



What is happening to our NHS?

The NHS is undergoing massive change. Since 1948 it has been a publicly funded, publicly provided health service, free to all at the point of need. In 2010 public satisfaction with the NHS was at its highest recorded level.

Now the Coalition's NHS reforms have put all this achievement at risk. Across the country NHS services are under increasing pressure, hit by a quadruple whammy

- ◇ *Expensive, wasteful, unnecessary reforms aimed at opening the NHS to the market;*
- ◇ *The NHS has to save £5 billion a year leading to staff cuts, and treatment rationing;*
- ◇ *NHS money flowing into the private sector because of high interest payments for money borrowed under the Private Finance Initiative (introduced by Labour)*
- ◇ *Austerity policies are damaging health all over Europe. Other government cuts reduce benefits and services like social care, advice and libraries.*

Many NHS bodies are in financial deficit, mostly for historical reasons or because of PFI payments. So the Government declares these units are failing, should be put into administration and, if necessary, given to the private sector to run. Since campaigners in Lewisham won a court case against them, they are even introducing a law (in the Care Bill) to interfere with successful hospitals without public consultation. Also **the new gagging law will restrict campaigning to save the NHS from next September.**

The Conservatives, many of whom have financial interests in private health firms, think the private sector can run the NHS better. They use a constant drip of stories about NHS failings to undermine people's faith in the NHS even though these failings can often be traced to financial pressure or the introduction of commercial priorities.

In many parts of England the NHS is being broken up with services being handed to private companies like SERCO and Virgin, thus enabling them to use the NHS logo to make profits for their owners. Of 57 clinical service contracts awarded in England between April and December 2013, 39 went to the private sector. A possible new trade agreement between the EU and the USA will give multinationals even greater advantage because the government will not exclude health care. Charges are under consideration.

Does privatisation work? NO. Private companies generally bid as low as they can so as to win the bidding competition. They then can't deliver on the contracts. SERCO's community services in Devon and Cornwall and in Suffolk have run into big trouble.

The government even wants to be able to sell these companies our GP medical records if we don't individually opt out by March by writing a letter to our GP.

DID WE AGREE TO ALL THIS? NO! It wasn't in any manifesto

SHEFFIELD SAVE OUR NHS

WE STAND FOR:

- ◇ A publicly owned health service that puts people before profit!
- ◇ An open, accountable and democratically run health service!
- ◇ Quality, accessible health care free at the point of delivery for all!

So what is happening in Sheffield and South Yorkshire?

We're lucky to have good quality NHS services and a Clinical Commissioning Group (led by GPs) which believes in partnership rather than competition. The CCG has only gone to outside tender when forced by the government or when there has been no local NHS provider. Campaigns against threatened cuts have been at least partially successful. However there is great pressure on NHS providers like the Hospital Trusts and the Ambulance Service. Some services are being rationed and staff often work under huge stress. The CCG wants to base more services in the community but this has its dangers, especially if the next government pursues privatisation vigorously. Sheffield Children's Hospital is marketing itself as an international centre to increase non-NHS income.

Probably the biggest threat is from Council cuts. From 2015 £25.5m local NHS money will be transferred by the government to a Better Care Fund run jointly by the Council and the CCG. It looks like public health money (transferred to the local authority from the NHS) will be used to try and support community groups running libraries. But there is a limit to such diversions of NHS money and it does mean there is less funding available for health services.

NHS services in Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster may be even more vulnerable, especially at Rotherham DGH where 750 redundancies were announced last year.

UP AND DOWN THE COUNTRY – FROM THE SOUTH COAST TO THE NORTH EAST - THE ONLY WAY TO FIGHT CUTS AND PRIVATISATION HAS BEEN TO MOBILISE PUBLIC SUPPORT – ON THE STREETS AND ON THE WEB

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Keep up the Campaign to defend the NHS** by joining a local or national campaign group (Sheffield Save Our NHS, Barnsley Save Our NHS, Keep Our NHS Public, 38 degrees), and opposing plans to break up NHS services and introduce private sector competitors
- **Watch out for rationing, private sector NHS adverts, and top up charges**
- **Report cuts or other developments which worry you** either as a patient or a member of the public. Email us at team@sheffieldsaveournhs.co.uk. Tell your MP.
- **Get involved with Sheffield Healthwatch** at www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk
- If you want your healthcare to be provided where possible by genuine NHS services (not private companies), **ask your GP to mark your medical notes 'No Private Provider'**
- **Visit our websites for information** about developments and our meetings.

Remember that by March 2014 you must have decided whether to opt out from having your personal records centralised and made more accessible to researchers, other state agencies, and private companies by telling your GP.