



tubeworker

STILL TIME TO STOP NHS PPP!

The Government's controversial plans for the health service have reached the House of Lords and are intended to pass through Parliament by May. Like unions and health professionals, we can see that these proposals are nothing more than a blank cheque for private companies to profit from sickness and vulnerability. The plans echo the Public Private Partnership we suffered on LU. We have until May to save the NHS.

The NHS is worth saving. Privatisation has made in-roads in recent years. But at its heart, the NHS remains the service based on human need that revolutionised working class people's lives when it was established in 1948. Rich or poor, wherever you live, you should get the best healthcare available – for free. That is set to change if the Government get their way..... They plan to switch NHS's ethos from human need to private profit.

How will it work? What's wrong with the plans?

Commissioning.

In the name of cutting 'bureaucracy', the government is abolishing Primary Care Trusts, but erecting 'Consortia' (groups) of GPs in their place. Why? So each group can choose which services to 'commission' (buy in), ending comprehensive healthcare, creating localised inequalities. These bodies will not be publicly accountable and will probably contract-in costly management consultancies, another profit-making opportunity. The structures allow Consortia to become private businesses in the long term.

Provision.

This is the heart of the Bill. GP Consortia will be required to consider buying services from private health providers, whereas at the moment all NHS-funded care is provided by public bodies. How can you have public health care run for private profit? A perverse and

disgusting concept! This will be PPP for the NHS: public funds ploughed into private companies. The long-term survival of the NHS is threatened. Private providers will cherry pick the most profitable services, leaving NHS services to compete with reduced budgets and possibly close.

Hospitals.

All NHS hospitals will be transformed into Foundation Trusts, forced to act like private hospitals: make profit or go under. Hospitals will treat more private patients to boost profits, at the expense of NHS patients. The proposals lift the cap on how many private patients a hospital can treat. What happened to the original concept of the 'best healthcare available' whether you're rich or poor?

A few myths peddled by the Government need to be addressed. Firstly, that this is about 'patient choice'. The only people who will have 'choice' are the rich. Working class people will have no choice but a second-rate service.

Secondly, they say they're 'cutting costs' to reduce the deficit. Tubeworker doesn't believe deficit reduction should come before public services, just because international banks say so. But in any case, these plans will COST £4 billion. It couldn't be plainer. Their sole purpose is profit. On the 29th February there was a lively demonstration outside a conference, 'Winning Business in the new NHS', about business opportunities opening up in health. The Government may pretend they have our interests at heart. But they are honest to their business buddies. It's all about the money.

Demonstrate: 7th March. Join the Unite union protest at 1pm outside Parliament or the TUC rally at Central Hall, Westminster, 6pm on the same day.

SNOW CHAOS!

On Friday 3rd February Boris said: "Across all our roads and rails hundreds of workers are on standby to ensure that, should we receive a mega deposit of snow, we are in a position to keep the capital moving

"With more than 100,000 tonnes of salt and an army of gritters, de-icers and specially adapted Tube carriages, together we will ensure that coordinated and swift action is taken to keep Londoners on the move."

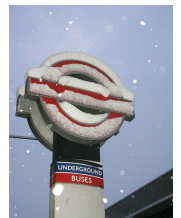
But by mid-evening on Saturday 4th February, LU was in chaos.

The Metropolitan Line shut down north of Rickmansworth. Hammersmith and City and Circle lines were severely delayed as trains stalled and points failed. Points failure suspended the Central Line. Same story on the Jubilee and Bakerloo north of Queens Park.

The only 'good service' was the Northern Line where last trains were so late that they did not reach destination in passenger service. LU kicked passengers off trains into freezing cold Central London to try their luck with night buses.

Following a hellish evening at work, staff waited up to two hours for their taxi, not getting home til 5 or 6am! Some staff taxis were cancelled altogether. Needless to say, LU have given no thanks or reward to staff for their sleepless nights.

Six inches of snow and all grinds to a standstill! Why don't they create jobs, cut unemployment figures, invest in preparation and maintenance so that LU genuinely is ready next time? Although fiercer, colder winters are becoming the norm, LU continues to cross its fingers and hope for mild weather. They escaped criticism from the City of London this year as the snow only ruined revellers' Saturday nights. When will LU learn?



