

PRESS RELEASE



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (13 February)

Valentine's Day protests as campaigners say 'We love the NHS'

Local NHS campaigns around the country will stage a coordinated day of action this Saturday (14 February) under the banner "We love the NHS". The Valentine's Day protests will demand an end to commercialisation and cuts in the health service.

Campaigners fear that government policies which outsource vital health services like GP care to the private sector will leave patients vulnerable to the vagaries of the market at time of global economic recession.

Nationwide, local campaign groups are fighting the many varied forms of privatisation and cuts in the NHS. Local Keep Our NHS Public groups and other campaigns will coordinate their efforts on Valentine's Day, from a demonstration in Camden against the private takeover of GP surgeries, to mobile protests against the privatisation of the Blood Services outside four Birmingham hospitals. A full list of actions is below.

Professor Wendy Savage of Keep Our NHS Public said:

"The majority of the British public want a publicly provided health service to remain. They do not want competing private and third sector organisations brought in to run hospitals and GP surgeries, according to the respected British Social Attitudes report [1].

"This explains why NHS managers have been failing in their legal duty to involve the public over these changes. A recent survey by the NHS Support Federation found that primary care trusts are not consulting properly over new health centres, meaning citizens are unable to express their opposition [2].

"On Valentine's Day NHS campaigners around the country will say 'We love the NHS', holding demonstrations and stalls to show their support for a public health service and their opposition to the privatisation policies which threaten it."

Valentine's Day actions:

Camden and Haringey – Camden Keep Our NHS Public and Stop Haringey Health Cuts Coalition demonstration, 11am, Mornington Crescent.

Birmingham – mobile protests at Birmingham University north gate (11am Prichatts Rd), Selly Oak Hospital (12 noon Oak Tree Lane), City Hospital (1.30pm Dudley Road), Children's Hospital (2.45pm Steelhouse Lane), city centre (4.30pm).

Brent – picket against cuts, 12 noon, Central Middlesex Hospital, Acton Lane.

Staffordshire – protest, Stafford Hospital.

Hatfield and Welwyn – demonstration, 11am, Hatfield town centre (Asda)

Levenhulme – Friends of Levenhulme protest against GP tendering.

Hackney – ‘We love the NHS’ stall, 11am, Stoke Newington high street.

Lewisham – Keep Our NHS Public stall.

Balham – ‘We love the NHS’ stall, 11am, Balham high road.

Waltham Forest – Keep Our NHS Public stall, Walthamstow market.

For further information please contact Alex Nunns on 07763 607 528, or Bronwen Handyside (campaign manager) bronwenhandyside@aol.com

[1] British Social Attitudes: the 25th Report, SAGE, January 2009. See

<http://www.natcen.ac.uk/bsa/docs/Public-Services.pdf> and

<http://www.natcen.ac.uk/bsa/docs/NHS-satisfaction.pdf>

[2] Is the public shaping the future of their NHS?, NHS Support Federation, December 2008.

See

<http://www.nhscampaign.org/uploads/media/Fed%20press%20release%20consultation%2019-12-08.pdf>

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