

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE BILL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

TORIES

The common thread among the Tories on this Committee appears to be their disagreement with decisions of their local PCT, which presumably has led to them being enthusiasts for GP-led commissioning. However, many have also been involved in opposing hospital closures or local cuts and take a hands-on approach to protecting local services, which contradicts the point of the Bill. Their prescription seems to amount to a healthy dose of hypocrisy.

Mr Steve Brine MP (Winchester)

General note

Brine repeatedly makes a point of being a “Tory who loves the NHS” and has taken a high profile on local health issues. He pledged to “work with South Central Ambulance Service and the wider NHS locally to improve response times and coverage, especially in rural areas” in his ten-point local election manifesto.¹ He is co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Breast Cancer and takes a particular interest in cancer services.

Quotes

In his speech at the Health Bill’s Second Reading – currently the top story on his website – he said:

“As I have said in my constituency more times than I care to remember, I am concerned only about protecting the services that my constituents rely on. If they are threatened, I will dust down the placards.”

In 2006 he echoed Andrew Lansley’s “Labour: the Party of NHS cuts”² on his own website.

“Health spending has doubled under Labour but our local hospital trust (Winchester & Eastleigh) faces a large deficit leading to job losses and ward closures. I will always work to serve and support the local NHS - its patients and its staff.”³

Local matters

He endorsed a merger of two local NHS Trusts which means the merger of two hospitals.⁴ This is in line with government plans and job losses are expected.⁵ It appears that cost cutting is the rationale behind the move though it is designed to preserve local A&E and maternity services.

Conclusions

His claims to protect local services and be prepared to campaign for them are at odds with the provisions of the Bill.

He has, however, expressed some alarm about the provisions of local cancer services, especially in the transition period, and presumably hopes to make some progress on this issue during the passage of the Bill.

¹ <http://www.stevebrine.com/issue.jsp?ID=76>

² <http://www.stevebrine.com/record.jsp?type=cchNews&ID=2148>

³ http://www.conservatives.com/People/Members_of_Parliament/Brine_Steve.aspx

⁴ <http://www.stevebrine.com/record.jsp?type=news&ID=513>

⁵ http://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/8723441.Hospital_jobs_may_go_in_the_creation_of_single_organisation/

Dan Byles MP (North Warwickshire and Bedworth)

General Note:

Byles is outspoken about local health issues, directing most of his anger at the PCT in Warwickshire for cuts in his constituency along with the former Labour government. A local hospital closure (Bramcote Hospital) was delayed following his lobbying but will go ahead later. He also met the PCT and successfully lobbied them to change various other schemes that were delaying treatment and also sending people to another hospital in Warwickshire.

Byles has served on the Board of an NHS Trust and was a medic in the military, while his wife is an NHS doctor.

Quotes

"It's been estimated that, since that crisis began, one in every 20 NHS beds has been cut nationally. Here in Nuneaton, Bedworth and North Warwickshire that figure will be one in four by March 2008. We've been badly let down by Labour. We deserve better than this."

"Both Marcus Jones [Tory MP for Nuneaton] and myself have always been fully committed to our local NHS services. We will continue to work closely with the PCT and the George Eliot Hospital to ensure that local health services remain effective, and patient safety and patient choice are respected at every stage."

Local matters

Byles made a big issue out of the alleged role of the last Labour government in the cuts at the George Eliot Hospital in his constituency of North Warwicks' and Bedworth in 2006, e.g. picturing him with a Gordon Brown cut-out and a pair of mock scissors⁶. He had campaigned against bed closures at George Eliot in 2007.

Both the PCT and the George Eliot NHS Trust are currently in deficit.

A recent u-turn on the closure date of the nearby Bramcote Hospital (it's still being closed but later) is now thought to possibly have knock-on effects for the George Eliot.⁷ Byles had lobbied the PCT to keep Bramcote Hospital open and demanded no change until a replacement service was up and running.

Conclusions

Byles has repeatedly lobbied his PCT and spoken out over local service delivery – but his demands to prioritise local hospitals could amount to anti-competitive behaviour under the Bill, while the George Eliot will be forced to become a Foundation Trust while still trying to resolve its deficit.

Stephen Crabb MP (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

General Note:

Crabb is the government whip on the Committee so will not speak.

Local matters

Crabb was active in the campaign to save the Worthy Hospital in/near his constituency in 2006. But plans to downgrade it and transfer services to Carmarthen re-emerged last year⁸. Crabb is on record as against the move.

