

NHS 72nd Anniversary Weekend July 4th July 5th 2020

Our Plans and Proposals

KONP/HCT have called for local groups to organise local NHS 72nd Anniversary events. The Anniversary itself will be Sunday 5th July but we want events to run over the whole weekend. This is being done for several fairly obvious reasons:

1. There have been celebrations of the NHS 'Birthday' for the last few years and this one will have much greater poignancy due to the pandemic
2. Other groups, organisations and even parties (heaven forbid, even the Tories) may also wish to celebrate this anniversary in 'their own' ways which could blunt or cut across central messages which we need to get out
3. There is even more public awareness of the importance of the NHS and now Social Care which we need to press home
4. There is also greater public support for the NHS as shown by the clap for carers events which we have to channel towards central messages we want to get across
5. We are planning a public online rally on Sunday 5th July at 4.30pm to last for an hour and we are looking for a huge turnout to boost our profile, alongside locally organised protests across the country.
6. We aim to use these events to launch a joint '2020 vision' around the key issues of the moment. Covid-19 has exposed what's wrong with healthcare, it's time to rebuild and go further so we're making the demands: Rebuild and properly fund the NHS, Proper pay and respect for all NHS and care staff, End racism in the NHS, NHS out of all Trade Deals, Public Health back in public hands, Radical reform of social care and more.
7. The more locally coordinated events we have, the higher our profile and message, and therefore we are asking all groups to prioritise this weekend. KONP and HCT have discussed these plans and are calling on ALL local groups to start planning their events now. We have also liaised with key unions, including the TUC, UNITE, UNISON and GMB which are all supportive. We therefore feel confident that we have a clear mandate and enthusiastic support to go ahead.
8. The online rally now has the support of the TUC, UNITE, UNISON, GMB, The People's Assembly Against Austerity and the FBU. We will be approaching all the unions for support and will send out a model letter which groups can adapt to their local circumstances seeking support.
9. Given the huge Black Lives Matters Protests, groups should also find ways of integrating this hugely important issue into their activities, highlighting our demand for an end to all migrant charges and the immigration health surcharge, as well as the huge issue of disproportionate deaths from Covid-19 in the BME Community

Guidelines for local groups

We want the Anniversary events to also take the form of a protest about the appalling way the government has handled the crisis and to properly honour ALL frontline staff.

Suggestions of the kind of activity include:

Gathering outside hospitals or town centres or other public venues, car or even bicycle cavalcades.

There are however important considerations to ensure they go well:

1. Groups MUST liaise with local union and staff groups in advance where possible.

2. ALL protests will have to be socially distanced and proper precautions taken including considering wearing masks and gloves
3. All groups must ensure the event is stewarded and that they are all properly briefed in advance and wearing hi vis jackets. It is vital that we maintain control over the event and there is no adverse publicity due to local groups or individuals taking unnecessary risks.
4. We suggest the widespread use of banners between protestors with key political messages and slogans (banners can be ordered from campaigns@keepournhspublic.com)
5. Groups should in advance decide what kind of event they will be holding, for how long and roughly how many you would wish to attend.
6. If there are speakers, groups should limit the number and be aware about the danger of sharing megaphones or PA mics

Whatever groups decide, we ask that you send in details of local event as soon as they are known so that we can publicise them through our websites and social media platforms. Every event must avoid clashing with our online rally so that there is maximum involvement in the rally itself which promises to be an excellent showcase for our campaigns.

We produce these guidelines well in advance so that groups can seriously consider all the necessary precautions and plans. We will be shortly be producing publicity material, most of which will be for social media use, but we hope to produce stickers, posters, leaflets, memes, Facebook frames etc which can be used to publicise the event.

Further information will follow very soon but we urge all groups to see the great potential in these events. It is a unique opportunity for us to claim the right to celebrate the NHS but also to link this to the huge issues thrown up the crisis. We have to capitalise on this and expose the Tory government's duplicity in failing to deal properly with the crisis. We think the time is now right for us to not only start asking the right questions but highlighting the key areas for immediate change. The government is hugely exposed and weak, and the Anniversary gives us a chance to seize the initiative and to shape the debate about the future of the NHS.

Thanks to you all and good luck with the planning. As ever please direct any queries to KONP National Office at campaigns@keepournhspublic.com