

## What's happening to the NHS?

During the recession, the NHS will play a vital role in ensuring that when people lose their jobs or homes they do not lose access to healthcare.

The NHS is a key part of the fairer society envisaged by UNISON's Million Voices campaign, but our health service faces an increasing threat from privatisation.

### Did you know that a far greater role is being created for the private sector, allowing more companies to take over our services?

A number of recent policies for the English NHS are promoting privatisation, and the government is doing this with no evidence that the service will get better and with little public involvement:

- the Transforming Community Services programme is designed to maximise the role for private companies and new organisations, such as social enterprises
- a new commercial operating model for the NHS will see an extra £20 million spent on maximising the involvement of private companies
- a new competition panel has been set up to maximise opportunities for the private sector to break into the healthcare market
- hundreds of millions of pounds has been spent on management consultants by the Department of Health with no proper assessment of value for money

### What does this mean for patients?

These changes will affect the way patients receive their care:

- patients may have to deal with a range of different competing organisations to get the treatment they need
- different organisations are expected to compete to deliver services, but this will mean they are also unwilling to work together to provide the seamless care that patients need and the greater efficiency that the taxpayer wants

## What about staff?

Healthcare staff will also be affected and this will have a knock-on effect on patients:

- staff will find they are unable to retain their membership of the NHS pension scheme if they are transferred to the private sector
- there is no guarantee during the recession that new organisations such as social enterprises will survive, so jobs may be lost
- if staff leave the health service as a result of these threats, patient care will suffer

## What impact has privatisation already had on the NHS?

- since Thatcher began the privatisation of hospital cleaning in 1983, the number of cleaners has been cut in half and hospital infections have risen as a result
- the use of private treatment centres has meant millions of pounds leaking out of the NHS and into the hands of private companies, with many centres failing to deliver the care that we as taxpayers have already paid for

## What are UNISON's demands?

Our NHS is based on compassion and equality. Private companies exist to make profits for their shareholders. Who would you rather was responsible for your care?

- UNISON is demanding a block on any further privatisation – the NHS must remain in public hands and not be handed over to private companies whose only motive is to make a profit.
- UNISON is demanding pension protection for staff.
- UNISON is demanding that hospital cleaning comes back into the NHS where it belongs.

## Add your voice

We need as many people as possible to add their voice to our campaign:

- talk to your friends, family, co-workers and neighbours about these issues
- raise these issues with your employer, local media, and political candidates
- take the campaign to workplace or community meetings – or organise your own – we can help with materials and speakers
- visit our website for more information, more campaign ideas and to tell us what you've been doing

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