# Derriford hospital announces huge cuts

Plymouth Socialist Party members

Derriford Hospital, the major health facility in west Devon and Cornwall, has announced massive cuts. Following an 8% cut to its budget, managers are seeking to make cuts of £31 million which will lead to reduced care for patients and hundreds of job losses.

The hospital's income has been reduced for the first time in a decade, following the Con-Dem government's austerity programme, combined with the rocketing costs of the government's unwanted and dangerous restructuring programme.

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Staff will face the prospect of compulsory redundancies and enforced reductions in incremental and sickness pay, with £17 million of the £31 million in cuts being aimed at the pay bill. This follows £20 million in 'savings' made last year in which low-paid workers bore the brunt, with pay cuts for part-time nurses.

Paul Roberts, Plymouth Hospitals' chief executive, warned that the number of posts at Derriford would be "significantly reduced".

In addition to cuts in staffing levels and pay, two operating theatres will be shut, 130 beds will be lost and outpatient clinics will be reduced, all real cuts in the service people receive. There will be further reductions in temporary staffing, mean-



NHS cuts and privatisation: coming to a hospital near you? photo Paul Mattsson

ing reduced care on the wards.

The management has argued that the cuts will not reduce services, but many people in Plymouth are very concerned by the announcement.

The Socialist Party in Plymouth is aiming to start a city-wide cam-

paign against the health cuts and is in discussion with union activists on how to develop this. We are the only voice in the city arguing for a publicly-owned and fully funded NHS and will continue to fight for the rights of NHS workers and patients.

## The difference a union makes

An east London Socialist Party member

An example of the utter inability of capitalism to answer the basic needs of society, and its young people particularly, was provided to me by my own family recently.

My daughter's boyfriend has a degree which he attained last year. Having recently moved in together, he had been hopeful of finding decent employment with his degree after several low paid jobs.

Aged 23, he was taken on in the South West by a company at a basic salary of £12,000 a year plus 10% on any deal.

The job entailed selling upgrades on mobile phone tariffs, making sure it is appropriate and the customer has a suitable phone or cash back amount, largely as a reward/gift for staying with the same phone company.

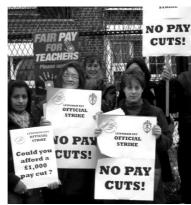


photo Lewisham SP

Very soon a management consultancy firm came in and took over the recruitment and human resources side of the company. They brought in seven or eight young workers who were previously door-to-door salespeople. They were then set working for 100% commission.

Shortly afterwards my daughter's

boyfriend was asked, with reference to job security, to move over to 100% commission sales.

The way in which he has been asked to sell upgrades has changed to firstly telling customers about a 'loyalty scheme' where they are due money back.

This also involves targeting specific groups, often the elderly and people with poor English, in the hope of landing sales on often wholly inappropriate packages.

This has now led to daily earnings of as little as £20 a day or less and a move from monthly to weekly (cash) wages.

There was no union organisation in the workplace.

But our discussion revealed to both my daughter and her boyfriend the differences for workers between unionised workplaces, such as mine, and non-unionised workplaces such as his and the one my daughter works in.

### the Socialist postbag

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#### Oppose all cuts!

A motion was submitted to the National Union of Students (NUS) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans conference entitled 'No to Cuts', which amongst other things called on councils to "reject all cuts, as seen in Lambeth and Liverpool during the 1980s" and called on the NUS LGBT campaign to oppose "all cuts to public services and privatisation of infrastructure".

Unfortunately these two sections were removed and replaced with demands that councils protect LGBT frontline services, and that the campaign simply opposes the government's austerity plan

This stance isn't good enough - we need to oppose all cuts. We need to call on councils to follow the example set by Liverpool's 1983-87 socialist-led council by voting against all cuts and instead proposing 'needs' budgets.

Unless NUS LGBT opposes all cuts it is unlikely that they will succeed in their campaign to stop attacks on LGBT services, let alone the attacks on the jobs, services and conditions that we all require

Liat Norris

Stoke

#### **Hardest Hit**

I went along to the Hardest Hit demonstration on 11 May in central London. There were over 5,000 marchers, including people with various levels of disability, carers, support staff, trade unionists from all sections of society and community groups, Remploy and the National Shop Stewards Network. It should be noted that Unison was not supporting the march as they had is

supporting the march as they had issues with some of the big charities who were said to be anti-trade union.

Yet at a recent South East Region Trade

Union Congress (SERTUC) Disability Network meeting this was reported and an amendment was put forward supporting the Hardest Hit march, though raising concerns over the anti-trade union approach of some charities.

Pat Atkinson

Unite and SERTUC Disability Network (personal capacity)

#### **GP** commissioning

There is a lot of talk about general practitioners taking over the commis-

sioning of health care. I went to see my GP earlier this year. When you go in you touch a screen to register. Then you sit in front of another screen to wait to find out which room to go to. The screen also puts up information - like 'have you had your flu jab?' and 'did you know you can hire a room at the surgery?'

What also came up was info that the average consultation with a GP lasts seven minutes, so the helpful suggestion is if you have questions for the doctor get them asked early so you do not feel rushed. Then the advice says if you will need to be examined do not wear tight-fitting clothes as this can waste time, there is a cartoon-like character struggling to get his jumper off, which is clearly wasting time.

What I thought though was if GPs are so stretched for time how will they be able to commission health care as well? Or will they have to employ private firms to do it for them?

Pete

Worcester

#### **Cut-price royals**

I have just been into the Birmingham city centre branch of a cut price book shop to see on sale, discounted from the publisher's price of £20 to £7.99, a book about happy Royal couple Wills and Kate complete with cover picture of what looked suspiciously like a wedding photo. It remains to be seen how many people will even waste £7.99 on such pap but to go from blanket media publicity and associated fawning to cut price bookshop in two weeks must be something of a record.

Despite the best efforts of the media and Royal spin doctors, large swathes of the population regard the rich goodfor-nothing royals as an irrelevance compared with their day to day struggles to keep their heads above water.

#### Clive Walder

Birmingham Socialist Party

#### Time to spare

Is it true that David Laws, the Liberal Democrat MP and former cabinet minister, intends to use the time of his suspension from the House of Commons to achieve his long term ambition to learn to play the fiddle?

Niall Peston

Bristol

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