Tubeworker is produced by Tube workers and published by Workers' Liberty, an organisation fighting as part of the labour movement for a socialist alternative to both capitalism and Stalinism, based on common ownership and democracy.

We want one democratic, fighting union for all railworkers. We reject artificial divisions between workers of different grades. We oppose racism, sexism, homophobia and all prejudice that divides

BLACKFRIARS STATION REOPENS

When BoJo reopened Blackfriars on 20th

February, he failed to mention that this was 1 month and three weeks late rather than one week early, as he boasted. The original scheduled opening of 30th December had been moved back to 26th February. So, opening on Monday 20th February was hardly much of an achievement!

Staff are much happier with the spacious, brand new station. But LU sailed close to the wire. On the night before the opening, there was no running water in the ticket office toilet - as members of staff found out to their cost! There was no heating in the GLAP. The entire set of lift keys didn't work, so they had to have an engineer on-site in case anyone got stuck.

They were willing to risk all this to score the propaganda point of opening 'ahead' of schedule.



ISS BREAKTHROUGH

ISS cleaning company has agreed to meet with the RMT to discuss an Olympics Bonus and a pay increase.

This brings new hope to long-standing RMT cleaner members and many new recruits. News of increased union membership among ISS cleaners has reached and frightened management.

The drive to organise cleaners and catering staff, initiated by some RMT activists, is really paying off. Their commitment to get into workplaces and talk about people's concerns is a model that all unions in all grades should follow. This is the way to strengthen our union movement against increasingly aggressive, government-backed management.



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WACKY WARNING

Central Line trains management have given a 23-week attendance warning to a driver due to retire in less than two weeks time!

What action could they take against him if his attendance deteriorates after retirement?!

LU expected him to feel grateful that the warning is three weeks less than the maximum 26 weeks.

If this is how they treat someone of 44 years service, what hope have we got?! Management's power has eclipsed basic rationality. We should take that power from them, and assert our own standards of workplace justice
www.workersliberty.org/sicksystem

UNFAIR PENALTY

TFL and LUL have raised penalty fares from £50 to £80. Yet another way to sting passengers for money! Since 2011's cuts, most stations have no ticket office outside the peak. There are no ticket sellers to keep ticket machines in service. So staff are forced to let passengers through without paying. And now LU will punish passengers for this situation?!

You can't have it both ways, LU. If you won't sell tickets then you should not make money from the victims of your cuts.

www.workersliberty.org/fares

ONLY EIGHT DAYS!

The new-recruit CSAs will receive only eight days' training: not long enough for safety-related procedures.

To LU, staff knowledge is an unnecessary expense.

The less we are trained, the more replaceable we are. Incident CSAs (managers trained in a day) were used to keep stations open in recent strikes.

LU have 1200 ICSAs on-hand for the Olympics. Undermining our training makes it easier to use untrained staff to break strikes. We need to stand up for our right to decent training!

www.workersliberty.org/training

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY (AWAY)

On the Central Line managers are trying to remove drivers' right to take a train out of service without getting approval from both a Train Technician and a DRM first.

This comes soon after LU said Station Supervisors could no longer refuse access to contractors. Remove our responsibilities and the job gets more risky. Our wages and our jobs may not be far behind.

www.workersliberty.org/LTsafety

SS HANDBOOK

LU's new manual for Station Supervisors is a further step towards turning Supervisors into managers.

It focuses on how SS's can boost the 'performance scorecard'— 'Real time information', 'Staff and Information Surveys' and (laughably with so few cleaners) 'cleanliness and presentation'

SS's are guided on managing staff shortages: 'try to cover any gaps by reorganising other staff on duty' while 'not causing other coverage issues'.

LU now see understaffing as part of the job.

LU are using SS's to create a disciplined, micro-managed workforce, concerned with targets rather than the service. The unions need to publicly oppose this Handbook before its ethos sets in.

www.workersliberty.org/perform-manage