

# A MESSAGE TO THE GOVERNMENT: HEALTH NOT WEALTH WELFARE NOT WARFARE

Instead of breaking from the Conservatives' status-quo, Labour seems intent on a path of austerity and cuts to vital public services.

The cuts to disability benefits of up to £6bn could affect more than a million disabled people across the UK.

This will have serious consequences for the NHS, and care services put under even more strain. Local authorities will be ill-equipped to help the huge numbers of people who will lose out on vital and life-changing benefits.

Labour has justified the cuts by arguing that they will help disabled and sick people back into the workplace. This is a thinly veiled attempt, straight out of the Conservatives' playbook, to vilify disabled people for not working, even though those who can do work.

At the same time, the health secretary, Wes Streeting, taking on the role of a health care professional argues that mental health illnesses are 'overdiagnosed', adding further insult to people suffering from mental

health conditions.

Labour has already cut Winter fuel payments to elderly people and maintained the two-child benefit cap, while giving even more funding to Thames Water, and committing to increasing military spending. The Spring Budget offered vague promises to cut borrowing and slash spending, with little on the NHS, which needs urgent investment.

Meanwhile, an investigation by EveryDoctor has revealed that MPs have taken £2.7million from private health companies since 2023 alone. Even Lord Darzi, whose recent report revealed the true depth of the NHS crisis, is revealed to have extensive interests in private healthcare.

Wes Streeting has received more donations than any other MP, with estimates he accepted £175k from donors linked to private health care.

These attacks on the welfare state mark a dangerous new precedent, and are a serious departure from the politics of the Labour Party that

founded the NHS.

Keep Our NHS Public welcomed the departure of the Conservatives, and we continue to reach out to those Labour MPs and others who have fought to defend the welfare state and our NHS.

However, the current Labour leadership is intent on following a path that will lead to the collapse of the NHS. These policies are now causing unspeakable distress and suffering.

This is why we must hold the government to account, fight for the restoration of the NHS based on its founding principles, and demand the government back down from its cruel attacks on disabled people.

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## MANCHESTER MENTAL HEALTH STAFF STRIKE OVER FUNDING

Mental health workers in the Early Intervention in Psychosis Service (EIPS) in Greater Manchester (GM) are on strike over lack of funds for their service.

The UNISON members are calling for more funding to ensure that their service can deliver adequate care to some of the most vulnerable people in society. Many service users have joined picket lines and other actions.

GM Integrated Care Board acknowledged a historic funding gap of approximately £97 million in mental health services against the national average. However it also says that funding increases in 2023/24 brought Greater Manchester closer to that average, and GM ICB is committed to addressing this gap.



In Manchester, the need for mental health support is amongst the highest in the country. Staff struggle to provide the care and treatment their clients need. Workers estimate that 388 more therapists are needed in Greater Manchester to improve access to psychological therapies.

GM Mental Health Trust and GM ICB told strikers that they are conducting reviews and analysis into the service to help solve funding gaps and

vacancies. Their senior executives have met with trade union representatives and do appear to understand the urgent need for funding and staffing.

GM ICB will receive funding for the 2025/26 year in April. The question remains: will it be enough to fulfil the commitment to tackle the under-resourcing staff and service users have suffered for so long?

**PLEASE SIGN THE PETITION HERE:**  
[TINYURL.COM/EIPSMCR](https://tinyurl.com/EIPSMCR)

## MRI SCANDAL IN SLOUGH

In July 2024, Keep Our NHS Public heard of a plan to outsource MRI services in a new Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC) in Slough, and possibly in Heatherwood Hospital in Ascot.

Radiographers raised concerns of the dangers of outsourcing MRI services: if private contractors were to take over, the services would be less efficient, training programmes for specialist work would be undermined. Outsourcing would also create unnecessary divisions in the workforce, and patient safety and outcomes would suffer.

GMB took a strong lead, building strength in the workforce and establishing dialogue with the Trust. Workers balloted in favour of striking if management didn't back down.

