



*Keep Our NHS Public has produced a Hustings Guide to help supporters of the NHS to ask effective questions to parliamentary candidates at hustings and campaigns events across the country. All politicians of all parties should be questioned properly – the NHS is in an existential crisis and needs a real, determined rescue package.*

*We have produced lists of questions we believe should be put to the Prospective Parliamentary Candidates of the Conservative Party, the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party, these being the largest three parties competing at national level. However, some of these questions could also fairly be put to candidates from other parties, such as the Green Party or the Scottish National Party. We have not addressed the Brexit Party as we regard them as being [clearly committed](#) to the abolition of the NHS.*

*Of course, every candidate, particularly incumbent MPs, should also be questioned about specific local health issues in their area, such as cuts and closures to services.*

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**The questions begin on the next page. Below, find a set of useful links and other resources that Keep Our NHS Public has produced for this election:**

- For more information on the issues, read our article [Ten things every voter should know about the NHS](#). Our [NHS Factsheets](#) and our article [Health Tourism: Facts vs Fiction](#) are also useful resources.
- To see all of our #VoteNHS Roadshow events lined up around the country, see our [Events page](#). To find out more about these and how to get involved, [see here](#).
- To obtain leaflets and other resources, see our [campaign resources page](#) or our [online shop](#).
- To find your nearest local Keep Our NHS Public group, see our [Local Groups page](#).
- If you are not a member of Keep Our NHS Public and you would like to be, you can easily [join online here](#).

## Questions for Liberal Democrat candidates



**Question 1: Why did Liberal Democrat MPs abstain on 23 October on an amendment to the Queen’s Speech which would have declared opposition to NHS privatisation?**

Why we ask: Keep Our NHS Public, [Health Campaigns Together](#), and all other major UK health campaigns supported the recent amendment and believe that it would have been a real step forward in stopping privatisation. No one bill brought by the opposition can reverse the privatisation agenda – that needs determined action by a government in office – but there’s no doubt that this was a chance to seriously obstruct the ongoing creep of NHS privatisation. Voters have a right to know why Liberal Democrat MPs refused to support it.

**Question 2: The last time the Liberal Democrats were in government, they were co-architects of the 2012 Health and Social Care Act, which is the central motor of NHS privatisation today, requiring by law that all NHS service contracts are competitively tendered to private providers. Do you still defend the HSCA?**

Why we ask: the steady privatisation of our NHS will continue until the Health and Social Care Act is repealed. Seven years after the act was passed, the unanimous opposition it provoked from health campaigners has been wholly vindicated, as [growing privatisation](#) has fragmented the NHS and undermined patient care. There is no way back to a fully public, universal NHS without repealing the HSCA.

**Question 3: Do you categorically rule out supporting the Conservatives in the event of a Hung Parliament?**

Why we ask: the destructive record of the current Government on the NHS was inaugurated by the 2010-2015 coalition government of the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. The party is currently led by a former coalition government minister, Jo Swinson, and has recently welcomed a raft of Conservative MPs who have defected due to the Brexit debate and are now standing as Liberal Democrat

candidates. Cooperation with the Conservatives, in the election or in the next Parliament, is an absolute non-starter for campaigners who are committed to restoring a fully public and universal NHS.

**Question 4: your party's website declares the Liberal Democrats are "the only party with a clear plan for the NHS and social care." Does this involving scrapping the NHS Long Term Plan, which most health workers see as disruptive, impractical, and an aid to further privatisation of NHS services?**

Why we ask: the "NHS Long Term Plan" document published by the Government and NHS England earlier this year is a recipe for restructuring the NHS in a way that [removes local accountability](#), and makes it hard or impossible for local residents and patients to speak out against closures, privatisations and reconfigurations. It also reorganises NHS services into huge hubs of assorted services referred to as "Integrated Care Systems" (ICS), which likewise lays the ground for easier bulk privatisation of services. Removing the Long Term Plan is an essential precondition of safeguarding, let alone improving, our NHS as a universal public service.

**Question 5: The Liberal Democrats have recently called to scrap financial charges levied on migrants for using the NHS, as these charges are proving dangerous and discriminatory and doing nothing to help services. However, this policy originates in legislation passed by the coalition government – do the Liberal Democrats now recognise this policy was wrong from the start?**

Why we ask: charging migrants to use NHS services doesn't help our NHS – on the contrary, it puts migrant patients' lives at risk and also undermines the solidarity and universality which is at the heart of a working NHS. These policies were initiated during the coalition under the 2014 Immigration Act, which the Liberal Democrats voted for (the Labour leadership at that time abstained on the Act, although the current Labour leader voted against it). We need an end to these policies and the Liberal Democrats, like all parties, must make clear where they stand.

## Questions for Conservative Party candidates



### 1. Will you take the pledge to protect the NHS from trade deals?

Why we ask: The Tories have banned parliamentary candidates from signing Keep Our NHS Public and We Own It's pledge to protect the NHS from trade deals, [a memo leaked to The Guardian revealed](#). Many other parliamentary candidates and MPs have already signed, including shadow health secretary Jonathan Ashworth and shadow chancellor John McDonnell, so why can't they? You can print off a selfie placard from [our pledge page](#).

