

FIGHT BACK FOR THE NHS BEFORE IT'S GONE!

The NHS was born at a time of food rationing and profound poverty. If we could afford it then, we can afford it now. As the Prime Minister has said: "we are a wealthy country".

The NHS, a comprehensive service, available to all and free at the time of need, can't be matched by the private sector. And neither can its values of compassion and public service. It has been called the nearest thing the British people have to a religion.

The events of this winter show that our NHS is not safe in this Coalition Government's hands: not just A and E waiting times, but also the fact that 1,000s of hospital beds have been lost, and we have half the number of community nurses we had ten years ago. GPs don't have time to see all the patients who need them.

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 removed the Government's responsibility to provide a universal, comprehensive health service. Most NHS services are now open to competition from private companies who will make profits from our money spent on the NHS. Commissioners are now being forced to put services out to tender, creating a huge, costly and unwieldy commissioning bureaucracy.

Unless the current policy is changed, we could see the NHS privatised out of existence: the process has already started with whole swathes of services, e.g. cancer services in Staffordshire, being handed over to the private sector.

BUT the private sector is already starting to fail: Hinchingsbrooke Hospital (run by private company Circle) couldn't make the sort of profits the shareholders wanted and provide decent care at the same time, so they gave up and walked away – the day before a damning report was published. The hospital has now to be rescued by the NHS.

So, if you care about the future of the NHS, make sure your vote goes where it can do most good.

Hear the general election candidates answer questions on health at a Health Hustings at Durham Town Hall on Tuesday 14th April, 6 – 9 p.m. put on by Keep Our NHS Public Durham.

Let's support our dedicated health workers and the wonderful ideal of our NHS.

REMEMBER, in the words of B & Q: ONCE IT'S GONE, IT'S GONE!

Find out more at: <http://www.konpdurham.org.uk>