

PRESS RELEASE



News from Keep Our NHS Public campaign www.KeepOurNHSpublic.com

EMBARGO/Release date: 00:01, Wednesday November 1

NHS campaigners from around the country descend on London for Westminster march

Campaigners fighting cuts and privatisation in their local NHS will descend on London on Wednesday for a march in support of the TUC lobby of parliament, as simmering discontent about the Government's handling of the NHS boils over. **A selection of campaigner contacts and quotes are below.**

Recent months have been marked by a huge upsurge in demonstrations and activity around the country as communities defend their NHS against cuts and privatisation. Thousands have marched through the most unlikely towns in what campaigners have called the biggest groundswell of unrest since the poll tax.

The public will march on Westminster under the banner 'Keep Our NHS Public'. Pensioners, community groups and local NHS campaigners from around the country will then join with NHS staff, who will be lobbying MPs in a union-organised event.

Protesters will assemble at 11.30am in Forum Magnum Square, just across Westminster Bridge behind County Hall, and march across the bridge to Westminster Central Hall.

Who will be marching, and why?

Steve Sweeney – psychiatric nurse, Cambridge, 07786 643755

"In Cambridge we're facing £4 million of cuts to mental health. A quarter of elderly inpatient services are going; two rehab wards have been closed; the Young People's Service has been axed, with an enormous impact. Plus Hinchingsbrooke Hospital in Huntingdon is under threat, and over 1,000 people marched in its defence this month. I'm going to London because what's happening here is happening throughout the country. The Government are diverting money to private companies, who are leeching off the NHS. It's important for people to stand up and show the Government that they can't do this without a fight."

Gwyneth Powell-Davies – NHS electronics technician, Bristol, 07989 105449

"We're getting one hospital in place of two in North Bristol. The new one will be PFI and will have fewer beds. First the NHS trust tell us they don't need so many beds, and then they say we're going to get a new independent sector treatment centre to increase capacity. They're just looking for ways to bring the private sector in. There is a whole coach-load of us going to London, all united in opposition to the marketisation of the NHS. We don't like PFI and competition in our health service."

Olivia Canham – mother & community volunteer, Brighton, 07947 837432

"My key concerns are the cuts of around 500 NHS staff at the Sussex County hospital including 14 of its 20 specialised cardiac nurses. £18m is being spent on a contract with the private sector to treat NHS Orthopaedic patients and the NHS unit is being cut. Student nurses completing their training in the area cannot find jobs. It is essential that the government start to see how angry and concerned we are at what is happening to the NHS. We don't want to see a privatised health service that can no longer plan adequate local treatment to meet local needs. They must understand that this will never win votes."

Peter Shields – retail, Warwickshire, 01926 853494 (does not have a mobile phone, and so cannot be contacted during the day on Wednesday)

"We just had a successful protest of 400 people through Warwick, with all-party support and councillors on the march. There is an acute services review and Warwick Hospital's A&E is under threat. They are trying to move it to the PFI hospital in Coventry. I want to make myself heard in Westminster because there is no accountability in the NHS, especially with the PFI."

Francis Hook – former nurse, senior midwifery manager, Greenwich, 07929 153027

“I’m worried about the impact of cuts on patient care especially as Greenwich is one of the most deprived boroughs in the country. Some stroke patients are waiting for up to 7 days for scans where the maximum recommended wait is 24 hours. 70% are dying without proper diagnosis. Six beds have been cut from the local specialist unit. So I’m going to London to help raise awareness and encourage more people to join the campaign.”

Edit quotes as necessary. For more information, contact Alex Nunns on 07763 607528

ENDS

Alex Nunns
Information Officer
Keep Our NHS Public
07763607528
konp.press@virgin.net
www.keepournhspublic.com