

Press release on behalf of *Keep Our NHS Public, We Own It, Just Treatment* and *Your NHS Needs You* for IMMEDIATE use

NHS campaigners and staff to present petitions with over 300,000 signatures against the Health and Care Bill today

This morning (Monday 22nd November) at 10am, health campaigners from organisations *Keep Our NHS Public* [1], *Just Treatment* [2], *We Own It* [3] and *Your NHS Needs You* [4] as well as patients, NHS staff and MPs, will join forces to hand deliver several petitions [5-8] to the Department of Health in opposition to the Health and Care Bill which has its third reading in parliament on Tuesday. This action has been organised to coincide with the first day of the report stage debate on the bill in the House of Commons. Petitions collectively number over 300,000 signatures.

Participants hope to raise awareness of the damaging implications this bill poses to the NHS and increase the pressure on MPs and in the Lords to vote against it as the bill goes through its next stages. The group will assemble at Downing Street before moving to Parliament Square Gardens where they will be joined by MPs John McDonnell, Barry Gardiner and Diane Abbott, before finishing up at the Department for Health, where the petitions will then be delivered.

Campaigners believe the bill will see less public accountability over healthcare decisions and increased powers given to private providers, as well as a worsening of the post-code lottery of care and cost-capping or cutting of certain services. The proposed Health and Care Bill fails to make it a duty for new NHS boards to provide emergency services and permits dangerous discharge from hospital without an assessment and care plan in place. It also fails to address the pertinent issue of waiting lists and staffing and, despite its title, makes no provision for social care. Campaigners believe that this proposed legislation places patient data at risk of abuse and that it would confirm NHS Digital's power to share patients' data with third parties, including a wide range of private companies, raising concerns for patients' privacy.

Greg Dropkin from *Keep Our NHS Public*, said:

"The Health and Care Bill has been spun as ending privatisation in the NHS. In fact, it gives the private sector a direct role in managing the NHS and shaping its priorities. It won't resolve the crises caused by massive staff shortages, and a workforce exhausted and demoralised by an ongoing pandemic which the Government failed to control, at the outset or subsequently. Over 100,000 people have signed our petition calling for the bill to be scrapped, which shows the strength of feeling on this. The Bill is being promoted as applying the lessons from Covid. The lesson the Government learned was full scale co-operation with the private sector."

Johnbosco Nwogbo, Lead Campaigner at *We Own It*, said:

"We have recently seen the government march Conservative MPs through the parliamentary lobby to vote for incredibly unpopular bills, from allowing sewage in our rivers to leaving the door open for sleaze, and then having to perform a U-turn in

the face of public outcry. We are here today to warn them that the public really hates their plans to open our NHS to more privatisation and sleaze and will stand up against it. Our polls show that and the volume of these petitions show that. Don't reorganise the NHS, give it the resources it needs and pay its workers fairly."

Diarmaid McDonald, Lead Organiser at Just Treatment said:

"This past week we've heard heart-breaking stories of people dying in the back of ambulances. Our NHS is in crisis, and patients are paying the price with their health and even their lives. Meanwhile, rather than providing solutions to this crisis, the government is pushing through a set of reforms that will do nothing to help. Instead, the government are giving private healthcare companies greater power and less accountability in our health service. All of the patients we work with are clear that this is the wrong bill at the wrong time - and hundreds of thousands have signed petitions opposing it. Time for MPs to listen to the people they represent and reject these dangerous plans."

Marcus Hynes at Your NHS Needs You said:

"In under a month, 100,000 people have signed our Parliamentary petition to scrap the Health and Care Bill, cancel extortionate PFI debt, and renationalise the NHS. The British public cherish the NHS, and want it to be publicly funded and publicly provided. Instead, it is being run down with tens of billions of pounds wasted each year on different aspects of the privatisation process. This failure by design is being used to justify 'reform'. But there is absolutely no mandate for shrinking and fragmenting the NHS, granting greater control to American private insurance corporations and creating a two-tier system, which is what this Conservative government is doing — though it will never admit it. Their privatisation by stealth is a grand deception, and a betrayal of the British public, past, present and future. We must fight this Health Bill and reverse the many years of privatisation that have already taken place, all of which have undermined the capacity of the NHS to deliver high quality care. The only reform the NHS needs is renationalisation."

[ends]

Spokespeople are available for interview. Contact Samantha Wathen, Press Officer for Keep Our NHS Public press@keepournhspublic.com or Call/WhatsApp: 0777 6047472

Professional photographs will be available to use in reporting, please contact Hope Worsdale at Just Treatment on 07901844980

Notes to editors

1. Keep Our NHS Public is a national independent organisation campaigning for a well-funded, publicly owned and provided NHS www.keepournhspublic.com
2. Just Treatment is patient-led organisation campaigning to ensure private profit is never put before patient health <https://justtreatment.org/>
3. We Own works to campaign against privatisation <https://weownit.org.uk>
4. Your NHS Needs You is a group of doctors, campaigners, researchers, academics and entertainers working together with DiEM25 to renationalise the

NHS

<https://www.yournhsneedsyou.com/>

5. **Keep Our NHS Public's petition** Protect the NHS: Scrap the Health and Care Bill, closed at 112,330 signatures: <https://www.change.org/p/health-secretary-sajid-javid-protect-the-nhs-stop-the-health-and-care-bill>
6. **Just Treatment's petition** Stop the NHS Bill stands at 21,840 signatures: <https://justtreatment.org/stopthenhsbill>
7. **Your NHS Needs You Petition** Renationalise the NHS, scrap integrated care systems and end PFI contracts stands at 109,548 signatures <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/598732/>
8. **We Own It's Petition** Stop Boris Johnson's Private takeover bill stands at 67,176 signatures <https://weownit.org.uk/act-now/stopthenhscorporatetakeoverbill>