



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION – SAVE OUR NHS

Constituency Campaign Month – January 2010

Activists Briefing

The questions outlined below are aimed to help you argue your case when you meet your MP. Remember, MPs have to deal with multiple issues on a daily basis so they may not be familiar with the proposals in the Health White Paper, or what is happening to your local health services. Don't forget – you know more about this than your MP – you're the expert!

The Coalition Government has said it has protected the NHS in England from cuts so what is the problem?

Chancellor George Osborne said the NHS would be protected from cuts but he delivered a spending review with only a miniscule 0.4 per cent increase over the next four years. This will not be enough to keep pace with the increased needs of an ageing population and new drugs and treatments and that is on top of £20 billion in "efficiency savings".

So are we seeing any cuts in the NHS then?

Yes, at a local level we are already seeing jobs and services lost. The reality is that the NHS is going to be tightly squeezed over the next few years with a miniscule increase in spending and having to find £20 billion 'efficiency savings' from now until 2014/15.

Will the plans to change how GPs services are provided mean better local services?

These changes will turn GPs into financial managers and lift the lid on private procedures in public health spaces. These reforms will turn our public health care bodies into profit not people driven organisations and will ultimately mean poorer

treatment for the poorer patients. These changes will see the return of a real postcode lottery in health on a level that we have never seen before and those that need care the most will be most affected and receive the worst services.

Will the commissioning role be more efficient?

The 52 PCTs will be replaced by 500 GP consortia, all commissioning services and will result in competition not cooperation in the NHS. The commissioning function is likely to be contracted out to private management or health companies and already the proposals have been supported by the private sector and a director from the private multi-national health company Tribal has said the proposals "could lead to the denationalisation of healthcare services in England.

What will happen to the diversity of local services currently available?

It is important that we realise that specialist services are at risk of being whittled down to a core. Services that may not be life saving but are certainly life transforming and part of a comprehensive health service may no longer be available. (Ensure that you tell your MP about the services already being cut in your area.)

Will these changes save money at a time when the Government are saying we all need to tighten our belts?

The organisational changes in the Health White Paper are expected to cost up to around £3 billion to implement. In addition, the White Paper claims that management costs will be reduced by 45% between now and 2014/15, yet we know that the 'GP commissioning' model in the White Paper creates the need for a mass of people simply to negotiate and manage contracts.

Who will be responsible for GP services ?

The very real concern here is that the GP consortia will be of varying sizes and accountable to no-one. The plans will reduce democratic accountability. Nationally, the NHS Commissioning Board will make decisions, but locally the decision making power about what services will be available will sit with the GP consortia – and may be outsourced.

Please do add to any of the above with your own experiences and any personal examples of what is happening on the ground now. It is the local, personal stories that will most make your MP sit up and take notice.

England only message:

Support the campaign to 'Save our NHS'

Before the election, David Cameron told us the NHS in England was safe in Conservative hands. It is all too clear now that this is not the case.

In addition, the coalition agreement drawn up by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats in May promised no more top down re-organisation in the NHS. The proposed Health Bill rides roughshod over this promise and sounds the death knell for the NHS as we know it.

Make it your New Year's resolution to 'Save Our NHS'.

Devolved message:

You must support the campaign to save the NHS in England

If you live and work in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, whilst these changes may not affect you directly, your MP will still have a vote on the expected Health Bill in Westminster.

Campaign with colleagues from over the border and don't let the Westminster government set a precedent to destroy the NHS as we know it.

Remember: the ConDem coalition government has drastically cut the budgets for Scotland and Wales this year, which will impact on the funding available for the devolved institutions to spend on the NHS and other public services.



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