

National Health Action Party

Election Manifesto 2015



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national health action party

The National Health Action Party Election Manifesto 2015

A new politics.

A healthy NHS.

A better Britain.

Contents

Foreword ...p4

Our goals ...p5

Manifesto in a nutshell ...p7

Our NHS values ...p15

Creating a fairer economy ...p25

Our vision for political reform ...p29

Better access to housing ...p32

A fair approach to migration ...p36

Common sense on Europe ...p38

Equal access to education...p41

Transport ...p42

Sustainable development ...p44



Foreword

The National Health Action Party was formed in response to the Coalition government's disastrous top-down reorganisation of the NHS. Even Cabinet ministers have now admitted this was their worst mistake in office. The reforms were designed to further increase the role of the private sector, fundamentally undermining the founding principles of the NHS.

Our first priority is to restore the English NHS to a publicly funded, publicly provided and publicly accountable health service. The NHS was rightly regarded all over the world as the benchmark for fairness and equity in healthcare provision. It forms the social fabric of our society. We must therefore reject and reverse the privatisation policies of successive Governments.

The NHS has also been plagued by chronic underfunding compared to other industrialised nations. It now faces a £30 billion funding gap by 2020, which will doubtless lead to calls for user charges, personal health budgets and insurance policies, signalling the end of our NHS free at the point of use. We must urgently address this funding crisis with significant new investment.

The National Health Action Party is also focused on delivering an anti-austerity agenda designed to improve and strengthen our public services. Investment in health, education and infrastructure is not a drag on the economy – it is fundamental to ensuring economic growth, prosperity, and social well-being. We are also committed to a new politics, free from conflicted interests and sleaze.

Our Manifesto is a therefore a blueprint for a stronger, more equitable, fairer society with a healthy future.

Dr Clive Peedell and Dr Richard Taylor

Our goals

- We're fighting for a healthy NHS that puts patients before profits.
- We're fighting for a properly funded NHS that helps you and your family when you're at your most vulnerable.
- We're fighting for a healthy Britain and healthy society. That means a fair economy, an end to austerity and a parliament that works for people not politicians.



A man with a mustache and glasses, wearing a purple hoodie and blue jeans, holds a large blue and white sign. The sign reads "patients not profits" in white lowercase letters on a blue background, and "NHA" in large blue letters on a white background. Below "NHA" is the text "National Health Action Party" in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font. The man is smiling at the camera. In the background, a crowd of people is gathered on a street. To the left, a man in a red jacket holds a black balloon with the text "BETTER WAY" on it. Further back, a tall, thin spire of a church is visible against a grey sky. A red building and a crane are also in the background.

patients
not profits
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Manifesto in a nutshell

An NHS free at point of need

- You will receive free, high quality healthcare, wherever you live in the country.
- Your social care needs will be assessed alongside your healthcare needs.
- Social care will be funded adequately via local councils. If your health requires personal social care at home, this will be free.
- You won't ever be made to pay for visiting your GP or staying in hospital. Existing prescription charges will be phased out.
- No 2-tier NHS: you won't be asked to pay to get quicker appointments, treatments or operations.
- No pushing of patients to the back of the NHS queue by those who can pay.

A properly funded and public NHS

- An immediate cash injection of £4.5bn, raised by increasing income tax by a penny in the pound, followed by a level of NHS funding sufficient to meet the £30bn funding gap by 2020.
- The NHS must move towards a funding level similar to other industrialised countries. Currently it is the lowest of all the G7 countries.
- No more wasteful competition between different parts of the NHS. We will prioritise cooperation and collaboration.
- No more selling off chunks of our NHS to private companies. The “NHS Bill 2015” will repeal the 2012 Health & Social Care Act, reinstating the principles of the NHS without further disrupting services.
- We will put an end to the billions of pounds of money wasted paying high interest rates on PFI debts originally brought in by the Tories and accelerated under New Labour.
- Private companies delivering NHS services must not use the NHS logo without disclosing their true status.

An NHS that works for you

- There must be enough doctors, nurses, midwives, ambulance staff and other healthcare professionals to ensure swift, safe and high quality treatment for you and your family. This must be backed by proper planning for the training, recruitment and retention of staff.
- Your local hospital, A&E and maternity unit will remain open and offering full services, unless there is overwhelming clinical evidence and local support for reorganisation of services.
- You will be offered sensible and accessible alternatives to seeing your GP or going to A&E via more NHS walk-in centres and GP out of hours services.
- If you or a family member are suffering from mental health problems, we will ensure the same high standard of service and respect that patients with physical health problems receive.
- If you have a complaint, it will be easier for your complaints and suggestions to be listened to through a revamped complaints system.

