increased and will continue to increase due to an aging population and will require an increasing proportion of National Income, not so far provided.
- Demand has been increased also by improvements in availability and effectiveness of treatments.
- The supply of NHS services although increased has not kept pace with demand.
- Reduction in social care particularly with respect to the elderly has increased the pressure on NHS resources by slowing the transfer of patients out of medical care.
- The provision of some types of care eg mental health is inadequate.

By those tending to **disagree** that **“Current policies with respect to the National Health Service are not working and need a major rethink”**

- Generally the NHS has managed very well to respond to the increasing pressures upon it.

Some suggestions were made that would reduce the demand for NHS services or perhaps moderate its increase.

- Resources should be directed towards prevention of ill-health as well towards cure. per
- Treatment required as a result of life style or other choices made by the individual should be paid for by the individual. (Health problems due to excessive alcohol or drug use were examples where this approach might be considered, sports injuries, traffic injuries were more contentious, and obesity and diabetes caused by poor diet were also suggested for this approach.)
- Demand from those not entitled to use the NHS should be eliminated.
- Social care needs should not be allowed to impact the NHS.

Concern was expressed that insufficient people were being trained for NHS roles within the UK leading to considerable recruitment from overseas, not without implication for those countries from where these staff are recruited.

Frequent reorganisations of the NHS do not seem to have been effective in achieving high morale among staff.

Whether the NHS could be taken out of the political arena was discussed; but its size and budget needs seemed so large that political control is essential.