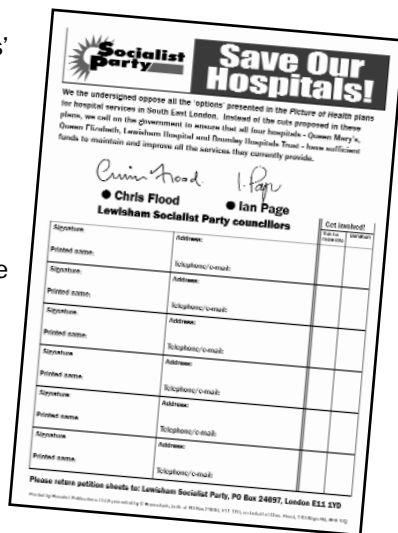


▶ Say NO to all the **Picture of Health 'options'**

The establishment politicians only listen when public protests force them to. That's why Lewisham's Socialist Party councillors **Chris Flood** and **Ian Page** are collecting signatures for a petition opposing *all* the 'options' in the *Picture of Health* plans.

With your support they aim to push Lewisham council to use its legal powers to fight for all the four south east London hospitals affected by *A Picture of Health* - Queen Mary's, Queen Elizabeth, Lewisham Hospital and Bromley Hospitals Trust - to have the funds they need to maintain and improve all the services they currently provide.

If you want to sign the petition, take copies for your friends and neighbours to sign, or can help in any other way, please contact Lewisham Socialist Party (see below).



Campaigning to defend our NHS. Ian Page (top picture, with the placard) and Chris Flood (below).

I would like to sign the petition help give out leaflets in my area join the Socialist Party get more info

Name.....
 Address.....
 Telephone.....
 E:mail.....

Send to the Socialist Party, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD
 Phone: 020 8988 8777 e-mail: info@socialistparty.org.uk
 www.socialistparty.org.uk

LEWISHAM councillor Chris Flood is a psychiatric nurse and a health service researcher:

"I WAS an elected trade union representative (a shop steward) in the NUPE union (now part of UNISON) from the late 1980s.

"In the early 1990s under the last Tory government I was involved in a campaign to keep Charing Cross Hospital open. The Tomlinson report into hospital services in London had highlighted it as a hospital that could be closed.

"The workers and the union led a campaign which threatened occupation if necessary to save the hospital. It got a lot of support from NHS workers and the general public and successfully kept that hospital open - it's still open to this day.

"I have never forgotten that campaign - through this fight, many people got to see the power of collective struggle. If we fight together, we can win battles.

"It says a lot about how similar the establishment parties have become that the campaign then was against a Tory government but now it's a New Labour government threatening our NHS. But if we show the same determination today we can stop the *Picture of Health* cuts and keep our NHS public".

www.socialistparty.org.uk
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 info@socialistparty.org.uk



Socialist News

An update on the NHS from Lewisham's Socialist Party councillors
Chris Flood and Ian Page

The *real* picture

▶ Hospitals pay the price for New Labour's 'private finance' policies

HOSPITAL SERVICES in South East London are under threat. The *Picture of Health* leaflets (right) that have come through our doors try to re-assure us. The plans to 're-organise' hospital services, they say, are being driven by 'clinical needs'. *But that's not the real picture...*

- The Accident & Emergency (A&E) department at Sidcup's Queen Mary's Hospital will close, and two of the three *Picture of Health* 'options' will see Lewisham's A&E close as well. Yet A&E services in South East London are already overstretched.

- The Maternity Unit will be closed at Queen Mary's and, again in two of the three 'options', at Lewisham Hospital as well.

- Bed occupancy rates in South East London's hospitals are already above the recommended maximum level for the safe handling of MRSA. The *Picture of Health* proposals will make things worse.

- The re-organisation is really about cutting public spending and getting the NHS ready for private companies to profit from our health services. The *Picture of Health* report says that South East London hospitals are operating at a £400,000 a week 'deficit'. But that's far less than the extra weekly costs of the 'private finance initiative' (PFI) schemes at the Queen Elizabeth, Lewisham and Bromley hospitals. Private profit is being put before public services!

The *Picture of Health* consultation ended in April but decisions won't be announced until June. Facing public opposition to the plans, local politicians from the establishment parties - New Labour, Tory and the Lib Dems - are saying that they oppose this or that point in the *Picture of Health* plans. But they all accept that 'cuts must be made' and support the 'NHS market' policies behind the plans. Their voting record on the council shows that the NHS is not safe in their hands. **That's why we have to keep the pressure on to stop cuts to our hospitals. Sign the petition. Help give out leaflets. Get involved. (See back page for how)**



Inside:

▶ **Put people before profits!**
 New Labour's 'NHS market' policies are behind the *Picture of Health* plans

▶ **Councillors' real record**
 Local politicians say they 'support the NHS', but how have they voted in the council chamber?

▶ **Get involved**
 Sign the petition against *all* the *Picture of Health* cuts 'options'



What the *Picture of Health* plans really mean

A *Picture of Health* is a blueprint for hospital cuts, dressed up as a new initiative to improve health services.

All three 'options' in the report would scrap the Accident and Emergency (A&E), Maternity and Children's Inpatients units at Sidcup's Queen Mary's Hospital. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Woolwich and the Princess Royal Hospital in Bromley would lose planned inpatients and day surgery units to become 'specialist hospitals'. Two of the three 'options' for Lewisham Hospital would close A&E, Maternity and Children's Inpatients services there.

Are there any clinical arguments for these plans? Far from having too many A&E units, South East London services are already overstretched. Attendances at A&E have grown by 28% between 2002 and 2006, compared to an average of 13% for England. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital would be expected to increase its emergency admissions by 40% under the plans - even though it often diverts ambulances to Queen Mary's because of lack of beds.

