



**Lewisham**

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# **Hospital Worker**

**A Workers' Liberty healthworkers' bulletin**

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## **Hunt attacks our pay**

The government is mocking us. Back in March George Osbourne said he would give us a miserly 1% pay rise. Now Jeremy Hunt has ordered the (not-so-independent) Pay Review bodies to withdraw the offer of 1%.

When you take in to account the rising cost of living, we are now 12% poorer than in 2010. If the government have it their way, then by 2016 could be looking at as much as a 25% reduction in our pay. This is bad for us obviously, bad for patients and bad for the NHS.

In the background is government attempts to abolish the system of incremental pay rises and introduce "performance related pay".

At the moment, we receive an incremental pay increase of around 3.5%. For every year of service, which moves us from the bottom of the pay band to the top over a period of 10 years. After ten years of service there are no more increments.

The government and the media have started to refer to increments as "automatic pay rises". They are not. Increments were originally introduced in order to pay newer staff less than the job was worth. As workers gain experience and competency they gradually go up the scale until they gain a full salary. NHS pays all new starters 75% of the rate for the job. NHS staff are only paid their full salary after 10 years of service.

Don't let anyone tell you that your increment is an "automatic pay rise". Actually its just a way of paying you less for the first 10 years of your work. This is an

*Lewisham Hospital Worker* provides a forum for staff at the hospital to tell their stories and air their views. If you have a story to tell or an opinion to share then get in touch. The bulletin is edited by healthcare professionals. All articles are published anonymously and we will ensure confidentiality is upheld.

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### **Is there really a problem with migrants using up the NHS budget?**

**0.01% NHS budget spent on EU and non-EU immigrants using the NHS**

**0.6% NHS budget wasted on hugely expensive wonga-style PFI debt repayments**

**4% NHS budget siphoned off to plug the hole caused by the banking bailout**

**15-25% NHS budget frittered away on accountants, lawyers, bureaucrats and management consultants organising NHS privatisation**

antiquated system that favours the employer because it allows them to employ some staff at the discounted rate. The pay structure should be "modernised" by raising all staff to the top pay point in their band and pegging annual wage increases to inflation.

But we won't win anything without a fight. The reason we are in this situation is because the union leaderships have signalled that they are unwilling to organise that fight. The defeat of the pensions dispute, demobilised after two strike days in 2011, gave a green light to the government to attack the NHS workforce.

But this is not just a question of pay. It is about the whole future of the NHS. In the shadows lurk the private sector health firms that want to take over parts of the NHS. The lower our wages, the higher their profits. As isolated individuals we will continue to lose pay and eventually lose our NHS. But united, 1.3 million NHS workers can defeat this government. We need to organise.

**• If you're fed up about pay and want to do something then you're not alone. Healthworkers across many unions and workplaces are organising on the healthactivists e-list. To join:**

**www.unionlists.org.uk/lists/info/healthactivists**

# WE'VE MERGED!

DID YOU notice the fanfare? The posters, and new signs, the people in every public part of the hospital telling the world that we're now a new organisation? Neither did I. Just a few e-mails about the practicalities of communicating with QEH. Our manager's disappeared somewhere in Woolwich for half the week now, and some services seem to be moving to QEH, but for most of us, nothing's really changed. Yet.

The shuttle bus, and joint switchboard will bring us closer together, but Woolwich still feels like a long way away. The staff over there have been waiting for this day, but our main concern is how this huge wonga-style QEH PFI debt will start to effect us. The accumulated debt's written off, and there's money to help for the first few years, but after that this new joint Trust is supposed to be able to pay all the PFI fees. 'Efficiency savings' cuts, are never far away.

Some people are moving from the PRUH, and others are moving to QEH. How this will all pan out even in the short term is not clear. Signs are that reorganisations may begin soon. As soon as you catch wind of changes in your area, get on to your union rep and let us know at *LHW*. The sooner they know there's an issue, the sooner we can figure out how to respond. The last year has been whirlwind of uncertainty, but we must reorientate ourselves quickly to make sure we're ready to respond to the next threat.

For now we are Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust, and the fates of our two hospitals are bound together. We don't know when or how the government will come back to try to dismantle the Lewisham part of our new Trust, much depends on the outcome of the next court hearing at the end of the month. In the meantime we need to get to know our neighbours, and get together in our unions, so we can defend ourselves again.

## Teachers on strike

ON THURSDAY 17 October, thousands of teachers across the country will strike in defence of their pay, pensions and working conditions. Many schools will be closed. Although that will cause inconvenience for many of us, the teachers should be saluted for standing up not only for themselves, but for our kids' education. Tell your kids' teachers you support them and visit their picket lines! And while we're at it, we should think about action about our own pay and conditions too.

• More at [www.workersliberty.org/category/trade-unions/uk-trade-unions/education-unions](http://www.workersliberty.org/category/trade-unions/uk-trade-unions/education-unions)

## A thousand people at Rivoli Ballroom fundraiser

THE FUNDRAISER by the Save Lewisham Hospital campaign in the Rivoli was a sell out with close to 1000 tickets sold, and thousands of pounds more raised in the raffle on the night. It was a fantastic night in a stunning venue, raised large amounts of money, much needed for ongoing legal costs. The turnout also demonstrated that the community in Lewisham is still aware, and supportive of the campaign to keep our hospital.

## 50,000 demonstrate for the NHS

NINETY TWO people from Lewisham used the coaches and bus organised by the campaign, and three chartered trains left from Euston, organised by Unite, Unison, and People's Assembly. The Unite train was fully booked.

When we arrived in Manchester, there was a huge traffic jam of coaches - many more coaches were arriving than had been expected, which led to some delays. The Lewisham coach arrived later than planned, but we'd agreed that we would lead the demonstration. Much of the march was assembled, but waited, and many contingents cheered our 'victory' and 'save Lewisham Hospital' placards and banners, as we made our way to the front of the march. As well as large national Unite and Unison contingents, NHS campaigns from all over the country were represented on the march. Non health unions including the FBU (firefighters), CWU (postal workers) as well as student groups came to support the march.

Unfortunately, but predictably the press did not give much coverage to the march, preferring to focus on of David Cameron. One BBC journalist said he had been stopped from filming the demonstration by Tory Party conference security.

There's little sign that the demo will effect the government's commitment to destroy our NHS. A better target may have been the Labour Party conference the week before, who we'd have had more chance of influencing.

But despite all the blather and spin designed to hide what the government is doing to the NHS, we were able to mobilise one the biggest demonstrations that Manchester has ever seen. The march shows the power of grassroots activism and shows what is possible when the unions start to organise for a fight. When we arrived back in Lewisham that night it felt well worth the effort.