



Privatised?

Please read the inside article by Max Pemberton, an NHS doctor and well respected medical journalist, writing in 'The Daily Telegraph' of 25 July 2011. **Bit by bit, your healthcare will be thrown open to private companies - just as in the USA- unless you put pressure on your MP now.**

“But what can I do??”

1. Write to your MP. **Tell them to vote against the Health and Social Care Bill on 7 September.** Not sure who your MP is? You can find out at: <http://www.writetothem.com>.
2. Write to members of the House of Lords who will be debating the Bill in September. Adopt a peer by getting details from <http://www.goingtowork.org.uk/peers/>
3. Go to: <http://38degrees.org.uk> and join the campaign to save the NHS - tell your friends and family what will happen to our NHS if we don't fight for it now.
4. Join up with **Sheffield Save our NHS**
MARCH 3 Sept. 11am outside the Hallamshire Hospital
VIGIL 6th September 5 pm outside Sheffield Town Hall

Together, we can stop the privatisation of our NHS

<http://www.sheffieldsaveournhs.co.uk>

The day they signed the death warrant for the NHS.

Andrew Lansley has announced that, from next April, NHS services worth £1 billion will be opened up to competitive bids from the private sector. Eight NHS services will be opened up to the private sector.

By Dr Max Pemberton of The Daily Telegraph, 25 July 2011

You might think that historians will record last Tuesday as the day the Murdoch empire was brought to book by MPs. Yet I suspect that in years to come, they will realise the significance of that day, not for the phone-hacking scandal but for the health service. While the nation's attention was focused on the most powerful man in the media attempting to dodge questions and cream pies, this was a good day to bury bad news. And the Department of Health duly obliged.

Andrew Lansley explained that from April next year, eight NHS services worth £1 billion, including musculoskeletal services for back pain, wheelchair services for children and adult community psychological therapies, will be opened up to competitive bids from the private sector. This means that in these areas, the NHS will no longer exist. Sure, the logo will still be there, but the NHS will no longer be national, any more than British Telecom is.

There is no doubt that this signals the first wave of privatising the NHS. Yet MPs of all persuasions continue to be deluded.

In a letter that has been passed to me, Stephen Williams, Liberal Democrat MP for Bristol West, assures a worried constituent that the NHS Reform Bill will "improve the NHS and therefore definitely not lead to the privatisation of services". Doubtless Mr Williams means this sincerely. But I wonder if he has actually read the Bill. I telephoned and asked him: no, he hadn't. The problem is that the MPs who are voting on this assume that the Bill's content reflects the Government's White Paper on the NHS, published last summer. I have read both and it is clear to me that the White Paper bears little relation to the legislation that is being pushed through.

The White Paper is a docile, fluffy, patient-focused document, with much talk of choice and empowerment. This is in stark contrast to the Bill, which almost exclusively focuses on opening up the NHS to private providers. The Bill is written in dense legal terminology, making any detailed analysis time-consuming and difficult. But anyone who does study it will find little more than a road map for destroying the NHS, turning it into a cash cow for the corporate sector. The focus is on transforming public sector provision into an entirely market-led system, throwing open every service to private providers.

Previous pieces of legislation that existed to ensure the NHS remained in public ownership are weakened or removed entirely in the Bill. Even the role of Secretary of State is altered so that he is no longer responsible for the NHS. There are 15 clauses (ss125-131, 168-175) that will allow private companies to buy and asset-strip NHS facilities. Clause s12 specifically enables the privatisation of high-security psychiatric services.

Does that sound as if the NHS, or the interests of patients, are being protected?

The concessions made by Lansley after the “listening exercise” were initially heralded as an acceptable compromise but, in reality, little has changed. For example, “any willing provider”, a phrase taken from EU procurement directives, has been changed to “any qualified provider”. This type of amendment does not help protect the NHS. The competitive commissioning process it refers to remains unchanged. After Lansley’s announcement last Tuesday, the BMA Council said that **the Government is misleading the public** by repeatedly stating that there will be no privatisation of the NHS and is continuing its campaign for the Health Bill to be withdrawn.

Yet MPs are defending the Bill without properly understanding it or even reading it. Cloak and dagger tactics are used to minimise any public outcry when key announcements are made.

The health secretary and the Prime Minister assure us the NHS will not be privatised when the legislation they are pushing through explicitly suggests otherwise.

The Bill enters the report stage and third reading on September 6 and 7. At the end of this, MPs will be voting on the future of your NHS. Is it safe in their hands?

WARNING:

THE GOVERNMENT CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH SERVICE

The health service is in serious danger. The government's NHS reforms, unwanted by almost everyone except the private companies being lined up to profit from our health service, have so far cost £1.49 billion, £160m more than the original estimate and rising by £1m a day.

At the same time it is demanding "efficiency cuts" in order to meet the demands of international bankers for deficit reduction and to prepare the NHS for competition. In Sheffield community services and hospital wards are being shut down. Next months three local services will be chosen to be prepared for tendering to outside agencies. The more that the private sector gets involved, the bigger will be the risk to the fundamental principles of the NHS.

The situation is bad, but it's not hopeless. Here in Sheffield, local people fought back and won against plans to close two care homes for people with dementia. If we resist what's going on, we can make a difference. We need to build these local victories into a movement that can beat the threats to our health services on a national scale. This is a situation that affects all of us, so come and get involved.

◇ **MARCH** with us from the Hallamshire on 3rd September 11 am

◇ Join our **VIGIL** outside Sheffield Town Hall on 6th September 5 pm

◇ **WRITE** to your MP

Letter to MPs at House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

Dear

I'm contacting you today regarding Andrew Lansley's plans for the NHS. I am very concerned that these plans could ruin our health service.

The Secretary of State for Health has already announced that eight NHS services will be opened up to competitive bids from the private sector from next April.

I am very concerned that many MPs are not aware of the detail of the NHS Reform Bill and do not know that the details of the Government's White Paper on the NHS bear little relation to the legislation being pushed through. Please will you assure me that you will vote against the Bill at its third reading on September 6 and 7?

<http://www.sheffieldsaveournhs.co.uk>