



Rebuilding a public NHS

Health and Social Care Policy Commission



Thank you for taking part in the Labour Party's 2019 National Policy Forum Consultation, the Party's process for getting input from our members, supporters and stakeholders on how we shape our policies.

This booklet is one of eight policy documents published by the Labour Party as part of our consultation this year.

Each document contains sets of questions for you to answer. You do not need to answer every question, nor is there any specific way to answer them. We suggest picking the questions most important to you and using them as a guide to write a few lines or paragraphs on what you think about the issues in this area.

At the end of the document you can find a guide on how to send in your ideas to us and other ways to get involved in the consultation.

There are seven other documents that might interest you covering different areas of the Party's policies, you can find them in the consultation pack or online. If you have an idea or issue you would like to talk about that is not covered in this year's consultation, you can submit these to us too via www.policyforum.labour.org.uk

Whether you're a Labour Party member or not, we want to hear your ideas on how the next Labour government should tackle the challenges our country faces, and build a more equal Britain for the many, not the few.

Want to know more about how Labour makes policy?

You can learn more about how Labour makes policy, further details about the 2019 Consultation and find policy events in your area on our website www.policyforum.labour.org.uk

ACCESSIBLE MATERIALS

The Labour Party is an inclusive member-based organisation that prides itself on being accessible to all who share its values. If you would like an accessible version of these documents please email us at policydevelopment@labour.org.uk to discuss how we can best accommodate your requirements.

Rebuilding a public NHS

Last year, we celebrated the 70th birthday of Labour's National Health Service (NHS); a service that provides universal healthcare for all, publicly funded and free at the point of use. Labour created the NHS and will always defend it – and now more than ever our NHS is at risk from privatisation, reforms that limit access to health services and crucially, the impact of years of austerity on NHS finances.

For Labour, the NHS is the greatest engine of social justice ever seen. Thanks to a public universal National Health Service life expectancy is now 13 years higher than it was 70 years ago.

But after almost nine years of austerity measures from this Government, life expectancy is going backwards for some of the very poorest people, health inequalities are getting wider and infant mortality rates are beginning to increase. Even the NHS's Long Term Plan now argues economic inequality is costing the NHS £4.8 billion a year in greater numbers of hospitalisations.

Labour's vision is a simple but compelling one: to create the conditions where people can live, longer, healthier lives.

That means rebuilding a publicly provided and administered, universal National Health Service freed from austerity; and it means an all-out assault on the wider social determinants of ill health. This is why Labour is consulting on how we rebuild our NHS.

Today we need to rebuild a public NHS to respond to the health challenges we face now and will face over the next 20 years. People are living longer; there are over 12 million people over the age of 65 in the UK. And people are living longer with multiple health conditions; one in four adults have two or more health conditions, which means more than 14 million adults are living with multiple conditions in England.

Responding to these demographic changes demands a health and care service that becomes better integrated and co-ordinated. The Health and Social Care Act has created a fragmented health system at a time when the local delivery of healthcare needs to be based on planning and partnership, not marketisation. That's why Labour is committed to the repeal of the failed Health and Social Care Act, ending the Conservatives' purchaser/provider split and introducing democratic accountability into the planning of care.

Labour believes privatisation in our NHS has been a failed, wasteful, expensive experiment. The reality is a public NHS provides better quality care for patients which is why at our Annual Conference last year Labour made clear our commitment to begin the process of renationalising and reinstating a public NHS.

Issues

A publicly funded NHS

The NHS has sustained a prolonged squeeze on its funding, with services cut or rationed. Mental health services remain the 'Cinderella' service of the NHS, with children being sent in some cases over 100 miles from home to receive treatment for mental health problems because of a lack of beds. Primary Care services are stretched, with patients waiting weeks for appointments. Our hospitals are facing an all year round crisis, with the NHS provider sector £1.23bn in debt. Alongside this, public health budgets have reduced in eight out of ten councils. Waiting lists for NHS treatment are at their highest on record, and key targets, such as those for A&E and cancer waiting times, continue to be missed.

Labour recognises that the Government's funding announcement for the NHS isn't enough to ensure targets are met and standards of care are improved. Labour will ensure that the NHS receives sufficient funding to cope with demand and improve standards for patients.

Have your say, give us your thoughts on the questions below:

- Building on our 2017 manifesto promises, what more can Labour do to ensure the NHS is fully funded and able to deliver universal health services?
- What does Labour need to do in its first term in Government to ensure NHS funding reaches the areas most in need?
- What should be the priorities when deciding local funding allocations?
- How should social care be funded?