⁶ <http://www.danbyles.co.uk/conservatives/news/george-eliot-hospital-forced-close-one-four-beds-cut-costs>

⁷ <http://www.danbyles.co.uk/conservatives/news/local-mps-welcome-u-turn-over-closure-date-bramcote-hospital> & <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-12213495>

⁸ http://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/news/8309185.WESTERN_TELEGRAPH_EXCLUSIVE__Leaked_documents_reveal_shock_hospital_plans/

Conclusions

Again, Crabb is guilty of hypocrisy for saving to prevent hospital closures while whipping through a Bill that would prevent MPs from meaningfully doing so in future.

Nick de Bois MP (Enfield North)

General Note:

De Bois has campaigned hard against the controversial proposed closure of A&E and maternity units at Chase Farm hospital, which the Tories promised to halt in opposition.

Quotes

“The decision, prompted by the previous Government, to downgrade and rip out our (Chase Farm Hospital) vital A&E service and axe the consultant-led maternity services that see 3,000 births a year, is being relentlessly pursued by those same bureaucrats and officials from the health services, despite the fact that the decision will cost lives...”

“Chase Farm Hospital is my number one priority as the local MP.”

“We must keep to our policy of no forced closures.” – to David Cameron at PMQs

“Among the proposals in the Bill are plans to set up local Health and Wellbeing Boards, which would include local councillors and GPs to ensure future changes to local NHS services could not go ahead without the approval of residents.”

Local matters

The long running saga over the reconfiguration of Chase Farm Hospital is one of the most high profile local hospital closures/cuts campaigns in the country. De Bois has been a key player in the ‘Hands off our Hospital’ campaign since it was launched in 2004. Andrew Lansley made an election promise not to not make cuts to A&E and maternity services at Chase Farm⁹ and David Cameron had visited the hospital to lend his support in opposition.

However, the latest review by NHS London has concluded that Lansley’s “four tests” for service reconfigurations have been met and it is due to go ahead, with the support of GPs from across the combined PCT, though not those from Enfield specifically. Only last Tuesday de Bois voiced his annoyance on about this again¹⁰. He still directs blame at Labour government and the local PCT but the problem looks set to land at Lansley’s door as local Tory MPs will be meeting him in March. Just two weeks ago the neighbouring Tory council (Barnet) announced a u-turn and accepted the London NHS decision.¹¹

Conclusions

Again, de Bois is open to charges of either ignorance or hypocrisy, and is extremely vulnerable locally as it now appears that the personal promises of Lansley and Cameron were insufficient to save the hospital. His position on the Bill rests on the provision that would allow a local authority to refer major service decisions to the Secretary of State, something that rather contradicts other elements of the Bill.

⁹ <http://www.nickdebois.com/local-campaigns/chase-farm>

¹⁰ http://www.enfieldindependent.co.uk/news/localnews/8825052.Chase_Farm_cuts__would_cost_lives__claims_Enfield_MP/

¹¹ <http://www.barnet->

[today.co.uk/news.cfm?id=3623&headline=Council%20now%20backing%20plan%20to%20downgrade%20Chase%20Farm%20Hospital](http://www.barnet-today.co.uk/news.cfm?id=3623&headline=Council%20now%20backing%20plan%20to%20downgrade%20Chase%20Farm%20Hospital)

Margot James MP (Stourbridge)

General note:

James was the founder and former head of private health and pharma lobbying company Shire Health PR, which she then sold to Ogilvy and Mather, after which she became European President of Ogilvy Healthworld. The company worked for a roster of some of the biggest names in the private health and pharmaceuticals industries and has now merged with Commonhealth to become one of the largest health lobbying and PR agencies in the world.

In this capacity she gave evidence to the 2005 Health Select Committee inquiry in to *The Influence of the Pharmaceutical Industry*, which concluded that the “close contact between the UK Government and the pharmaceutical industry in formulating health policy was illustrated by Ms Margot James”.¹²

She has spoken at Big Pharma conferences since the 2010 election, saying that “the pharmaceutical industry remained very important to her and has a very special place in her heart”.¹³ Her name appears in connection with many pharmaceutical industry companies and newsletters and she has made public statements about better cooperation between the industry and NICE, and spoke at a Novartis-sponsored fringe meeting at Tory conference.

She also has many articles on health on her website – including one condemning the 2009 McKinsey report, which is cited by the government as support for the Bill, under the banner “Can you trust Labour with the NHS?”

On the flip side, she has called for the Care Quality Commission to more aggressively regulate private care homes, though she does not appear to have learned any wider lessons.

