

JUNIOR DOCTORS STAND FIRM

UNITED WORKERS' ACTION CAN STOP HUNT AND SAVE THE NHS

WE SUGGEST THE NEXT STEPS SHOULD INCLUDE:

- Mass joint trade union meetings to discuss the next steps
- United local trade union and community protests to compel Trusts to maintain the existing nationally agreed contracts
- Call on Jeremy Corbyn to instigate an emergency meeting of the Labour NEC and TUC to look at organising a mass demonstration and solidarity action in support of the Junior Doctors and to save the NHS
- Co-ordinated strike action across the NHS in defence of pay and terms and conditions as a step towards a 24-hour general strike

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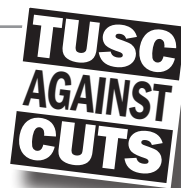
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ORGANISE NOW TO KILL OFF HUNT'S CONTRACT

Junior doctors have launched a magnificent battle in defence of their contracts and against privatisation of the NHS. Their strikes have revealed a determined workforce united in struggle. There was solidarity from other trade unionists and from the public. Some online polls put public support at over 90%.

But the strike has also revealed intransigence on the side of the Tory government. Behind them stand the private healthcare companies. These vultures see public services and particularly health as extremely lucrative. Tory Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt is legislating to aid their profiteering aims, including by driving down workers' pay. The Tories also want to continue to slash government expenditure to further their aim of reducing corporation tax for big business and income tax for the rich.

Hunt falsely claims his contract is about improving weekend service. But it means doctors working longer hours for less pay. Junior doctors already provide seven-day emergency service. Improving this requires investment.

On the day after the last strike Hunt announced that he will impose a contract on the 45,000 junior doctors. The BMA has pledged to fight this imposition and must have the full backing of the trade union movement and of the 99% who rely on the NHS and want to defend it.

If Hunt is successful in imposing this contract, consultants and GPs are likely to be his next target. He could then attack Agenda for Change workers' terms and conditions while student nurses will lose their bursaries. But the Tories can be defeated.

MASS ACTION IS URGENTLY NEEDED

The most important thing is for the BMA to stand firm and to set new dates for strikes. They should also make an appeal for concrete solidarity action from the trade union movement. This will show Hunt that he will not succeed.

Mass joint trade union meetings are necessary to discuss the next steps for the dispute. Socialist Party members across the trade union movement are inviting BMA members to trade union meetings and campaigning for joint meetings in hospitals.

It was a welcome sight when John McDonnell, Labour's shadow chancellor, visited the doctors' picket lines in January. But he faced criticism from the pro-privatisation MPs in his own party. To build on his very popular call to defend the NHS, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn should instigate an emergency meeting of the Labour NEC and TUC to look at organising a mass demonstration and solidarity action in support of the Junior Doctors and to save the NHS.

Hunt and the Tories were elected with only 24% of the vote. They have no mandate for

their destruction of the NHS. A well-prepared national demo and an ongoing and escalating programme of industrial action would reveal the mass opposition to this attack on the doctors and the health system.

As well as the junior doctors' strikes, the midwives first ever strike in 2014 and the recent special conference of GPs to discuss the crisis in general practice are signs of a growing feeling that the Tories' destruction must be resisted. This needs to be tapped and turned into effective action.

Co-ordinated strike action across the NHS in defence of pay and terms and conditions must now be discussed and fought for in all the health trade unions. This could form a step towards a 24-hour general strike of which would have the potential to defeat this imposition and shake this weak Tory government to its core.

MAKE HUNT'S CONTRACT UNWORKABLE

These vital tactics can be combined with applying pressure to Hospital Trusts. Hunt already faces opposition among the Trust chief execs he claimed supported him. And he cannot compel the 152 Foundation Trusts to impose his contract.

But the BMA, backed by trade unions, trades councils, health campaigners and the community, could compel Trusts to maintain the existing national agreement and not impose Hunt's contract. Over 50 junior doctors at St George's Trust have written to the chief executive there asking him to resist Hunt. Such actions could be combined with mobilising big protests to pressure Trustees to confirm non-imposition.

The junior doctors can win. But they have rightly said that the health service must be defended on all fronts. This needs a socialist programme for the NHS which would reverse all privatisation, scrap PFI and end all the cuts in pay, pensions and services. Nationalising the pharmaceutical industry would save billions of pounds. Democratic socialist planning of a publicly owned and run NHS with the full funding needed would end the real threat it now faces to its existence.

Do you agree?

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