

75 YEARS  
OUR NHS  
ONE TEAM

On 5 July 2023, we celebrate the 75th birthday of the NHS. Established practically a lifetime ago, for most of us it's hard to imagine life without a high-quality health service that treats us free at the point of use.

Before the NHS, healthcare was a luxury that not everyone could afford. Nowadays, most people living in the UK don't need to agonise over the potential cost of treatment – we just expect the NHS to be there for us “from the cradle to the grave,” as its creators promised 75 years ago.

And just as we all rely on the NHS to be there for us when we need it, we almost all know someone who works within it. Staff are the backbone of our health service, with over 1.5 million people working as one team to deliver safe patient care.

We're also marking 75 years since the arrival of the Windrush generation: Commonwealth citizens who helped to transform our public services and build our NHS. We pay tribute to them and thank today's workforce of over 200 nationalities, without whom our health service would not function.

Let's celebrate, of course. But now, more than ever, it is vital that we stand together to defend our precious NHS.

Record waiting lists and a staffing emergency were never part of the vision, but they're the reality in our NHS right now. Staff are in an uphill struggle to treat everyone who needs it – but they can't do it through sheer force of will.

We must turn the tide on chronic underfunding which leaves staff burnt out and patients waiting months for vital treatment. We must end outsourcing, which leaves privately contracted workers on poverty pay and undermines the delivery of care. And we must keep staff in our NHS by rewarding them fairly for all the hours they work.

### What can I do?

- + Continue to support the NHS in any way you can. Polling consistently shows that the public is incredibly proud of it and wants to protect it for future generations.
- + Send an email or a letter to your MP telling them about your recent experiences with the NHS and share with them what a publicly owned, free health service means to you.
- + Everyone deserves to feel safe at work but aggression towards NHS workers is all too common. If you witness ill-treatment of staff, try to tell someone or show your support.
- + In elections, vote for politicians who you believe will defend its principles and fund it properly.
- + Talk to your friends, family, neighbours and colleagues about the challenges our NHS faces. It's our national health service, so it's a national conversation!

Please join us in our fight to protect and rebuild this most special institution, and to properly value the staff who keep it running. Here's to the next 75 years – and beyond.