Quotes

In describing all the changes to the NHS since 1997 she placed all the credit for this on the pharmaceuticals industry - *“These extraordinary changes have come about due to the research and development that the pharmaceutical industry undertakes and we should be proud of what our industry has achieved in this time.”*

“The new government wants to devolve greater powers and responsibilities to citizens and professionals, empowering people to take control over their lives and have greater choice. There is to be less state interference and intrusion in to people’s lives.”

Local matters

The local Wordsley or Corbett Hospitals currently appear safe. She has shown some interest in local mental health provision, though partly in relation to the Work Capability Assessment.

Conclusions

Margot James’s presence means that big pharma is virtually in the Committee Room, making the law. The fact that the Tories nominated her to it is rather telling.

And again, the issue of hypocrisy raises its head given that James is even now condemning the McKinsey report that the government uses to justify the Bill itself.

¹² Paragraph 331

¹³ <http://www.prweek.com/news/rss/1013512/Conservative-MP-Margot-James-tells-pharma-audience-Tory-healthcare-plans/>

Jeremy Lefroy MP (Staffordshire)

General notes:

Lefroy's wife is a GP and lecturer in medicine at Keele University. His main connection to the debate appears to be through the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust, which was embroiled in a scandal over standards of care, the results of which have yet to be heard.

Quotes

"The key will be to make quality of service the most important factor in commissioning."

"But it is very important that the consortia are more accountable in practice than PCTs in respect of commissioning."

"The questions I have relate to: the pressure on all trusts to become Foundation Trusts within 2-3 years. It was such pressure which seems to have been one of the causes for the problems at Mid Staffordshire."

"Acute hospital trusts are complex systems. Commissioners are required to consider "any willing provider". It is possible to see circumstances in which willing providers will be prepared to offer the easier 'discrete' services (perhaps scans/X-rays/non-urgent operations) which will then leave an acute hospital with less activity to cover its high cost base. Will there be an indivisible minimum block of services around acute provision to ensure that we will not end up with acute providers in a state of constant financial instability?"

Local matters

The key local issue is the scandal around the failings of the local NHS Foundation Trust, which is thought to have caused up to 400 unnecessary deaths. On 17 March 2009 the Healthcare Commission published its report into the severe failings in emergency care provided by Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust between 2005 and 2008. The government then ordered two reviews and ultimately a public inquiry under Robert Francis QC, which is yet to report.

Conclusions

Lefroy seems to have some mild doubts about some of the thrust of the Bill, including on price competition, the accountability of the consortia, the deadline for FT status and the application of 'Any Willing Provider'.

Nicky Morgan MP (Loughborough)

General notes

Morgan is a new MP and mainly appears active on mental health issues in so far as anything related to this Bill.

Local matters

Morgan appears to take on issues of mental health services quite strongly with lots of web references toward this including her championing a mental health NHS walk-in centre in Loughborough in her constituency¹⁴. There were rumours that this centre would be moved which aroused strong and public objections from Morgan, mainly aimed at the PCT.

¹⁴ http://www.nickymorgan.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=90:press-release-4-feb-2011-mp-nicky-morgan-stands-up-for-users-of-mental-health-services-in-house-of-commons-debate-on-health-and-social-care-bill&Itemid=12

Dr Daniel Poulter MP (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich)

General note:

Dr Poulter was an obstetrician and gynaecologist before entering the House of Commons in 2010. He is a former consultant in Surrey and later at the NHS Princess Royal University Hospital in Bromley. During his time there he, as leader of nearby Reigate and Banstead council, was active in the campaign to save Epsom St Helier hospital¹⁵ along with now Health Minister Paul Burstow. He is a strong defender of hospices¹⁶.

Quotes

"I shall elaborate on the point about how PCTs have been a great source of wasted money. In my part of the world in Suffolk, they have spent millions of pounds each year on external consultants to tell them how they should be doing the job that they should have been doing in the first place."

"I support the maintenance of high quality district general hospitals and NHS services that provide local healthcare to our communities."

Local matters

Poulter has taken his medical credentials and past campaigning on health issues with him to Suffolk. He took an anti-Labour line before the election in publicly campaigning for the retention of cardiac and cancer care services at Ipswich Hospital and to stop the threatened transfer of these to other hospitals in the region. Cuts to the regions services were mooted before the election and have also been announced since¹⁷. Poulter has campaigned against the PCT shutting community hospitals like Hartismere in his constituency.