Preventing ill health

- Prevention is better than cure. A high quality public health system is essential to keep us healthy as individuals and as a nation. Poor population health is damaging to the economy
- To improve public health, we would :
 1. Prioritise public health in all policy decisions from transport to local development
 2. Introduce minimum unit pricing for alcohol.
 3. Ensure stricter control on alcohol advertising.
 4. Control salt and sugar levels in food, by taxation if necessary.
 5. Limit the lobbying power of fast food, alcohol and tobacco firms.
 6. Support measures to make it easier for people to cycle and walk more.

An NHS that values its staff

- Staff who witness things going wrong will be supported and their complaints taken seriously.
- A fair pay structure for staff will ensure the NHS can retain experienced staff and recruit new staff.

Funding our NHS plans

1. 1p rise in basic rate of income tax - will raise around £4.5 billion/year.
2. Scrap the market within the NHS - conservatively estimated to cost £4.5bn/year to run.
3. Renegotiate PFI deals - hospital trusts currently spend £2bn/year on repayments.
4. Stop wasting money on unnecessary locums (£2.5bn/year) and management consultants (£ 640m/year).
5. Greater investment in public health education, including exercise. Stricter controls and taxes if needed on tobacco, alcohol, sugar and unhealthy foods. This will save money in the long run by the cutting cost to the NHS of alcohol, smoking, diabetes and obesity.
6. Integration of health and social care and greater investment in social care will save money by diverting pressure from, and reducing costly treatment at, A&E units, hospitals and GP practices.
7. Higher investment in healthcare will stimulate economic growth, ensure a healthy workforce and encourage spending in local economies.
8. Use the purchasing power of the NHS to secure better deals on drugs and medical equipment.
9. Crackdown on tax avoidance and evasion to generate £20bn for the economy.

A fair political system

- Reform the unelected House of Lords.
- Clamp down on politicians' conflicts of interest.
- Give voters the power to 'recall' misbehaving MPs.
- Force transparency on corporate lobbying.
- End the 'revolving door' culture between politics and big business.
- Lower the voting age to 16.

A fair economy

- End austerity and invest in public services to grow the economy with a longer term view.
- Improve regulation of the financial sector.
- Introduce a living wage.
- Outlaw compulsory 'zero hours' contracts.

Fair taxation

- Reinstatement of the 50p income tax rate for earnings over £150,000
- Reduce VAT, which affects the poorest most, back to 17.5%.
- Crack down on tax avoidance and evasion.
- Reverse cuts to HMRC staff and close tax loopholes.
- Introduce a financial transaction tax.
- Create new council tax bands to fairly tax the rich.

Fair housing

- Reinstatement of government house-building programmes for affordable homes, including improving and upgrading current housing stock and tackling the number of empty homes.
- Avoid the use of 'greenfield' sites where possible.
- Enforce genuinely affordable housing in private developments.
- Regulate landlords and put limits on 'rent inflation'.

- Ban the sale of local authority homes and housing association property, unless sale can finance more and better social public housing in the area on the same terms.
- Protect tenants through rent controls, extended tenancy agreements and higher standards of safety and hygiene.
- Scrap the bedroom tax.
- Revalue council tax bands.

A fair stance on migration

- Ensure an informed debate, not scaremongering, on migration.
- Fully recoup money payable to the NHS from other EU member states through the use of a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).
- Oppose any move to make NHS staff refuse treatment to UK residents based on migration status.
- Invest in public services and create job opportunities in areas with high immigrant populations.

A sensible stance on Europe

- Oppose the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.
- Push for EU reform and make the EU democratically accountable.
- Keep the pound and campaign against Eurozone austerity practices.

A fair system of law and order

- Reverse cuts to legal aid.
- Properly fund the police force.
- Tackle the underlying causes of crime, make greater use of restorative justice and rehabilitation.
- Crack down on corporate, 'white collar' crime.

Fair education

- Abolish tuition fees, reinstate education maintenance allowance.
- Invest in primary school places.
- More support for nursery and early years education for families.
- End the creation of new 'free schools' and 'academies'.
- Give teachers a greater voice in policy making.
- Reinstate in-house school catering.

Better transport

- Bring back a nationalised British Rail.
- Stop privatisation of our roads.
- Scrap HS2 and use the money to invest more wisely in transport infrastructure.
- Create more cycle lanes and pedestrianised zones.
- Re-regulate and expand bus services.