A publicly delivered NHS

Since the introduction of the 2012 Health and Social Care Act there has been increasing levels of privatisation in our NHS. The expansion of the internal market in the English NHS has led to one third of contracts being awarded to private providers since the Act came into force. The continued chronic underfunding of the NHS has meant that increasingly NHS bosses have turned to the private sector to deliver contracts, often with serious consequences and with millions of pounds wasted on failed public contracts. The current Government focus on technology in the NHS, such as the GP at Hand App, has also meant private technology companies are able to profit from delivering services, drawing much-needed funds away from over-stretched areas. Often the drive

to introduce digital health services has been without a robust evidence base, or without concern for the impact on other NHS services. Going forward, a key issue in the NHS will be accountability for the delivery of health services.

Alongside this, existing areas of NHS care have been stripped back or rationed after years of underfunding. Transferring public health budgets to local authorities has meant cash-strapped local authorities have cut back on vital prevention services. While the Government announced further funding for the NHS in 2018, this funding has been introduced in the midst of the longest funding squeeze in NHS history, and is at a level that barely maintains current funding levels. Social care continues to be neglected by this Government, with years of underfunding meaning services are at breaking point. Four in ten home care workers leave their role every year, whilst private home care providers are handing back their contracts to local authorities, unable to deliver their services.

Labour has continued to campaign against the sale of NHS assets, cuts introduced through sustainability and transformation plans, and rationing of NHS services.

Labour will take action to reverse damaging privatisation, repealing the Health and Social Care Act, and reinstating the powers of the Secretary of State for Health to have overall responsibility for the NHS. Labour in Government will restore a universal, publicly provided and administered National Health Service.

Have your say, give us your thoughts on the questions below:

- The Government's top-down reorganisation cost billions; how do we reverse the Health and Social Care Act without causing similar disruption?
- Labour is committed to ending privatisation and profiteering. Should the voluntary sector and charities who currently provide some community health services continue to have a role? What role should they have?
- Should public health services continue to be provided by local government or should they return to the NHS?
- Should social care be integrated into local NHS services?
- How do we ensure democratic oversight over local NHS decisions?

The NHS workforce

The NHS is facing a workforce crisis. Years of underfunding and de-prioritising the NHS workforce has meant the NHS does not have the workforce it needs. There are over 100,000 vacancies in the NHS, and uncertainty around Brexit has meant fewer health professionals from the EU are coming to work in the UK.

In the social care sector, a lack of training and professional support has left the care sector feeling undervalued and demoralised, with high numbers of workers leaving the care profession each year. Labour has committed to building a National Care Service, that will ensure people get the care and support they need.

Labour's 2017 manifesto committed to putting safe staffing levels into law, as has been done by a Labour Government in Wales, and we support the reintroduction of NHS bursaries for students training to become nursing and allied health professionals. Alongside this, we are opposed to the rationing of training budgets, which means NHS staff have been unable to access the professional development they need, whilst NHS training budgets are now at their lowest level for five years.

Ensuring the NHS has a highly trained and skilled workforce is vital to ensuring we can rebuild a public NHS that is fit for the future.

Have your say, give us your thoughts on the questions below:

- What further steps can the Labour Party take to ensure the NHS has a sustainable health and social care workforce fit to deliver a truly publicly provided NHS and National Care Service?
- How can the Labour Party address issues such as morale, staff retention, and professional development in the health and social care workforces? How do we ensure this in the workforce outside the NHS?
- How can we ensure the health and social care workforce work together to deliver health and social care services that meet the needs of the population?
- Looking ahead, technology is likely to play a greater role in health and care services. How is this likely to impact the health and social care workforce?
- How do we broaden entry into health and social care professions?

Thank you for taking the time to read our consultation document.

We want to harness the views, experience and expertise of our members, stakeholders and the wider public. If you would like to respond to any of the issues in this document, there are a number of ways you can get involved:

- 1. Online:** The best and easiest way to send in your ideas and join the discussion is via our online home of policy making:
www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/consultation2019
- 2. By post:** If you have written down your ideas, you can post these to us at:
The Labour Party,
Policy Unit,
Southside,
105 Victoria Street,
London, SW1E 6QT
- 3. At your local party:** You may want to discuss your ideas with other members of your CLP or local branch. You can suggest to your CLP Secretary that a policy discussion is held at a future meeting.
- 4. Regional Policy Forums:** Look out for events hosted by your regional office, local parties and National Policy Forum Representatives.

You can find out more about the 2019 consultation, upcoming events and more details on how Labour makes its policy at

www.policyforum.labour.org.uk

Follow us on Twitter for regular updates during the consultation

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Please send your ideas before the consultation period ends, it runs until Sunday 30 June 2019.