Conclusions

Again, Poulter opens himself up to charges of hypocrisy by campaigning against local hospital closures when the Bill hands powers over this to the unelected regulator and market forces.

Anna Soubry MP (Broxtowe)

General note

Soubry is Parliamentary Private Secretary to Simon Burns, and will mainly sit on the Committee to assist him rather than actively participate in the debates.

Quotes

"This is not a "Tory cut"; Nottinghamshire PCT has made it quite clear that they are making savings of £80 million based on changes to their budget imposed last year." (on the Stapleford walk in centre)

Local matters

The Stapleford walk-in centre has apparently been under threat and is due to be cut. She claims this is not a 'Tory cut' and blames the PFI funding scheme Labour imposed before 2010¹⁸.

Conclusions

Soubry will only be on the Committee to liaise between ministers and their staff and backbenchers.

¹⁵ http://www.centralsuffolk.co.uk/pg_local_news.html (see news box on webpage – you cant jump to the link to the newspiece)

¹⁶ [http://www.politics.co.uk/comment/health/comment-the-case-for-hospice-funding-\\$21387040.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/comment/health/comment-the-case-for-hospice-funding-$21387040.htm)

¹⁷ <http://falseeconomy.org.uk/cuts/item/west-suffolk-hospital-job-cuts>

¹⁸ <http://www.anna4broxtowe.com/stapleford-walk-in-centre-anna-working-to-save-the-centre>

Julian Sturdy MP

General note:

Sturdy is another enemy of his local PCT and has complained about the withdrawal of spinal injections in his area, citing it as an example of the postcode lottery, and the PCT being forced to eliminate its deficit too fast.

Quotes

“The (York & North Yorkshire) PCT seems so keen to rectify this deficit immediately because of the previous Government’s imposition of a statutory obligation on all Primary Care Trusts to break even by the beginning of 2011.”¹⁹

“I fear that our patch is in danger of becoming an area of health deprivation.”²⁰ (comment made in reference to above issue of York & North Yorkshire and its financial crisis)

“I am sure that the Secretary of State will remember visiting my constituency earlier in the year and listening to constituents’ concerns about the withdrawal of spinal injections on the NHS. Given that the PCT’s decision is set to become another example of the postcode lottery in the health service, will his Department consider the ongoing debate about spinal injections in York and support the attempts of my constituents as they seek to shape local health services around their specific needs?”

Local matters

Above quotes pertain to a cash crisis with the York & North Yorkshire PCT. These were imposed, according to Sturdy, by the previous Labour governments’ rule change stipulating PCTs must break even by January 2011.

Conclusion

Sturdy’s apparent opposition to postcode lotteries is a stark contrast to the content of the Bill, which allows local consortia far greater scope to pick and choose treatments and far less in the way of national guidance. His remarks on cutting deficits too fast also have a slightly ironic feel.

LIBERALS

John Pugh MP (Southport)

General notes

John Pugh seems a rather surprising choice for this Committee, as a self-declared member of the “Keep Our NHS Public” campaign, and an active one at that. For example, a website article entitled ‘NHS – anxiety that cost pressure could lead to privatisation’ advertises his presence on their national demo during the election campaign²¹.

He also describes himself a strong opponent of privatisation in the NHS and says that the White Paper did break the Coalition Agreement. He abstained on the Second Reading of the Bill.

He had also previously tabled a Private Member’s Bill, calling for full democratic control of PCTs: requiring them to obtain prior approval for their spending plans; to present an annual spending plan to

¹⁹ http://juliansturdy.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=98&Itemid=2

²⁰ http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/8721335.Health_chiefs_defend_cuts/

²¹ <http://web.johnpughmp.com/news-stories/454-nhs-anxiety-grows-about-cost-pressures-leading-to-privatisation->

local authorities for approval; and setting out resolution arrangements in the event of Primary Care Trusts failing to secure their consent. He gave an angry speech denouncing the deliberate exclusion of elected politicians from health policy.²²

Quotes

*"It's just implausibly silly to pretend [NHS reforms] do not flatly contradict the coalition agreement to avoid top-down restructuring"*²³

Local matters

Pugh does also have an ongoing battle with his PCT, however, as a service is being moved out of Southport. He had previously objected to Southport losing its children's A&E service.

Conclusions

It would seem to be extraordinary if Pugh supports the Bill in its current draft.

²² <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm091021/debtext/91021-0004.htm#09102134000002>

²³ <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/lansley-faces-flak-over-yet-another-broken-promise-on-healthcare-2174159.html>