A healthy environment

- Suspend the current rush towards fracking pending further research into its effects.
- Ensure new housing developments are energy-efficient and environmentally friendly.
- Fund more widespread schemes for energy efficiency and alternatives to carbon-based energy sources and reduce CO₂ emissions by about 10% per year from now until 2030.
- Support sustainable farming practices and measures that protect the countryside and reduce the risk of flooding and habitat destruction.

Better world health

- Maintain the UK's commitments to humanitarian aid abroad.
- Invest in health research to aid developing countries and the global community.
- Call on the WHO to coordinate a massive up-scaling in international donations to tackle global health inequalities.



GREAT OR
HOSPITAL



Our NHS values

We must restore the NHS as a safe, comprehensive, publicly funded, publicly delivered, and publicly accountable integrated healthcare system by reversing the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and supporting the proposed NHS Bill, to halt and reverse NHS privatisation. We will do this by focusing on thirteen actions.

1. **Restore** the duties and responsibilities of the Secretary of State for Health to provide universal and comprehensive healthcare in England. Ensure less political interference in the day-to-day running of the NHS.
2. **Halt** privatisation, end competition and scrap the market within the NHS with its associated huge and unnecessary costs and bureaucracy. Reinststate the NHS as the preferred provider of healthcare and remove the requirement to tender out contracts to the private sector.
3. **Increase** NHS funding by a minimum of 4% per year and ensure that resources and staffing levels are consistent with maintaining patient safety and high quality care and that the value of staff pay is maintained. Use a 1p rise in income tax to fill the NHS spending gap while multi-billion pound savings from other policies kick in.
4. **Listen** to patients and staff to improve the NHS. Establish a Health Ombudsman at the head of a team of local independent health commissioners to evaluate and on concerns expressed by patients and staff. Reduce the NHS and Department of Health dependence on management consultants and increase the influence of healthcare professionals, staff and patients.
5. **End** financially-driven A&E and hospital closures and re-configurations. There must be evidence-based, clinical reasons which have the support of the local population and the affected professional staff. Suitable and accessible alternatives must be in place before any closures take place.

6. **Oppose** the EU/US Free Trade Agreement (TTIP) and similar agreements which threaten not only the NHS but the health and well-being of the public.
7. **Stop** further Private Finance Initiative (PFI) deals and remove the PFI repayment burden from individual hospital trusts. The Government should renegotiate on the basis of “fair value”.
8. **Use** the purchasing power of the NHS to get the best deals for all NHS supplies, equipment, and pharmaceuticals for the benefit of patients.
9. **Abolish** prescription charges, which are effectively an unfair tax on working people with chronic long term conditions.
10. **Ensure** “parity of esteem” for mental health services, strengthen maternity services and address the crisis in General Practice with an urgent injection of funding.
11. **Introduce** free personal social care for the elderly and disabled people, and integrate NHS health provision and local authority social care.
12. **Prioritise** and focus on public health and preventative medicine, including measures to reduce excess alcohol consumption, smoking and obesity.
13. **Make** the social determinants of health an absolute priority in the design and development of all government policies.

Restoring the NHS

Health and health care are basic human rights, not marketable commodities. The NHS is the world’s best example of the principle of social solidarity, remarkable for having had the support of people from all political persuasions, since its creation. When the country invests in healthcare it not only reduces poor health and extends lives, but also creates a healthier workforce and contributes to economic growth.

Only a publicly funded, provided and accountable NHS can sustain the founding principles of a comprehensive, universal, equitable, accessible service. These principles have been severely undermined by the toxic mix of the increasing marketisation and privatisation of the NHS, combined with chronic underfunding with an estimated funding gap of £30bn by 2021.

The last 5 years has seen a £20bn efficiency savings programme called the “Nicholson challenge”. After some initial expected productivity gains, this has now resulted in falling NHS productivity, which will make the £22bn efficiency savings envisaged by the “Five Year Forward View”, impossible to achieve. If the funding gap is not addressed, services closures, patient charging and insurance payments seem inevitable. A comprehensive NHS “free at the point of use” will not be possible without significant extra investment.

