

SAVE LEWISHAM HOSPITAL CAMPAIGN CONFERENCE AND DISCUSSION

NHS in Crisis

Why is our NHS under threat and what can we do to defend it?

Goldsmiths College Saturday 5 December 2015, 10.30am - 4pm

Why we need an NHS Bill

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After 25 years' of market policies, the NHS is being dismantled:

- no longer does the government have a legal duty to provide hospital and other key NHS services throughout England
- foundation trusts are now structured to be 51% NHS and 49% non-NHS – and NHS trusts have been prospectively abolished with the intention of them becoming foundation trusts, if not closed down or sold off
- services that are provided by foundation trusts and which have been protected since 2013 (Commissioner Requested Services) will lose that protection from April 2016 and Monitor expects the protected services to decrease
- tendering of services is now virtually compulsory
- Monitor has already issued 113 private provider licences
- public health has been carved out of the NHS and shared between local and central government

This situation cannot be reversed without legislation. The NHS Bill would do this.

The Bill has support from Green, Labour, Liberal Democrat, SNP and Plaid Cymru MPs – including Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell. The Bill would, in particular:

- re-establish the legal duty to provide services throughout England
- create Health Boards from the bottom-up
- end the purchaser-provider split
- abolish NHS trusts, foundation trusts, Monitor and clinical commissioning groups
- end competitive tendering
- centralise PFI obligations in the Treasury who would have an obligation to make the contracts public and to propose how to reduce the debts, by re-negotiation and in any other way possible
- assert Parliament's control over treaties (such as TTIP) that could allow international companies to provide NHS services.

The Bill is scheduled to have its second reading in the House of Commons on 11th March 2016, although this might not happen and the likelihood of it having the support of a majority of MPs is very small. But the immediately important thing is to build parliamentary support for the Bill, especially amongst Labour MPs as the party revises its health policy after the leadership election. Successful legislation will probably have to wait for a change of government, but we can work now to raise awareness of the Bill amongst the public, as well as getting support from local Labour parties and trade unions and monitoring the activities of local clinical commissioning groups and trusts.