

# Primary Care

## NEWS

## Transforming Community Services threatens the NHS – UNISON says it's time to speak out

■ The NHS is under threat from privatisation as a result of the government's Transforming Community Services programme, says UNISON.

"Where PCTs are not listening to the vast majority of staff who want to stay working in the NHS, jobs are at risk of being outsourced to the private sector or to a social enterprise," said Mike Jackson, senior national officer in UNISON's health group.

The programme introduces a range of different options for how PCTs should structure themselves as service

providers. It may mean that staff are transferred out of the NHS and into private companies or social enterprises.

If PCTs choose to ditch the NHS in favour of a private provider, pay and terms and conditions for staff would no longer apply and staff would not be able to remain a member of the NHS Pension Scheme (except in limited circumstances within social enterprises).

UNISON has stepped up its campaign around Transforming Community Services to make sure that staff are aware of what could happen to their jobs. We are also continuing to lobby the government nationally. New campaign materials have been produced to help you campaign locally for community health services to continue to be provided within the NHS. UNISON believes this delivers the best care for patients and keeps staff jobs and terms and conditions secure in the long term.

UNISON members and activists are making sure they can influence the decisions being made by their PCTs, as well as recruiting new members so that all staff have a say in their future. They are lobbying local MPs, councillors and local involvement networks (LINKs) and getting their message out via local newspapers and radio. For more ideas on how you can campaign and get

involved please contact your local branch or call UNISONDirect on 0845 355 0845.

You can find our briefings and guidance on primary care by going to [www.unison.org.uk/pct](http://www.unison.org.uk/pct) and following the link to the section on Transforming Community Services.

UNISON's fight against health service privatisation is part of our new Million Voices for Change campaign – the biggest, most wide-ranging campaign in our history. A Million Voices for Change is about putting people before profit, and putting public services at the heart of our strategy for building a stronger economy and a fairer society.

UNISON members working in vital public services are out there making a real difference to people's lives in these difficult times.

That's why we're calling for:

- social justice – help for those facing redundancy, repossessions and poverty, not bonuses and tax cuts for millionaires
- good jobs – environmentally sustainable and socially useful jobs, with decent pay and pensions and a strong union voice
- quality public services – no more privatisation. Increased investment in accountable public services like health, education and housing.

UNISON urges all members and service users to add their voice to our Million Voices for Change campaign by visiting [www.unison.org.uk/million](http://www.unison.org.uk/million)



to add your voice go to  
[www.unison.org.uk/million](http://www.unison.org.uk/million)

## Deadline for PCT provider arm decisions scrapped

**The Department of Health has scrapped the deadline it imposed on primary care trusts for developing plans around organisational options for provider arms.**

**In a letter to all chief executives of strategic health authorities (SHAs) and PCTs in England, NHS chief executive David Nicholson said the department wanted to “take a more flexible approach to the timetable” that was introduced as part of the government’s Transforming Community Services programme.**

**Decisions on the timetable for the development of the proposals for the future organisational forms on PCT provider services will now be made by SHAs.**

**“We welcome this decision by the Department of Health at a time when PCTs are coming under immense pressure,” said Mike Jackson, senior national officer in UNISON’s health group.**

**“We believe this will provide a greater opportunity for in-house PCT provider arms to demonstrate their ability to provide services. We would also urge PCTs and SHAs to use the extra time to ensure that staff and trade unions are fully engaged and satisfied with any decisions on the future shape of PCT provider services.”**

## UNISON challenges NHS Hull privatisation plans

UNISON has staged demonstrations against plans by NHS Hull to privatise local health services. Under the plans, all healthcare currently provided by the PCT, which has around 1,500 staff, will be taken on by the Community Healthcare Partnership Ltd.

Ray Gray, regional officer for UNISON, said: “Moving all of the PCT to a private company is a huge change. It is fundamentally wrong to take such a large part of the service out of the public sector.”

UNISON has joined with other unions to criticise the plans and NHS Hull’s failure to properly consult staff and the public. The union is continuing to challenge the plans and support members, many of whom were not aware that they would no longer be working for the NHS.



*UNISON members protest at NHS Hull with support from the Hull City Branch.*

## UNISON presses government to state NHS is “preferred provider”

UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis and head of health Karen Jennings expressed their serious concern at the way some SHAs and PCTs are rushing headlong into procurement of community services from social enterprises or private companies, when they met health secretary Andy Burnham.

Discussing the government’s Transforming Community Services programme, Mr Prentis and Ms Jennings stressed that NHS providers must be allowed to review and improve services and that the NHS must remain the preferred provider.

The secretary of state has since ordered a review by the Department of Health of the way the programme is being implemented across PCTs.

UNISON expects the Department of Health will soon issue further guidance confirming continuing NHS provision as the preferred option.

## How can you keep updated on changes in primary care?

**Join us** – together we are stronger and UNISON offers unequalled protection and benefits to members. Call us on 0845 355 0845 now or visit [www.unison.org.uk/join](http://www.unison.org.uk/join)

**Get in touch** – tell us about any planned changes in your workplace and help us distribute information like this newsletter to your colleagues. To contact your local UNISON representative, call 0845 355 0845

**Primary Care Contacts e-network** – If you are a UNISON representative or branch contact in a primary care site and would like to receive updates on the latest national developments, please email your contact and workplace details to [primarycarecontacts@unison.co.uk](mailto:primarycarecontacts@unison.co.uk)



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