



HANDS OFF OUR NHS!

- Kill the bill. Stop Tory health minister Andrew Lansley turning the clock back on healthcare in Britain. We want free, accessible, high quality and publicly funded healthcare.
- No cuts, closures or job losses in the NHS.
- No mergers, or any other 'reorganisation', on anything other than clinical grounds.
- End the postcode lottery. Fully-funded, high quality, healthcare should be accessible in every area.
- Kick big business out of the NHS. End PFI and refuse to pay the debt.
- Nationalise the pharmaceutical companies under democratic control and integrate them into the NHS.
- For mass action to defend the NHS with trade union strike action at its heart



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The government have launched an unprecedented attack on our NHS. The Tories and Liberals want to break-up the NHS and sell it off to their big business mates to run for profit. They deny this, but everything they are doing points in that direction. But it's not their health service to give away! The millionaire ministers and privileged MPs can afford private healthcare for themselves and their families. They don't care if we have to put up with under-funded and under-staffed hospitals. Unsurprisingly, 56 out of the 70 hospitals currently in 'financial difficulties' are in deprived communities.

But any 'financial difficulties' have been created by the government and Blair and Brown's Labour governments before them. They choose to under-fund the NHS. They make cuts, force through mergers to save money, and attack the pay and pensions of hardworking NHS staff. But they can find the money when they want to! The Tory health

minister, Andrew Lansley, has found £1.5 billion to meet the debts of NHS trusts struggling to repay big business PFI loans. How many nurses could be employed for the same money? Again, private profit is put before public welfare. The last Labour government saddled the NHS with £215 billion of repayments to big business for building projects worth only £55-65 billion. The Con-Dem government is carrying on this theft of public money for big business.

The government's timetable would see every NHS Trust turned into a 'foundation' trust by 2014. More than half of all NHS Trusts have already been forced down this road. A 'foundation' trust is preparation for privatisation. It is a 'reorganisation' not driven by clinical priorities but by the financial bottom line. They want to create neat little units, with balanced books, so it's easier to sell-off hassle free when they think they can get away with it. Scandalously it has even been proposed that

the credit rating agencies – currently helping the bond market profiteers bankrupt entire countries across Europe – would be brought in to assess whether hospitals and other services are 'financially robust'.

The same motivation lies behind plans to require GPs to form 'consortiums' – i.e. businesses – and take over responsibility for commissioning services from 'any provider' – i.e. businesses. Doctors would have to take over procurement and other administrative jobs. Either that, or hire in private management firms – i.e. businesses – to do it for them! There are already reports of doctors sending themselves on accounting courses in preparation. Do we really want our family doctors worrying about their balance sheets when they should be focusing on providing the best care possible?

Nobody wants these changes, least of all the doctors, nurses and other health workers who actually run our hospitals, clinics and surgeries! Every professional body, every health expert, says that Lansley's reforms threaten the NHS. On 30 November, the government provoked the first national strike in the NHS for over 20 years by attacking health workers' pensions. In London, the police had to help cover 999 calls. Now, the doctors and the nurses' trade unions are justifiably threatening strike action! The government has severely miscalculated. They will not be able to get away with this attack.

Socialist principles were at the core of the NHS when it was set up – health care, available to all, free at the point of use, was a massive victory for working class people. And working class people will fight to defend it from the millionaire politicians and the big business vultures. We need to organise a massive movement including demonstrations and strike action.

TRADE UNIONIST AND
SOCIALIST COALITION

WWW.TUSC.ORG.UK

The Tories, Lib Dems and Labour will never run the NHS in the interests of working class people. They are parties of big business. The Labour Party that set up the NHS in the 1940s is dead and no amount of expert care can revive it. It is survived by New Labour, a party that embraces the austerity of the government and promises not to reverse a single cut. We need to build a new party.

The Socialist Party played a leading role in setting up the Trade Unionist & Socialist Coalition (TUSC). We see this as an important step towards building a new party. TUSC is supported by leading members of the RMT transport union and the PCS civil service union. TUSC takes up all the issues that working class people are concerned about. Campaigns against NHS cuts have won councillors and even MPs in recent years. Anti-cuts campaigners are invited to stand their activists under the banner of TUSC in any forthcoming elections.