- **Restore** the NHS to public ownership: publicly funded, publicly provided and publicly accountable.
- **Restore** the duties and responsibilities of the Secretary of State for Health to provide universal and comprehensive healthcare in England. But without the opportunities for political interference in the day-to-day running of the NHS.
- **Halt** and reverse privatization by **abolishing** competition and the market in health provision with its associated huge and unnecessary costs and bureaucracy.
- **Reinstate** the NHS as the preferred provider of healthcare and remove the requirement to tender out contracts to the private sector.
- **Replace** the market with a system based on resource allocation, not commissioning. This system would enable effective planning of healthcare according to the needs of the population at local, regional and national level.
- **Implement** the NHS Bill drafted by Peter Roderick and Professor Allyson Pollock as the best way to achieve this, as it not only repeals the Coalition’s 2012 Act, but also corrects the earlier legislation that created the internal market.

Funding the NHS

- An immediate cash injection of £4.5bn, raised by increasing income tax by a penny in the pound, followed by a level of NHS funding sufficient to match the healthcare inflation rate (at least 4% per year), meeting the £30bn per year funding gap by 2020.
- In the medium to long term the savings from ending the market and halting privatisation will boost the funding to front line care.
- We would aim to increase NHS funding to bring it into line with G7 countries.

Defend local hospitals and the District General Hospital (DGH) model of care

- Our policy is to defend the District General Hospital as a good model of care for the majority of people who need admission to hospital. The DGH provides people with care close to home and family during their stay. This is a key feature in retaining the founding principle of access and equality.
- The networking of these DGHs to larger specialist hospitals is essential to ensure that patients who need highly specialised care get access to specialised services.
- Reconfigurations of service should have local community and clinician support and be subject to a full consultation process. We say there should be full equality impact assessment published before any hospital or service closures.

Abolish PFI

- No more PFI deals should be signed. The policy should be ended now, not after May 2015.
- The Treasury must force a full investigation of mis-sold PFI contracts, penalise those responsible and renegotiate onerous contracts on the basis of fair value, with the recoupment of excessive payments.

Abolish prescription charges

- We call for the abolition of prescription charges, which are effectively a tax on working people with chronic health problems. This would bring England in line with the policy of the NHS in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

General Practice

- We support the traditional model of British General Practice supported by primary care teams working in defined areas, distributed fairly, based on long-term relationships with patients and underpinned by the vital concept of continuity of care.
- To improve access and thus continuity we call for GP numbers to be increased by 10,000, in line with recommendations from the Royal College of GPs
- A GP needs to remain the patient's champion and committed advocate. GPs should remain free from financial pressures, particularly incentives that could detrimentally affect their clinical decision-making, which must always be in the best interests of their patients.
- British family medicine is extremely cost-effective but needs investment. The cuts to general practice funding (nearly £1 billion in last 5 years) must be reversed, with greater investment in premises and good GP-led local out-of-hours services.
- Cuts to the Minimum Practice Income Guarantee (MPIG) must be reversed and practices in deprived areas provided with adequate funding.

Nursing

- We endorse the Royal College of Nursing's manifesto.
- Improve patient care through safe staffing levels, access to training and environments where staff concerns are listened to.
- Value nursing, with fair pay for nursing staff, an end to down-banding and a focus on the future of nursing.
- Invest in health and care. No more cuts to nursing; increased community resources; workforce planning around patient need.

Maternity Services

- Ensure a safe and effective service for women and their babies at one of the most vulnerable times in their lives.
- Address midwife shortages and training numbers.
- Increase maternity and paternity pay.
- Increase support for working parents.
- Focus on maternal mental health issues.

NHS Staffing

- Invest in safe staff-patient staffing levels and reduce dependency on costly agency staff.
- Implement a pay structure to reward NHS staff fairly for their skills and their work. Salaries should rise in line with inflation. Terms and conditions of service should be protected.
- The living wage, not the minimum wage, should be the lowest rate payable in the NHS.

Supporting Mental Health Services with “parity of esteem”

- Mental health funding to be addressed as a matter of urgency
- Increase staffing levels and training places for mental healthcare professionals.
- End the privatisation of mental health service provision.

Listening to patients and staff to improve the NHS

- Introduce local independent health commissioners, accessible to patients, relatives and staff, in all major towns, working under a new and specific Health Service Ombudsman (based on the New Zealand system).
- The NHS Complaints Process to be patient-friendly and be used as a means to improve the NHS.
- Department of Health dependence on management consultants must be reduced, and the influence increased of healthcare professional bodies, health staff and patient groups.
- Restore responsibility for health planning to public health and clinical leaders.
- Strengthen the whistle blowing system to allow staff to identify and report their concerns about quality of care and patient safety without fear of recrimination.

