

# NHS STAFF VOICES

## PROTESTING FOR PROPER PAY

### WE ARE PROTESTING BECAUSE WE DESERVE A PAY INCREASE

During the first few months of the pandemic, hospital workers went above and beyond to meet the needs of the patients.

**They were anxious. They were frightened.**

The fear in my colleagues' eyes after some of our own staff were brought into critical care with severe hypoxia was unforgettable.

Some staff left their families in order to protect them and moved into accommodation. They sacrificed everything because they are so dedicated.

**640 staff sacrificed their own lives to care for their patients. How many professions can say they have done this?**

Yet the lack of pay rise for hospital staff, including nurses, has been a complete slap in the face. Of course, we didn't do it for the money, we did it because we are devoted to our profession.

**But it's unfair, we deserve recognition for what we did, and will do again.**

The NHS has 44,000 nursing vacancies.

Nurses are leaving the profession in droves.

We need to boost this number quickly, or else the winter will be very harsh, with Covid 19 numbers starting to increase already and another peak on the horizon.

It's a bleak outlook.

**My colleagues are burnt out, many suffering from flashbacks of the peak. Patient after patient lying prone, attached to ventilators, many dying.**

It is time the government stood up and listened.

Public support has been huge during the pay rise demonstrations. It's nice to know the public are behind us, because the government clearly don't have our backs.

**We take care of patients and their families!**

**Who is taking care of us?**

*Sarah Hewson, Critical Care Nurse*



## **we own it** Help us keep it that way

*In 2017, at Nudgestock, a behavioural science conference, Dominic Cummings, Boris Johnson's most recognisable adviser made a staggering admission. Tory MPs, he said, "don't care about the NHS."*

By voting against an amendment in July that would have included explicit and comprehensive protections for our National Health Services in future Trade Deals, the Tories once again proved Cummings, and pretty much everyone else, right.

75% of the British public told the pollster Survation on the 11th of July that they wanted Parliament to include explicit protections for our NHS in the Trade Bill. The Tories voted against these expressed wishes.

The House of Lords now has an opportunity to right the wrongs of the House of Commons, and if the Lords and Baronesses of the upper house do the right thing, those MPs will get an opportunity to redeem themselves when the Bill enters the "Consideration of Amendments" stage. This is the next frontier in the fight to protect the NHS.

**We must work together to impress upon Conservative MPs to vote to keep those protective amendments in the Bill.**

There are a number of ways that we can do this, but the most important and indeed the simplest is to reach out directly, as individuals or as part of our organisations to friends and relatives, especially those who have always voted Conservative and to encourage them to get in touch with as many Tory MPs as they can and ask them to do the right thing for the good of our NHS.

**We Own It will be unveiling our strategy for prosecuting this final stage of the campaign in the coming weeks, and we invite you to sign up as a supporter at [weownit.org.uk](http://weownit.org.uk) so we can keep you in the loop and you can get involved.**

*Johnbosco Nwogbo, Campaigner - We Own It*

## We're not ready for a winter crisis

Every year the 'winter crisis' in the NHS gets worse and lasts longer, with the summer reprieve already being a fading memory prior to the pandemic.

The *lack of beds and facilities* coupled with *austerity-driven poverty* has led to patients requiring higher levels of care in ever greater numbers as workers face attacks on their pay and conditions.

The continuing confusion over PPE procurement and availability will make the situation worse as staff will be unable to guarantee that they will have the equipment to safely perform necessary care. **They will either have to put themselves at risk by potentially going without the right PPE or reusing single-use equipment, or put their patients at risk of not receiving the highest levels of care.**

This Tory government is **FAILING THE NHS** on a scale that not even ten years of extreme austerity ideology prepared us for.

The deliberate failure to learn the disastrous lessons of the first wave of the pandemic has left us as ill-prepared as we were in March, but ever more terrified and exhausted as we have an idea of what the second wave is likely to bring.

**The Tories have consistently betrayed the NHS and the people who devote their lives to caring for us at our most vulnerable moments.**

*Caitlin Southern, Sterilisation Technician and NSV member*

## WHY JOIN A UNION?

As individuals, you might have a sickness meeting, get called to an investigation meeting, have a situation where you aren't happy about.

As a collective, there are bigger battles. When ISS (a private company) took over the contract at Homerton hospital they threatened to make 97 staff redundant.

**We led a protest in front of the hospital and balloted for strike action.**

**ISS backed down resulting in no compulsory redundancies. We won protected carer's leave, and gained protection for members. This year we even won sick pay for our ISS colleagues.**

UNISON have even won a legal battle to show that high tribunal fees were a barrier to individuals taking a case to tribunal.

**A strong union branch brings successes such as those mentioned above. They would not have been possible had we fewer members.**

*Jordan Rivera, Occupational Therapist and Unison Steward*

## What's going on: We aren't ready for a winter crisis

Powerful meeting discussing the pandemic, whether we are prepared for a second surge, and why we must campaign for a better #NHS

Thank you to our excellent speakers Karen McDougall, Ely Badcock, Helen O'Connor & Allyson Pollock

[youtu.be/N2UxTC\\_WMo0](https://youtu.be/N2UxTC_WMo0)

[facebook.com/106097000977094/posts/186037906316336/?extid=0&d=n](https://facebook.com/106097000977094/posts/186037906316336/?extid=0&d=n)

[twitter.com/aliarebeccasara/status/1318990690794328066?s=21](https://twitter.com/aliarebeccasara/status/1318990690794328066?s=21)

## Trade deal day of action marked across UK

*Whatever the outcome of the election in the US, the NHS is still at risk from further privatisation made possible through future trade deals.*

Keep Our NHS Public local groups took to the streets on Saturday 24 October to protest a future trade deal with the US that doesn't protect the NHS.

