



# Lewisham Issue 49 (18 November 2014)

# Hospital Worker

A Workers' Liberty healthworkers' bulletin

www.workersliberty.org • hospitalworkerbulletin@gmail.com • 0207 394 8923

## Unions scupper their own strike

Q. When is a strike not a strike? A. When your union tells you to go to work as normal.

During the four hour strike on 13th October the unions instructed all SLAMs inpatient staff, HTT, psych liaison and

support services (porters, security, domestics etc.) to go to work as normal. At Lewisham, a general exemption was given to all A&E and maternity staff.

Whilst nobody wants to see patients suffer due to the strike, we do want to cause maximum disruption for management. In other Trusts, ALL members were called out for the full duration of the strike and management had to implement contingency plans to ensure the continuation of basic services. That involved moving strikebreaking staff (e.g. managers, RCN members) from office jobs and non-essential services onto the wards. If they were really struggling they could negotiate for named individuals to be exempt. But not whole staff groups!

There was a good picket from Unison, Unite and RCM members. But it would have been more effective if the unions had followed the correct exemptions policy. Our union branch leaders spend too much time in cosy chats with management. After years of "partnership working" they basically allowed management to write the union strike policy. Union members should contact their branch officers and demand better.

£54.7bn of public building projects £1162 bn given to the banks during the financial crisis of 2007-8 (including £133 bn in cash)

The boss class controls the state – of course they serve their own interests. We need a workers' government that will serve our class, like the Tories and New Labour serve the capitalists.

## Five Years Forward... to Privatisation

In his report Five Years Forward the new NHS chief executive, Simon Stevens, proposes a number of measures he claims can save the NHS as a free comprehensive service. In subsequent briefings he asks politicians for an extra £8 billion to redesign services.

The £8bn figure has been much discussed in the press as a "funding gap". This is wrong. Everyone accepts that the gap between resources and demand over the next 5 years will be £30 billion (on top of the £20bn gap from 2010-15).

Stevens reckons that by spending £8bn on his redesign, he can save £22 bn. But it's all speculation. The £8bn claim does not actually appear in the 39-page report.

The report also says nothing about staff pay. This has been a big source of the £20bn savings since 2010. Staff have sacrificed around 15% of their wage in order to keep the NHS afloat. Our sacrifice is now having an impact on recruitment. The private sector is now able to offer comparable wages with a lighter workload. The entire debate on the NHS is based on an assumption that the government cannot raise enough money to fund an adequate service. It's nonsense. NHS workers must escalate

their action on pay to smash the pay freeze and the

## Can we afford an extra £50bn on the NHS?

The big lie of our times is that we have run out of money. But there is plenty of money – the government just chooses to give it away to the super-rich: £120 bn a year given to tax dodgers.

£300 bn to be given to PFI capitalists in return for

# Labour's Efford Bill: not very good

On 21st November Parliament will debate a Private Members Bill tabled by Labour's Clive Efford. The Efford Bill is an attempt by the Labour leadership to show they are fighting the Tory's privatisation of the NHS.

Backed by the Labour leadership and supported by Unite, Unison and the GMB leaders, it's an attempt to show Labour mean to restore bits of the NHS without committing to any spending and without challenging of the crippling PFI debts accumulated by hospital trusts under New Labour. But when you translate the legalise, the Bill is not so good. Far from halting privatisation it will extend marketisation to more parts of the NHS and place the NHS under the remit of EU competition law.

On 21 November campaigners will be outside Parliament raising our own independent demands for the NHS.

Repeal of the Health and Social Care is top of the list, followed closely by calls for the reversal of cuts and a massive cash injection to meet growing healthcare needs; removal of the PFI burden on the NHS an end to privatisation and the market in the NHS; a decent living wage for NHS workers; a guarantee of safe staffing levels; an end to blaming migrants for the NHS crisis. After the protest there will be a meeting inside to discuss how we can organise to win our demands. Clive Efford and Andy Burnham are among invited speakers.

More analysis: [www.workersliberty.org](http://www.workersliberty.org)

# Solidarity with the QEH strikers

Outsourced workers at QEH - including porters, cleaners, caterers, switchboard workers, seamstresses, porters and others – employed by ISS will strike again on 24th and 25th November in their campaign for the same pay and conditions as directly employed NHS workers.

One striking worker told us: "Outsourcing and PFI – that's how these companies make their money. Its private profit rather than going to the NHS. Of course if we had NHS wages and conditions it

wouldn't be so attractive to them."

A militant workforce willing to strike for better pay and conditions is the best defence against NHS

privatisation. Send messages of support and donate to the strike fund: [bit.ly/1H4BKSO](http://bit.ly/1H4BKSO)

# Making sense of the housing crisis

Spending a fortune on rent to a private landlord? You're not alone. House prices in London make buying a home almost impossible. And you can forget labour council housing. Lewisham Council's own website states: "most people on the housing list face no prospect of being housed by us."

While the homeless camp out in Lewisham's parks, new build studio apartments in Deptford are being sold by a Hong Kong based estate agents, IP Global starting at £470,000. The housing bubble is being fuelled by the global capitalist elite buying up London property solely for investment purposes. In the poshest areas of London the millionaire mansions stand empty. They mothball their mansions, wait a few years, and then sell them on for a profit. The billionaires move into the millionaires areas, the millionaires move into the middle class areas etc. Before we know it there are people with dodgy moustaches and tweed jackets drinking craft beer on the streets of Catford.

Property speculators like the customers of IP Global artificially inflate house prices to turn a profit. The landlords take a bigger share of our wages. The free market in housing allows more opportunities for the rich to exploit us. Lewisham's Labour Council (which is supposed to represent working-class interests) facilitates this exploitation. Like healthcare, decent housing is a basic human need. We must fight for decent homes for all!

*LHW* provides a forum for staff at the hospital to tell their stories and air their views. If you have a story to tell or an opinion to share then get in touch.

The bulletin is edited by healthcare professionals. All articles are published anonymously and we will ensure confidentiality is upheld. Email: [hospitalworkerbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:hospitalworkerbulletin@gmail.com)