Public Health

- Introduction of plain cigarette packing, minimum unit pricing for alcohol and a sugar tax. More stringent requirements on the fast food industry to cut the use of additives such as sugar and salt.
- More overt food and drink labelling, including calorie labelling on alcohol.
- Tougher controls on alcohol advertising
- Stricter rules and greater transparency surrounding links between public health research & policy and the food & drinks and pharmaceutical industries.
- Easier access to exercise and sport in schools and local communities.
- Adequate funding of local authority public health education and public health policies, which should form a major focus of political policy.
- End the outsourcing of public health services and take them back into the NHS family to enable better integration and planning with NHS services.

Social Care and Elderly care

- We will reverse the cuts to local authority budgets and increase funding for social care to a level that fully meets the needs of vulnerable, elderly and disabled people.
- We will reverse the cuts to social services budgets for children and families.
- We will introduce free personal social care and increase funding to meet the needs of vulnerable elderly and disabled people.
- We call for implementation of the Dilnot Commission recommendations.

We support the 6 key policy decisions of the British Geriatrics Society:

1. End the divide between health and social care.
2. Build capacity in Intermediate Care.
3. Invest adequately in healthcare and social support for older people.
4. Provide national strategic direction on older people living with frailty, dementia, complex needs and multiple long-term conditions.
5. Support staff across all care sectors to develop competencies in the management of older patients.
6. Measure the dimensions of care that matter to older people and their families.

Reducing health inequity

There is incontrovertible evidence (e.g. Marmot report, Fair Society, Healthy Lives) that health inequity arises from social inequalities. To reduce such inequalities requires action across all determinants. Targeting the most disadvantaged alone will not improve health sufficiently. To reduce the social gradient in health, actions must be universal and with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage.

We therefore strongly support evidence based programmes to achieve the following 6 policy objectives

1. Give every child the best start in life.
2. Enable young people to achieve the maximum of their potential for healthy lives.
3. Create fair employment and meaningful work for all.
4. Ensure healthy standard of living for all.
5. Create and develop healthy and sustainable communities.
6. Take every opportunity to promote well-being and prevent ill-health.



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Creating a fairer economy

We understand that current debt levels cannot continue to increase indefinitely. Our deficit and overall debt must be addressed, but this must not be at the expense of deteriorating public services. We are a sovereign nation with our own Central Bank. There is good evidence that austerity policies have actually slowed economic growth.

Progressive taxation

- Taxation policies should be based on maintaining a decent standard of living for all, and as income soars way above the level of comfort to ridiculous excess, tax bands should reflect that. We support the re-instatement of – and efficient collection of – the 50p higher rate of tax and we support higher taxes on luxury goods and services.

A determined clampdown on tax avoidance and evasion

- The Tax Justice Network estimates up to £70 billion in tax is avoided and evaded each year – just under half the amount of income tax that was actually collected in 2013-14. Tax avoidance is estimated to cost the UK up to £20 billion per year. The Public and Civil Service Union says more than £120 billion is lost to avoided, evaded and uncollected tax. Whatever the true figure, it's clear this money could have a huge impact on stimulating our economy and bringing down our debt. We demand that all due taxes are collected, that greater efforts are made to close the tax loopholes which enable tax avoidance and that short-sighted cuts to HMRC staffing levels are reversed and inspectors increased to focus on tax evasion by the richest corporations and individuals.

A financial transaction tax

- A small levy of 0.1-0.5% on all financial transactions could raise billions of pounds that could be used to stimulate private sector growth and generate more revenue for public services. To be effective, the tax would need to be adopted by all the major economies. Eleven European nations have signed up for it, but the UK, as yet, has not. We fully support these proposals and the UK should sign up to these Financial Transaction Tax proposals

Taxes on goods and services that are harmful to health

- Increased spending on public services and infrastructure have been shown to give a positive economic return (e.g. health, education, transport and energy infrastructure). Compelling evidence from the IMF and Oxford and Stanford Universities shows that each pound of public spending put into health and education generates significantly more cash in the economy (multiplier effect). This is not just because of the positive economic effects of a healthy and well-educated workforce. Money spent on publicly delivered services circulates within the UK economy instead of being siphoned off to foreign shareholders and offshore tax havens.

Better banking

- Small businesses and entrepreneurs need access to loans to grow their businesses. We support the idea of stronger local community banking, and a national state-run bank to support business lending and encourage growth of UK manufacturing industry and small businesses.
- Better regulation of the financial sector at EU and G20 level, as our politicians of every hue have shown themselves incapable of controlling sharp operators at national level. The retail and investment arms of major banks must be separated.