The local MP, council and press were also supportive, as were

Slough Trades Council and the Save Heatherwood Hospital Campaign, who wrote to local press detailing support for the NHS and fear of privatisation.

In Autumn 2024, the workforce was informed of the decision to outsource MRI services at the CDC.

News about staff terms and conditions was more positive. Pay would remain within the NHS contract. The trust made written assurances that further decisions around the outsourcing would be shared with workers, and apologised for the lack of communication.

Despite the news that outsourcing would be taking place, the workforce proved its commitment to keeping services in-house.

Action from the union has shown management that workers are ready to challenge and stand firm when needed.

## HEALTH CAMPAIGNS TOGETHER

Affiliate your union branch to Health Campaigns Together:  
[tinyurl.com/HCTaffiliate](https://tinyurl.com/HCTaffiliate)

## Join us today!

Be part of a growing campaign to demand a publicly funded, provided, and accountable NHS

## KEEP OUR NHS PUBLIC

Join Keep Our NHS Public as an individual:  
[tinyurl.com/JoinKONP](https://tinyurl.com/JoinKONP)

## SYNNOVIS CYBER ATTACK: Proving the dangers of NHS privatisation

In the summer of 2024 private health provider Synnovis suffered a major cyber attack. 400GB of data was stolen, including NHS patient data. The attack was one of the most serious recent breaches of NHS patient data.

It is likely to cost upwards of £70m for the NHS, including the costs of legal wrangles about how much the company pays and how much the NHS pays. Tens of thousands will likely be spent in legal fees. The overall cost is in the tens of millions.

Synnovis provides critical blood and tissue testing services across the NHS in South East London.

It is a private partnership between Guy's and St Thomas (GSTT) and Kings College Hospital Trusts and the huge tech company, Synlab.

The cyber attack meant that blood tests were significantly delayed, causing havoc for GPs and leading to a national shortage of crucial O negative blood. It caused significant harm to some patients and extra work for staff who are already overworked.

The cost-cutting that led to this cyber security blunder by Synnovis, with real risk to patients, illustrates the danger the private sector brings to the NHS.

Unite activists at GSTT have fought battles with Synnovis for years, and say the new Synnovis hub at GSTT is dangerously unfit for purpose.

The centralisation of pathology also damages clinical relationships between patients and staff, affecting patient care.

It is time for Labour to put an end to dangerous instances of private involvement in the NHS.

## PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVES: BACK TO HAUNT US

The clear lesson from New Labour in the 2000s was that investment in the NHS improves services and public satisfaction. Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) do not.

If the NHS is not rebuilt, the economy may collapse as health inequalities worsen and more people are unfit for work.

Lord Darzi pointed out the huge lack of capital investment (£37bn) in the NHS and its damage to productivity. A staggering 20% of primary care buildings are older than the NHS. The backlog maintenance bill now stands at £13.8 bn. The 2024 autumn budget provided only an additional £3.1bn capital over two years. Meanwhile, Labour's manifesto pledge to implement the new hospital building programme was quickly dropped.

A zombie idea is one that was dead and buried but somehow manages to return and charm a new generation of policy makers. PFI deals involve paying a private company to borrow money to fund an infrastructure project at much higher interest rates than it costs the government to borrow. Despite PFIs being abandoned by common consent as poor value for money in 2018, it is being rehabilitated for the same bad reason - an attempt to disguise public spending.

The NHS Confederation (representing commissioning and provider organisations) clings to the mistaken view that the public purse is empty, and that bringing private capital into the NHS is the solution. Amanda Pritchard, NHS England Chief Executive, endorsed this shortly before her resignation. Others in the Department of Health push the bizarre idea that the NHS 'can no longer de-

pend on free capital'.

Wes Streeting is 'very sympathetic to this point of view,' while noting 'PFI deals lumbered the NHS with an enormous cost that it continues to bear'. In fact, £80bn of contracts delivered just £13bn of assets and included lucrative estate management provisions where private sector 'efficiency' meant driving down the terms and conditions of workers.

