



GETTING A LETTER IN THE LOCAL PAPER

The local press is very important. More people read their local paper than a national newspaper and getting a letter published in the letters page is a great way of highlighting an issue. Here is an editable letter for you to send to use.

FOR PUBLICATION

To: The Editor

The coalition government's plans for the NHS could spell disaster for our local health services. Many people are not aware that the policies represent the biggest change to the NHS since it was founded in 1948, and they will affect every patient in _____. The government wants to move to a more American-style market health system, where hospitals and doctors have to compete with each other for business.

For patients that will mean a worse service. All our hospitals and community health services will be separated off from the NHS and made into independent businesses, meaning any of them could go bust or close a vital department like A&E to save money. Hospitals will be free to treat private paying customers first, with the rest of us having to wait our turn. Certain treatments like hernia operations could be dropped all together, forcing people to pay.

GPs will be made to take on the role of accountants, buying services for patients, doing the job currently done by _____ PCT. Will patients still trust their doctor if they think he or she is putting cost cutting before their health? What will happen to the doctor patient relationship when it turns out the GP is responsible for the decision to close the local hospital? The government's plans will also bring about a huge postcode lottery where drugs and treatments will be available to patients of one GP and denied to those of another. Plus there is the prospect of GP surgeries running out of money and telling patients they will have to wait until the new financial year before they can be treated.

The cost of making such huge changes to the NHS is going to be at least £3 billion at a time when the country can least afford it, and they come alongside £20 billion of 'efficiency savings' in the NHS that will mean closures and cuts anyway.

None of these controversial policies were in the Conservative or Lib Dem manifestos at the election. They have come out of nowhere and are soon to be put to parliament. We have to take a stand now to defend our health services.

Include your full name, address, phone number and e-mail address. Include a note after your signature if you do not want the newspaper or media outlet to publish these details.



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