Investment in transport and energy infrastructure

- It is crucial to improve cities' transport links outside London, to stimulate their local economies. We support the idea of investing in renewable and sustainable energy policies.

Your working life

- We support policies to promote full employment. We reject the right-wing ideology that says that a certain rate of unemployment is “natural”. Unemployment is a scourge on the economy, individuals and families. In times when the private sector is failing to provide jobs, judicious public spending on infrastructure projects, and policies to support the growth of UK manufacturing and small businesses, we will offer opportunities for all.
- We oppose enforced zero hours contracts. In the case of home care workers, they must be paid at least the Minimum Wage for the time they spend travelling between clients as well as the time spent with them.
- We support the introduction of a statutory Living Wage. This would transform the quality of life and health of low-paid workers; slash billions from the benefits bill (actually a state subsidy for low-paying employers); and stimulate economic growth. A Living Wage creates jobs by pumping more money into the economy at the level where it will be spent locally.
- We support provision of comprehensive and universal childcare support system. This would pay for itself by freeing parents to contribute to the economy through their taxes for paid work. We would increase investment in the evidence-based early years programmes.
- We support gender equality in pay and oppose all forms of discrimination in the workplace. Workers’ rights, their health, and their safety, must be protected.



Our vision for political reform

There are profound faults and failings in the UK political system. Public trust and confidence in both the individuals (MPs, peers and civil servants) and the wider political system have been undermined. This has resulted in increasing numbers of people failing to engage with politics at all, destabilising our very democracy. We therefore believe that reform of the UK political is essential.

A parliament that works for people, not politicians.

- Much stricter control over MPs' and Peers' ability to support legislation where they or their family have a personal or financial interest. This exists in the current code of conduct, but it must have the force of law behind it.
- A review of party "whips" and the practices of voting with party and without attending debates.
- The introduction of "recall" - the power of constituents to remove misbehaving MPs.
- A monthly People's Question Time.
- An end to the 'revolving door' through which civil servants, politicians and corporate employees put profit before professionalism as they move between the private and public sectors.
- Much greater control of, and transparency into, corporate lobbying and corporate influence over civil servants and elected officials and an end to the employment of corporate representatives in public decision making posts.
- Greater transparency and control over corporate lobbying and influence in Europe.

- Appoint an independent Commission to investigate a move towards a system of PR.
- Lower the voting age to 16.
- Liberalise the rules governing access to the media both before and during election campaigns.
- Repeal the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill.

House of Lords reform

- We support a completely new second chamber to review proposed legislation.
- This would be made up of nominations from elected regional assemblies plus a politically neutral panel to nominate experts from across society – science, technology, health, education, business, charities, the voluntary sector, local government and trade unions.



Better access to housing

We reject the free market “solution” to the housing crisis, which is to remove planning controls to let developers build wherever they see a profit, regardless of local objections. Development should be for the benefit of local people by creating affordable homes, with due regard for infrastructure to sustain local health and wellbeing – including health, education and recreational facilities, sustainable green transport facilities and protection of natural habitats.

Sensible, sustainable investment

- Ban the sale of local authority homes and housing association property, unless sale can finance more and better social public housing in the area on the same terms.
- Reinstate government house-building programmes for affordable homes, including improving and upgrading current housing stock and tackling the number of empty homes.
- We would restore the presumption in favour of brownfield sites for development before greenfield sites.
- House building and modification should be as efficient as possible, using as little energy and water, and producing as little waste as can be reasonably achieved. Investing in a national infrastructure with these objectives would generate jobs and increase energy security. We would examine the evidence on using carbon taxes/rebates to drive this effort.
- Re-examine the evidence around large infrastructure projects such as HS2, to assess whether the billions of public investment required would yield better returns for the community, economy and social development if redirected into our house-building project.

Fair taxation of land and housing

- Scrap the bedroom tax.
- Introduce further council tax bands to reflect the reality of soaring top property values, with extra monies gathered going to building up the local public housing property portfolio.
- We believe there is a strong case for a progressive tax on property. We would examine the evidence around the ability of a national Land Value Tax to suppress the speculation and land-hoarding that currently drives up house prices, and deter the massive rise in speculative property purchase for profit by overseas investors who may never set foot in the country and have no interest in its well-being. Any such tax would have to protect designated public spaces such as parks and the Green Belt, while encouraging the development of well-designed communities.
- We oppose privatisation of the Land Registry and call for this vital national monitor to be returned to public ownership, resourced appropriately, to record all property ownership accurately and help prevent tax avoidance and evasion.
- We believe that the use of tax havens to purchase and own UK property in order to avoid taxation must be made illegal. All property in the UK should be purchased only through a UK bank account, with strict money laundering controls. We would look at the evidence around possible regulations on house purchase by non UK residents.

