



Red Pill

A Workers' Liberty healthworkers' bulletin

www.workersliberty.org • awl@workersliberty.org • 0207 394 8923

Organise to stop the cuts!

At team meetings across the NHS, managers have been fretting over how to balance increasingly tight budgets. But they cannot do the impossible.

The NHS is currently experiencing the biggest funding cut since it was created in 1948. As demand for NHS services rises (due to ageing population etc) the government has decided to freeze funding until 2015, effectively cutting £20 billion from the NHS budget. But it won't stop in 2015. Top bosses have already signalled that they plan 7% cuts for the next decade.

On top of the cuts, the government has just passed legislation to siphon off £15 billion of NHS money to set up a private sector bureaucracy that will privatise the NHS.

The government is trying to sell the lie that state-run NHS is costing too much money, at the same time as it pushes a system of US-style private healthcare. Yet, in the USA health spending is the highest in the world at 17.4% GDP (compared to around 9.4% GDP in UK). Despite spending vast amounts of money, their health outcomes are the worst in the developed world. Their privatised system has completely corrupted healthcare so that on the one hand 50 million people go without medical cover, and on the other hand a third of health spending is wasted on overtreatment that may do more harm than good. This model, where human lives are literally sacrificed on the altar of private profit, is the inspiration behind the government's assault on the NHS.

Whatever ingenious schemes our managers conjure up to save money, they will not be able to balance the books in the face of these relentless cuts. The best they can hope for (by implementing the cuts) is to financially out-perform the neighbouring NHS service-

sand save themselves for another year. The worst indebted wards, hospitals and Trusts will be taken over by the private sector or simply closed.

We will be left with a rump NHS for the poor, a system of sub-standard medical insurance schemes for the working-class majority and a exclusive health system for the rich that will waste resources on overtreatment.

NHS workers and the communities they serve can stop these cuts and push the government back from implementing their barbaric vision. We need to reclaim the unions as centres of working-class resistance, that can build a mass movement of protests, strikes and hospital occupations.

In the words of one psychiatric nurse: "The government is like a patient with anti-social personality disorder. They manipulate us and use divide-and-rule tactics. And they won't stop. If you give them an inch they just keep coming for you until you can't even breathe any more. Our job is to work together and impose some firm boundaries."

Lobby the Labour Party Conference!

Demand that Labour pledge to reverse cuts and privatisation and rebuild the NHS!

Saturday 30 September - 2:30pm - Manchester

More info: www.nhsunity.com

Called by NHS Liaison Network

Workers' Liberty is a revolutionary socialist organisation active in the British labour movement fighting for an alternative to capitalism and Stalinism based on common ownership, democracy and workers' control. Red Pill is produced by our members who work in the health service. To get involved with producing the bulletin, or to take copies for your workplace, email awl@workersliberty.org with the subject line 'Red Pill'.



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Terms and conditions under attack

Feeling confident that the pensions dispute is over, the government is preparing a fresh attack on our terms and conditions. The new proposals are a "bully's charter" that will give line managers control over whether or not you get increments,

Under the new schemes, we will have to meet locally determined performance targets before we get our increments. Moreover, those at the top of their pay band will get their pay increases as a lump sum, and not as part of their monthly pay packet.

The bosses are trying to promote the idea that our increments are like bonus pay for good performance rather than part of our contracted pay. The effect of this change is to create a system where managers can restrict pay at will. It will also mean that union representatives are overloaded with individual case work, as members challenge their bosses' judgement.

Other changes include sick pay being paid at basic rate plus high cost-of-living increases, but without any unsociable hours payments. This will be particularly harsh on workers who work permanent nights, and rely on regular unsociable hours income. Trusts can also set their own pay scales for senior nurses, and they are abolishing the double increment rise for new starters.

The unions have threatened to walk out of negotiations because some Trusts (mostly in the South West) have joined a "cartel" which is ignoring the national negotiating process and railroading through their own plans. Rumours abound that some union branches have already accepted local changes to AfC.

Unions need to be organising on the ground against the attacks now, and maintaining national union in our own ranks...

Pensions latest

Despite a majority vote for "sustained industrial action" in Unison against the government's pensions proposals (albeit by a small margin and on a low turnout), and votes for rejection in GMB, Unite, BMA, and RCN, none of the union leaders are organising further strikes.

Without further action, the government has won. We are PAYING MORE, GETTING LESS, and WORKING LONGER. For more details of the history of the battle, and the cowardice of the union leaders, see workersliberty.org/node/18551

Barclays boss to run NHS!

Most NHS workers will feel sickened by the sight of Bob Diamond walking away from his job at Barclays with £20 million in his pocket.

But while he is taking some heat in the media, Naguib Kheraj (the Vice Chairman of Barclays) has secured himself a position on the NHS Commissioning Board, the organisation that now oversees the NHS!

Senior executives at Barclays have demonstrated that they are incapable of running a bank, even on their own terms. But instead of locking these criminals up and putting the banks under social control (which is the programme of Syriza, which recently won mass support in Greece's elections), our government has put these same bankers in charge of the health system!

We not only need to get rid of Naguib Kheraj from the NHS Commissioning Board, but take the whole of the NHS and the banking sector out of the hands of the millionaire class and run in democratically in working-class interests.

Boycott the NMC fee hike

Since the credit crunch of 2008, prices have soared while our wages have stagnated.

The latest jar of salt to be rubbed in the bleeding wound of our monthly expenditure is a 60% hike in the NMC registration fee. In return for an extra £44 a year, the NMC has promised... to close its advice service! "Pay more, get less" seems to have become the motto of the bosses.

The RCN is saying it's "one hit too far", but will they hit back by organising a fees boycott? Members should push their tough-talking leaders into organising some action.

Domestics show the way

Domestics in Swindon's Great Western Hospital have struck for over 20 days against management bullying.

Elsewhere, porters, cleaners, caterers, and security are also getting organised and fighting back.

For more info, see workersliberty.org/unison