The Conservative Party claim the ban is in place as it would "give credence to factually inaccurate smears ... The NHS is not for sale." But it is.

See [our letter to The Guardian](#) in response to this revelation.

### 2. If "the NHS is not for sale", why did the Conservative Party vote against a motion to save the NHS from privatisation in October?

Why we ask: Just days before the General Election was called, Shadow Health Secretary Jonathan Ashworth [introduced a motion of regret](#) calling the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to be repealed and for the NHS to be restored to public ownership and protected from future trade deals.

The Conservatives voted against, alongside their recently booted former colleagues and the DUP.

### 3. How are you going to plug the NHS staffing shortage, which stands at nearly 100,000?

Why we ask: Conservative Party policy from scrapping the nursing bursary in 2018 through to introducing migrant charges to migrant NHS workers this week has worsened staffing shortages. These will worsen the winter crisis and patient safety.

Since the bursary for nurses and allied healthcare professionals was scrapped in England, applications for nursing courses [have dropped 30 per cent](#). There are nearly 40,000 nurse vacancies at present and the situation is set to worsen as [one in three nurses](#) are due to retire in the next 10 years. The Conservatives have [slammed the SNP](#) over its failure to tackle this problem in Scotland where one in five are set to retire soon, so why haven't they tackled the problem on their watch in England?

Failure to provide EU nationals with reassurance they will be allowed to remain and work in the UK after it leaves the EU has caused uncertainty for many NHS staff. While Priti Patel promised at Conservative Party conference to introduce an [Australian-style points-based immigration system](#) to "take back control of our borders", Sajid Javid was forced to admit last year that the current [visa system](#) caused "problems" for NHS recruitment as over 100 doctors were revealed to have had their visas denied in the midst of a staffing crisis.

#### **4. Why can't the Conservative Party tell the truth about the NHS?**

Why we ask: Boris Johnson and others insist on repeatedly making statements about the NHS that have been debunked.

"40 NHS hospitals" – In fact the money [will refurbish six and the rest will get some more money](#). There is a £6 billion blackhole of refurbishment that needs doing anyway.

"The will inject the largest amount of money into the NHS in its history" – Uses [unadjusted cash figures](#) which means the real figure is £12billion less than promised.

"More doctors and nurses" – There are nearly [40,000 nurse vacancies](#) and 10,000 doctor vacancies. There are fewer nurses per patient now than ten years ago, before the Tories came into power.

"The NHS is not for sale" – Yet Conservative Ministers have discussed potentially raising drug prices under a [future trade deal](#) with the US.

#### **5 .Why are you charging migrants, including migrant NHS workers, twice for accessing the NHS?**

This week the Conservatives unveiled plans to charge migrant workers, including doctors and nurses, £625 a year to access NHS services. They claimed this was to ensure new migrants made a ["fair contribution"](#) to running the NHS, but they already pay the same taxes we all do if they are living and working here.

## Questions for Labour Party candidates



### **1. Will you sign our pledge to protect the NHS from privatisation?**

Why we ask: So far a number of Labour ministers and MPs have signed our pledge to protect the NHS from privatisation, but we need to know that all parliamentary candidates are on board. All Labour MPs must be fully on board with restoring the NHS to public ownership and protecting it from future trade deals.

You can print off a selfie placard from [our pledge page](#).

### **2. What will Labour do to improve the inequalities in mental health?**

Why we ask: We are in the midst of a [mental health crisis](#), yet the NHS spent £181 million last year on paying private firms to care for people with serious mental illnesses. This means many [mental health beds are in private hospitals](#). Will Labour look at renationalising those hospitals?

### **3. How will the proposed funding increases for the NHS budget (£26bn) and social care services (£10.8bn) be made to be sustainable long-term?**

Why we ask: The Conservative Party claim they will give the NHS “biggest cash boost in history”, but it’s figures aren’t adjusted for inflation which is deliberately misleading. In the last election Corbyn and Labour were criticised for promising a ‘magic money tree’. Now is the time for them to defend their figures.

### **4. What would "ending privatisation in the NHS" mean for GPs, Macmillan nurses, community pharmacists and hospital cleaners?**

Why we ask: While privatisation of the NHS has been a hot topic this election, with a lot of focus on what that could mean for funding and trade agreements. But what about staff? We need to make sure that ending privatisation also means better and

clearer employment conditions for all of its staff, and the best way of doing this is making a nationalised NHS their employer.

**5. How are the improvements Labour is promising the NHS going to be delivered with a 100,000 staffing blackhole?**

Why we ask: There are over [40,000 nurse vacancies](#) and [10,000 doctor vacancies](#) in the NHS, and these shortages are only set to worsen in coming years as large numbers of staff are due to retire in the next ten years. It's all very well pledging extra beds and facilities, but what if there are no staff to care for patients? Labour has pledged to reintroduce the nursing bursary but there are still shortages forecast for GPs and other specialisms.