Greater protection for tenants

- Tenants should be protected by regulation of rented property to ensure it is safe, hygienic, and energy-efficient.
- We support rent controls and extended tenancy agreements, with the sitting tenants offered first refusal, to protect tenants and prevent rent inflation (which generally transfers to an increased burden on the public purse).
- We support the introduction of a national register of landlords to improve private rental standards across the country. Local Authorities must have a statutory duty and sufficient funding from local and central government to identify poor quality housing and enforce improvements.
- Every property must be certified as fit for purpose before being put on the rental market.



A fair approach to migration

The majority of EU migrants who come here are young, healthy, tax-paying workers, and therefore pay far more in to the NHS than they will ever take out – unless they choose to settle here permanently, in which they will present the same profit and loss account as the rest of us. For most migrants though, as for the British who choose to work abroad, a few years working in another country is just a prelude to returning home.

EU migrants

Inevitably, though, some EU migrants will need the NHS while they are here. Therefore -

- Greater efforts should be made to recoup money payable to the NHS from other member states under the EU's reciprocal agreement on health care abroad through the use of a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

Integration and social cohesion

There is reliable evidence that migrants from the EU have contributed £20 billion to the UK economy and do not, overall, reduce employment opportunities for British-born workers. That said, we recognise that successive governments have done little to alleviate the extra pressures that migration to specific areas can place on local communities in terms of health care, education, housing and employment. Therefore -

- We want government to use the “migration bounty” wisely in localities to accommodate migrants and to encourage integration and a cohesive community.

Access to free healthcare

The cost of nationwide policing to weed out the occasional chancer outweighs any possible saving. Therefore -

- We oppose NHS staff being instructed to refuse treatment to “ineligible” foreign patients seeking medical treatment.

But there are also two vital principles at stake: one moral and one scientific. First, NHS staff have a duty of care to all people seeking healthcare, and should not be required to turn people away when they are at their most vulnerable. And, second, they cannot fulfil their duty to protect the public’s health if anyone is deterred from seeking prompt treatment for illness or infection by hostile questioning. In countries where healthcare is not free at the point of need, we see that not treating those who can't afford to pay generates a much bigger cost – both in money and lives lost – in the wider society. We cannot afford to sacrifice good medical practice for headline-grabbing political posturing.

Common sense on Europe

Reform of the European Union is essential and long overdue

- Make the EU democratically accountable to voters, with mechanisms to allow the public to hold elected officials to account.
- Make the European Commission more accountable to the European Parliament
- Establish a register of lobbyists
- Put health and the wellbeing of EU citizens, not corporate interests, at the centre of policy-making
- Tackle the proliferation of health-related EU agencies that are accountable only to the Commission, and not to the public.

TTIP: the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Oppose the EU/US Free Trade Agreement (TTIP) and similar agreements which threaten not only NHS independence but also the protection of public health from commercial exploitation. TTIP will leave the UK prey to being sued in secret courts under the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) clause and the supposed economic benefits of the treaty benefits are now being seriously questioned. If the EU does sign this treaty with the United States, we believe the British Government must exercise its right to a full opt out.

The Euro

In common with other parties, the NHA Party believes the United Kingdom should keep the pound and not join the Euro. We are opposed to monetary union in principle. And, in practice, since the financial crisis, the Eurozone has been transformed into to a two-tier system in which richer nations have the power to impose Austerity policies on poorer ones, to the direct harm of the health of their citizens.

EU Referendum

There is much to be said on either side about EU membership. Future developments may further radically change the balance of good and bad. We therefore leave it up to individual candidates to offer their own perspective and to consult with their constituents on whether or not to support a referendum on the issue of EU membership.

In the event a referendum on EU membership takes place, we would ask, based on the evidence:

1. Will leaving the EU contribute to public health and wellbeing in the UK?
2. Is there sufficient economic evidence to justify leaving the EU?



VOTE

National

Health

Action

Party

London Local elections

22nd May



Health Action Party

Equal access to education

We believe there is compelling evidence that, as with healthcare, access to high quality education is beneficial to society and to the economy and that it should be viewed as an investment, not a cost. Education is a basic right and public good and should be free to all. This should include access to free school meals of good nutritional standard.