It shouldn't be a surprise. But an authoritative five-year study of 10,000 patients by the Medical Care Research Unit at Sheffield University, published last year, found that "increased journey distance to hospital for all emergency patients" leads to "an increase in mortality for patients with life-threatening medical emergencies". But *A Picture of Health* doesn't even discuss this evidence.

Then there's the issue of hospital beds. Bed occupancy rates in South East London's hospitals are already above the recommended maximum level for the safe handling of MRSA and other hospital-acquired infections: 13% more for geriatric beds and 5% for general and acute beds. The *Picture of Health* plans would cut at least one in ten beds.

In reality these plans are about cutting public spending and preparing for an ever greater involvement of private companies in the NHS. The NHS 'market reforms', making hospitals and different parts of the health service 'compete' with each other, are wasting billions of pounds on administration - and, from April, competitive advertising! **But they will make it easier for American-style private health companies to step in to the most profitable parts. And that's what *A Picture of Health* is all about.**



Marching to keep the NHS public - but New Labour councillors wouldn't back the pensioners' campaign (see opposite page)

PFI - Profiteering From Illness

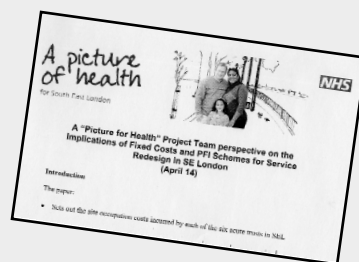
THERE IS no clinical case for any of the cuts in hospital services proposed in the *Picture of Health* plans. But even the details of *where* the cuts are to fall are being dictated by commercial considerations!

One *Picture of Health* report, buried away amongst all the glossy publicity, lets slip the real reason why Queen Mary's Hospital will be hardest hit - because it is "the site where there is the greatest scope to reduce fixed costs". If services

are cut at Queen Mary's, it says, "then the surplus estate [buildings and land] can be sold or leased". [Source: *Implications of fixed costs and PFI schemes for service redesign in SE London, April 2007*]

In contrast, the report admits, both Queen Elizabeth and Bromley hospitals are locked into massive Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts for between 30 and 35 years which carry extremely punitive penalty clauses. Bromley has to pay out £12.2 million a year more than it would do if private companies weren't involved, and Queen Elizabeth £8.9 million more. Because they are locked into these contracts and Queen Mary isn't, this makes it easier - and more profitable - to close services at Queen Mary's and sell off the land.

How can they say with a straight face that New Labour's 'NHS market' policies are putting patients' needs ahead of private profit?



The report that admits that PFI costs are behind the cuts plans



Councillors' Report



Facing public opposition to cutting our hospital services, local politicians from the establishment parties - New Labour, Tory and Lib Dem - are 'voicing concerns' about this or that point in the *Picture of Health* plans. But what is their real record on the NHS?

In Lewisham there are two Socialist Party councillors, Chris Flood and Ian Page (pictured top right). And since the local elections in 2006 Lewisham has been a 'hung council', with no party having an overall majority. With Chris and Ian there to put them on the spot, it has been easier to see exactly where each party stands. So how have Lewisham councillors voted on the key decisions affecting local health services?

Where did our local politicians really stand?

| | Socialist Party | New Labour | Lib Dems | The Tories | The Greens |
|---|-----------------|------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Opposing ward closures at Lewisham Hospital? | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Keeping private profit out of the NHS? | Yes | No | No | No | Yes |
| Defending community health services? | Yes | No | No | No | Abs |

▶ Opposing ward closures at Lewisham Hospital

EARLY IN 2006 Lewisham Hospital managers announced plans to close three wards and sack hospital staff, to meet a funding shortfall of £7 million.

In response, the Socialist Party councillors **Chris Flood** and **Ian Page** moved the following resolution at the 1st March 2006 council meeting:

"These cuts and closures will not serve the population of Lewisham well and this council calls on the government to fund Lewisham's health services' deficit to enable these and other planned cuts to be averted".

The Socialist Party councillors voted for the motion, but the New Labour, Liberal Democrat, Tory and Green councillors voted against. If you were a councillor, how would you have voted?

▶ Defending community health services

EVERYBODY AGREES that there should be more community health services and care delivered as close to home as possible. That means co-ordinating services with local councils.

But when Lewisham council discussed its budget plans for 2008-09, the New Labour mayor of Lewisham, Sir Steve Bullock, proposed to cut Adult Social Care assessment staff, Children and Adolescent Mental Health services, and social workers based at Lewisham Hospital. **Chris Flood** and **Ian Page** moved an alternative budget at the 3rd

March council meeting opposing these cuts.

The Socialist Party councillors voted to keep these services. The New Labour, Liberal Democrat and Tory councillors voted to cut them. The Green councillors abstained.

Did they tell us, when they stood for election in 2006, that they would cut local health services?

▶ Keeping private profit out of the NHS

IN THE Autumn of 2006 local councillors and MPs were contacted by the Lewisham Pensioners' Forum, who wanted the council to add its voice in opposition to the 'market restructuring' of the NHS - the results of which we are seeing now in the *Picture of Health* plans. After consulting the Pensioners' Forum, **Chris Flood** presented a resolution to the 20th September council meeting:

"This council endorses the recently expressed views of the Lewisham Pensioners' Forum which welcomed the increased public funding for the NHS but is concerned about the billions going into restructuring on market lines, the millions being paid to management consultants and financial advisers, and the drain upon hospital budgets from the long term financial burden of PFI loans.

"This council joins with the Pensioners' Forum in calling upon the government for an immediate halt to these costly and wasteful measures".

This time the Green Party councillors backed the motion along with the Socialist Party, but the New Labour, Liberal Democrat and Tory councillors all voted against.