The demonstrations were done alongside a day of action with Global Justice Now and Traidcraft Exchange, against the planned trade deal with America once the transition period after leaving the EU has ended.

*The NHS is at risk of being further privatised if measures are not taken to protect it from future trade deals.*

The risk isn't just to more and more NHS services being up for tender to private companies, but also to your health data. Many big tech companies are pushing for health data to be made more freely available. [keepournhspublic.com/trade-deal-day-of-action-marked-across-uk/?fbclid=IwAR3Ogx\\_flickr.com/photos/wdm/albums/72157716593338926](https://keepournhspublic.com/trade-deal-day-of-action-marked-across-uk/?fbclid=IwAR3Ogx_flickr.com/photos/wdm/albums/72157716593338926)



## In the middle of a pandemic and still pushing a Trump trade deal?

*Unless we stop this toxic trade deal, we face:*

- The NHS being opened up permanently to American healthcare companies
- Chlorinated chicken, hormone-laced beef and lower food standards
- Forced deregulation of our environmental laws, our rights at work and our rights to data privacy
  - New rules that make it impossible to take effective action on the climate crisis
  - International trade laws trumping and overriding our own UK laws

*If this sounds scary – that's because it is. We can stop it, but need to make our voices heard.*

Gay Lee, NHS Campaigner and NSV member

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## THE GOVERNMENT STILL DON'T CARE ABOUT CARE HOMES

*There are over 410,000 people living in care homes with almost half of newly admitted residents coming from hospitals.*

The UK holds the European record for numbers of deaths from COVID-19, 20,000 of which occurred in care homes. Staff frequently felt completely unsupported and *two thirds of homes were unable to isolate patients* carrying the virus.

In addition, hard pressed community care workers with inadequate PPE and on zero hours contracts were likely to have spread infection as well as suffering an excess of deaths themselves.

What we witnessed was silent human destruction wreaked on the most unprotected members of society, and devastation in the social care system having taken place without any politician admitting to knowing or understanding what was happening.

As new cases of covid now rocket, *councils are once again asking homes to take infected patients.*

Will anything be different this time around? Some argue convincingly that the root cause of excess infections in care homes is 30 years of privatisation.

Currently 83% of care home beds are owned by for-profit companies. Larger care homes make more money for investors but in those with less than 20 residents, risk of an outbreak was very low, at only 5%.

*In larger care homes however, with 60-80 residents, risk increased as high as 83-100%.*

Lower risk homes also paid staff sick pay (larger ones did not) and had higher staffing levels. A change in business model is clearly needed with smaller sized homes and a new deal for staff with improved pay and training.

*KONP is calling for a National Care and Support Service that will have overall responsibility for publicly provided residential homes; all provision will deliver to national standards. There will be no place for profiteering and the marketisation of social care will be brought to an end. Dr John Puntis*

## Born in the NHS

*I'm a first year medical student at Barts medical school. I worked in a hospital as an HCA throughout the summer and am looking forward to a career as a doctor. I love the NHS.*

I was born in the NHS, my physical and mental health have been cared for by the NHS throughout my life, and I want to spend the rest of my life working in the NHS.

What I love about it is that it provides care to anyone who needs it, regardless of their ability to pay. It is the embodiment of the principle that your access to a good life should not be determined by the wealth you possess.

*We would do well to see this principle applied to other areas of society.*

However, the ability of the NHS to provide safe, quality care on this universal basis is under threat. We are facing a crisis of understaffing with many thousands of nurses and junior doctors saying this summer that they are thinking of leaving our health service, citing frustration over pay as a key issue.

*The last few months have been a particularly difficult time but Covid has exacerbated pre-existing tensions.*

Last year, we were already looking at 100,000 vacancies across our health service. How are we supposed to carry on providing safe, quality care when our teams are perpetually full of gaps and we are expected to pick up the slack?

It is not sustainable, and this puts patients at risk. We're never going to fill these jobs if the wages offered don't match up to the skill, hard work and compassion needed to do them.

*That is why it is so important, for the future of our NHS, that health workers are paid properly. A 15% payrise for all healthcare workers now is a start towards this.*

Liam Miller, Med Student and NSV member

## WHO WE ARE

NHS Staff Voices is a network of NHS workers, from medical to domestic staff, all interested in fighting for a better, safer and fairer NHS. We are part of a wider campaign called Keep Our NHS Public, the largest NHS campaign in the UK.

We all know there is a huge crisis in the NHS and that we are at a point where the service is very compromised. Coronavirus has exposed this, and now is the right time to campaign for better pay and working conditions for staff, as well as improving outcomes for our patients.

Find out more by visiting our facebook page which has all the up to date information, including links to our meetings which we encourage you to join: <https://www.facebook.com/NHSStaffVoices/> You can sign up to our mailing list by emailing us at [NHSStaffVoices.KONP@gmail.com](mailto:NHSStaffVoices.KONP@gmail.com)



Whether you simply want to get organised, let us know how things are in your workplace, volunteer or write for us, send an email to [NHSStaffVoices.KONP@gmail.com](mailto:NHSStaffVoices.KONP@gmail.com)



Next organising meeting  
6.30 Monday 9 November

**We look forward to hearing from you. Together we can save the NHS.**