For a government committed to national renewal, the current NHS crisis demands evidence-based decisions rather than recycling past failures.

The creation of the NHS in 1948 despite the war-ravaged economy clearly shows that when there is the political will, money can be found for welfare. More recently, we have the examples of £445bn to bail out the banks and £450bn for the Covid furlough scheme.

The bottom line remains that the government can borrow more cheaply than the private sector, and the debt that has to be repaid is much lower if public money is used to build new hospital facilities.

The government must re-bury the zombie and attend once again 'the magic money tree' growing in its own garden.

**SIGN UP TO OUR MAILING LIST:**



# LABOUR'S NHS POWER GRAB: CUTS, OUTSOURCING, PRIVATISATION

Nine months since the general election, Labour has ditched pledges to fund new hospitals, to roll back outsourcing, failed to address the crisis in emergency care and postponed fixing social care.

Lord Darzi warned that the 2012 Lansley Act left management capability now behind where it was in 2011.

Since 2012, in NHS England's commissioning role, it has contracted out services which has been wasteful and damaging, especially alongside record underinvestment.

In March, Keir Starmer declared that NHSE will be entirely abolished. Streeting and Starmer justify this shocking move by arguing that it saves money.

However, the estimated £500m from cutting 10,000 jobs is insignificant given the £425bn cumulative underspend the NHS has suffered through austerity. It is a fraction of the £6.6 billion NHS overspend the Department of Health is bent on avoiding.

Integrated Care Boards are to be cut by 50% and shocked NHS workers face up to 30,000 job losses.

Labour argues that abolishing NHS England brings 'the NHS back under democratic control.'



However, the government has not asked the public for their view on the return of New Labour figures like Milburn to key positions of influence. Nor has it consulted the public on the huge NHS data contract with spy-tech firm Palantir, or the expansion of profit-hungry private companies into the NHS.

Reports have repeatedly shown that the NHS is the most efficient among health services of rich countries.

Investment in the NHS during the Blair-Brown years demonstrated that only real funding can decrease waiting lists and improve public satisfaction.

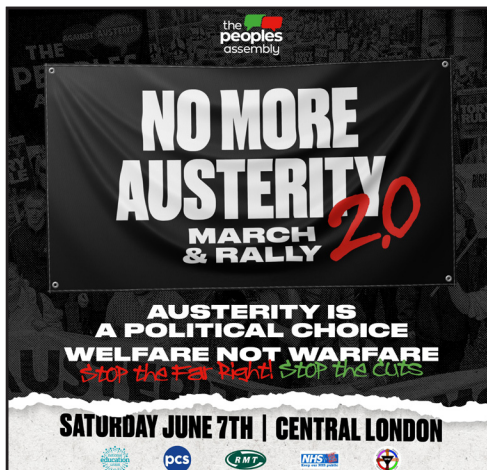
Labour now chooses to ignore this

in favour of frantic cuts to the NHS and big investment in the private sector in the name of 'reform'.

This means services slow to improve, waiting lists remaining long, and an electorate cheated of the hope that a Labour government would mean change for the better.

After this power grab, it is clear that Streeting and the Labour government must be held to account if they fail to restore a healthy NHS to meet the needs of the population.

The case for a publicly funded, provided and accountable NHS, restored to its founding principles has never been stronger.



## NO MORE AUSTERITY: MARCH FOR OUR NHS ON JUNE 7

Keep Our NHS Public and Health Campaigns Together are pleased to be supporting the People's Assembly anti-austerity demonstration in Central London on June 7.

We are calling on all NHS activists to join us on this crucial day.

The demonstration will bring together trade unions, campaign groups and community organisations to demand

Keir Starmer's government stop the cuts, and spend on welfare not warfare.

Austerity is not an inevitability, but a political choice. By spending money on arms rather than disability benefits, public services, social security and our NHS, this government is actively impoverishing us.

We say no, and we mean it.

[THEPEOPLESASSEMBLY.ORG.UK](http://THEPEOPLESASSEMBLY.ORG.UK)