- The shortage of primary school places must be urgently addressed and we support the need for smaller class sizes.
- The policy of encouraging Free Schools and Academies should be abolished, and the money be spent more fairly and equitably across the system.
- The teaching profession should have a greater role in the policy-making process and the structure and functioning of the education system, as well as the national curriculum.
- End to the marketisation and privatisation of further education, higher education and universities sector. This includes an end to student fees, and student loans to pay for them. The Coalition policy of tripling student fees has been a profound economic failure and the issue of a debt jubilee for existing student loans at some future date should be investigated, possibly in conjunction with a special one-off tax on high earners.
- Exercise including sport should play a major role in schools, with education about healthy lifestyles a key part of the curriculum.
- We call for support and development for genuine apprenticeships, especially in advanced technology areas, manufacturing and infrastructure industries such as building.
- We call for a substantive programme for adult further education and learning.
- We call for a serious review of whether the educational provision for medical and care staff at all levels is sufficient for the future needs of the nation and its NHS, and call for any shortcomings to be addressed.

Transport

We believe that an integrated, environmentally sustainable transport system, with access for all, promotes economic development. This requires an integrated transport policy, which decades of de-regulation and increasing privatisation have thwarted.

A return to truly 'public' transport

- Privatisation of the railways has not served the nation well, and we support re-nationalisation.
- Rail fares must come down to increase rail use and reduce the burden on our roads.
- We oppose the privatisation of the road network.
- We support re-regulation of buses services nationwide and the expansion of bus routes to provide better services to rural and isolated populations who depend on them.

Sensible investment for the future

- We support transport initiatives to improve the connectivity and economic fortunes of our major northern cities and towns. However, we believe HS2 has run into too many problems and we believe there are better ways to invest £50bn with a much wider range of policies, to improve the connectivity and economic fortunes of our major northern cities and towns.
- We would promote walking and cycling in our cities and towns with more cycle lanes and greater urban pedestrianisation.
- Public safety must be a priority in design, planning and building.



Sustainable development

The long-term health of people depends on a healthy environment, supportive social structures and adequate natural resources. We believe in development that fulfils the needs of the present generation without endangering future generations.

Almost any human activity consumes resources and has both social and environmental effects but we now have the technology to outstrip the planet's natural capacity to regenerate itself.

Human induced climate change (HICC) is real and we must act to halt and reverse its effects to the extent that we are able.

Motivating people to take a long-term perspective on everyday decision-making is difficult in a society increasingly consumerist and short-term in outlook. However, most adults desire a better quality of life not only for themselves, but for their children and grandchildren.

The 2006 Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change put a price on HICC. It concluded that, without action, the overall costs and risks of climate change will be equivalent to losing at least 5% of global GDP each year, now and forever. The poorest, most vulnerable countries and populations will suffer most, although they will have contributed least to the causes of climate change.

The Stern Review also found that there is still time to avoid the worst impacts of climate change with strong, swift collective action. Most nations signed up to the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Treaty on climate change but in the UK the various policy initiatives will not meet the binding targets set out in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. We want to encourage a new commitment to a sustainable future for the planet.

Taking steps to protect the environment

- We support the proposals of the Stern Report and within the NHS intend to examine the potential of sustainable department approaches to release resources to reinvest in services.
- A clean environment is essential to our health and wellbeing. Both the environment and nature need to be protected from misuse, pollution and unnecessary interference.
- Profit must never be put before environmental safety and essential conservation. Environmental considerations must be an integral part of all planning, business and industrial decision-making to ensure commercial gain is not at the expense of our finite natural resources, surroundings and nature.
- We will always consult expert advice before forming policies involving the environment and nature.
- We will pro-actively engage with relevant organisations, charities, pressure groups and local communities to seek evidence and agreement on health issues and decisions which may have an effect on the environment, both locally and nationally.
- Those responsible for NHS land and property should incorporate consultation in any decisions that may have an impact on the environment and/or nature conservation.
- We believe no fracking should take place in the UK until the process has passed the test of much more scientific, evidence-based research. There are too many unanswered questions. And there must always be provision for local communities that are likely to be affected to have a real say on what happens beneath their feet.

World Health and development

- Back a law to enshrine the commitment of 0.7% of GDP to foreign aid for genuine humanitarian purposes, essential interventions, increased investment in health research and development and other "global public goods".
- Charge the World Health Organisation with coordinating the massive, multi-year scaling up of donor assistance for health and with monitoring of progress.

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