

Primary Care

NEWS

Government confirms NHS is preferred provider

UNISON welcomed the statement by the Secretary of State for Health Andy Burnham MP confirming that the NHS is the government's preferred provider of health services.

UNISON has been extremely concerned about the increasing tendering and privatisation of community health services as a result of the government's Transforming Community Services programme.

The NHS Together health trade unions, led by UNISON and the TUC, held meetings with Mr Burnham and his ministers over the summer to express concern at the drive towards privatisation of healthcare. This led to a statement by the Secretary of State in which he made it clear that the NHS was the government's preferred provider.

This statement represents a significant policy change and the Department of Health has issued guidance laying down how the statement should be applied by commissioners in a number of different scenarios. Where the NHS is providing a good service that meets the needs of local communities, this statement goes some

way to ensuring that this should continue.

UNISON lead negotiator Mike Jackson welcomed the 'preferred provider' statement saying, "Staff don't work in the NHS to get rich; they do so because they have a pride in the NHS and share its values. The NHS remains best value for money compared to other national health systems partly because it is not burdened with the administrative bureaucracy of managing a market. This statement says that NHS providers and NHS staff should have the first opportunity to deliver health services".

UNISON branches representing staff working in PCTs and their provider arms are encouraged to enter into local discussions with staffsides and their employers to discuss the impact of this statement on the progress of the Transforming Community Services project in their area.

A copy of the statement and advice to UNISON branches is available at unison.org.uk/pct

NHS staff passport launched

The NHS Social Partnership Forum has launched a new "staff passport" for NHS workers facing transfer to another employer. The passport comes in the form of an online toolkit which gives NHS staff an easy-to-use, practical guide to the employment standards and rights they can expect when being transferred. It also gives HR advisors,

union reps and managers an online advice tool that they can use to advise staff facing a transfer on the employment

standards that they can expect. Changes in the NHS mean that services, and the staff that provide them, can be transferred to new providers: either another NHS trust or third parties working under contract to the NHS and the staff passport aims to bring clarity and reassurance to the staff facing transfer. The staff passport ensures that staff are aware of their rights on and following transfer and will play a key role in making sure those rights are embedded by commissioners and respected by future employers. The Social Partnership Forum brings together health trade unions, NHS Employers and the Department of Health to discuss workforce issues in partnership. Find out more about the NHS staff passport at socialpartnershipforum.org/StaffPassport



Training to influence service reviews

UNISON has put together a one-day training course for activists on how they can get involved in the service reviews that will take place in PCTs as part of Transforming Community Services. The course aims to

demystify the service review process, focussing less on technical aspects and more on practical steps for branch engagement. The course will also include advice on branch involvement in service

improvement plans that are likely to follow from service reviews.

The course will be rolled out to regions shortly. Ask your regional education officer for more information.



A million voices speak out for primary care

Under the banner of UNISON's Million Voices campaign members are fighting to prevent staff and services being transferred out of the NHS under the government's Transforming Community Services programme. Add your voice now to our campaign for a fairer society on the million voices campaign webpage at unison.org.uk/million Campaigning materials with the

message 'The NHS is under threat from privatisation' are available to download from unison.org.uk/pct/tcs along with the latest UNISON TCS guidance briefings including:

- Transforming Community Services Q&A for members
- NHS as preferred provider Q&A for members and branches
- Primary care is changing leaflet
- Social enterprises fact sheet
- Local Involvement Network (LINK) fact sheet
- Service reviews – what you need to know
- Using overview and scrutiny
- Co-operation and Competition Panel

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.

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

a million voices for public services

add your voice

UNISON campaigning for a fairer society
unison.org.uk/million

UNISON has more than a million members delivering essential services to the public. Services that protect, enrich and change lives. We want to see changes that put people before profit and public interest before private greed. Add your voice to our campaign to create a fairer society.

To find out more or add your voice to our million voices for public services go to unison.org.uk/million

UNISON
the public service union