

“They did not believe they could win the election if they told you what they were going to do”

Michael Portillo: Former Conservative Leadership Candidate and commentator on Conservative health plans (Guardian 17 March 2011)

What YOU can do to Support the Campaign...

- Sign and share the Save The NHS online petition www.j.mp/SaveTheNHS
- Write to your MP asking them to support Early Day Motion (1535) written with the support of the BMA. You can find out your MP's details at www.theyworkforyou.com
- Share copies of this leaflet with your colleagues and friends. Contact Melanie Lowden at mlowden@tuc.org.uk or on 0191 232 3175 for copies, or download from www.tuc.org.uk/northern

Northern Public Services Alliance

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SAVE THE NHS

“The NHS will not exist within five years of a Conservative election victory”

Conservative Cabinet Minister Rt Hon. Oliver Letwin: Independent, 6 June 2004

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The Government has recently published proposals which represent the most damaging attacks EVER on the NHS.

The Diagnosis

Despite promising to stop 'top-down reorganisation' the Conservative-led Government is trying to open up the whole of the NHS to worldwide commercial control and dismantle existing checks and balances in public health.

The Government is privatising the NHS in slow-motion by handing over almost the entire NHS budget to GP consortia which are then incentivised to use profit-driven businesses to run our health services. These plans will have a devastating impact on patient care in so many different ways:

- **Increasing postcode lotteries so health services are determined by 'GP consortia' which is decided by where you live and not what treatment or operation you require.**
- **Taking a huge risk with handing over the entire health budget to GPs – many of whom admit they lack the training and interest to be financial managers. Meanwhile savage cuts to training will mean a drastic shortage of health professionals in the future.**
- **Selling off services like the National Blood Service to those wanting to**

'exploit commercial opportunities' in health. This will further erode the ethos for the health workers, patients and in this case, donors. The right to fair and equal treatment will no longer apply to patients but will shift to investors who can use trade laws to demand privatisation.

- **Forcing false competition which will lead to hospitals and services fighting each other as 'business rivals' which will inevitably result in more closures and the 'cherry-picking' of patients.**
- **Reducing accountability leaving patients only protected by a toothless 'consumer watchdog' and not accountable to parliament or the Secretary of State for Health. Under new plans if a council or even a future government wants to keep a service within the public sector they will be liable to face expensive legal challenges from private companies.**
- **Attack on pay but freedom for bonuses. Companies will be given the freedom to reduce pay for health workers, undermining collective agreements with trade unions while handing unlimited bonuses to corporate directors.**

- **Patient groups fear individual health needs will come second to shareholder profits. GP consortia will be given new powers to deny care, close services, promote private health insurance and introduce charges. Services will be determined by the small print in contracts and not by patient need.**
- **Conflicts of interest. Companies such as Care UK have been longstanding donors to the Conservative Party and have funded the private office of Andrew Lansley MP, the Secretary of State for Health. Already they are winning contracts worth over £50 million to deliver health services in North East prisons.**

The Government said the NHS would be 'protected' but it is already cutting services and staff to meet £20 billion of 'savings'. Already 53,000 NHS job losses are being planned up and down the country with more expected. This is already leading to services being cut and undermined across the northern region.

Dr Clive Peedell, Co-chair of the NHS Consultants Association and a consultant clinical oncologist at James Cook hospital in Middlesbrough, believes the Government's plans "would not drive up standards, as Mr Lansley suggests, and would in fact be detrimental to patients." Even Conservatives with health experience working in the NHS have challenged the proposals. Dr Sarah Wollaston, Conservative MP:

The Best Medicine

It is vital we start building awareness and action to Save the NHS. The Government has already backtracked over the sale of publicly owned forests and now we need to ensure they perform a u-turn on publicly owned healthcare. These proposals were not in any manifesto and so the Government has no mandate for these changes. The majority of the medical profession now oppose these plans and the more the public know what it will mean for them the more pressure we can build to halt this devastating attack on the NHS.



“ To my mind, it felt a bit like someone had tossed a grenade into the PCTs. These people have so much uncertainty about their position that they are haemorrhaging in a rather uncontrolled fashion. If the expertise is not there in the remains of the PCT clusters, inevitably they are going to have to be turning more to the private sector. ”