

Press release on behalf of Keep Our NHS Public - for IMMEDIATE use

More than two thirds of the public think the NHS is underfunded, including over half of Conservative voters polled

Ahead of the national NHS demonstration happening this Saturday [1], a damning new poll [2] has found that more than two thirds (67%) of the public believe the NHS is underfunded. According to Opinium poll results published today on behalf of campaigning group *Keep Our NHS Public*, [3] 58% of Conservative voters also agree that the NHS does not receive enough funds.

A total of 67% of those polled also thought the NHS was performing badly and over half (55%) believed that the government were primarily responsible for this performance. Nearly three quarters (72%) of those surveyed thought the NHS should be a fully or mostly public (not private) service.

This evidence of the strength of public feeling is yet more reason as to why a huge national demonstration has been called by the coalition of over 50 organisations *SOS NHS* [4] (founded by Keep Our NHS Public) which will take place in central London this Saturday 11th March with tens of thousands expected to attend. The coalition is calling for increased funding to bring an end to the around 500 avoidable deaths happening every week [5], support for NHS workers by paying them properly for the work they do and putting an end to further industrial action, together with an end to the privatisation of the health service.

Increased funding is urgently needed to recruit and retain staff in order to tackle the gaping hole of over 132,000 vacancies. This would therefore reduce waiting lists and improve outcomes for patients. Money is also needed to tackle the soaring costs for backlog maintenance of estates and increase the amount of hospital beds, the number of which seriously falls behind other European health systems.

Dr Tony O'Sullivan, Co-Chair of Keep Our NHS Public and retired Consultant Paediatrician, said:

"These results send a clear message to the government that the public are crying out for a return to a properly funded health service with shorter waiting

lists, accessible emergency care, and a content workforce. In 2010 when the NHS was well funded, it was independently ranked as the best healthcare system on the planet - and it can be again. There must be an end to the misery of avoidable deaths and staff burnout that we are currently experiencing. It's now obvious that Conservative politicians hollow talk of 'record funding' simply does not wash with the public, with the majority of those surveyed rightly blaming them for the NHS crisis. Sunak and Barclay must listen to what the public are saying: fund the NHS properly, commit to pay staff what they are worth, and bring an immediate end to this horrendous crisis of their own making."

[ends]

Spokespeople are available for broadcast interview. For more information please contact Press Officer for Keep Our NHS Public, Samantha Wathen press@keepournhspublic.com or call/WhatsApp 0777 6047472

Notes for editors:

1. NHS demonstration information (including speakers) can be accessed here <https://keepournhspublic.com/sos-nhs-demonstration/>
2. Opinium is an MRS Company Partner and member of the British Polling Council. Opinium polled 2,000 GB adults aged 18+ and fieldwork was conducted between the 1st – 3rd March 2023. Data was weighted to be both politically and nationally representative of Great Britain [Opinium - Keep Our NHS Public Polling - Opinium](#) Polling was initiated by NEON on behalf of Keep Our NHS Public and the coalition SOS NHS.

Details of the questions asked by Opinium and their responses are as follows:

a. Thinking about all the things the government has to do, would you say the NHS is currently overfunded, underfunded or gets the right amount of money?

Underfunded 67%

Overfunded 7%

It gets the right amount of money 14%

Don't know 12%

b. Would you say the NHS is currently working well or badly?

Well 24%

Badly 67%

c. In the previous question you said you thought the NHS is currently working badly. Who do you think is primarily responsible for this?

The government 55%

NHS management 34%

NHS patients 2%

NHS staff 1%

Someone else (please specify) 5%

Don't know 3%

d. Which of the following comes closest to your view of how NHS healthcare should be provided?

The NHS should provide all its own treatment with no private sector involvement 40%

Private companies should provide some services for part of the NHS 32%

Private companies should provide most services for parts of the NHS 7%

The NHS should be a fully privately run service 4%

Don't know 17%

3. Keep Our NHS Public is a national organisation campaigning for a well-funded and fully public NHS www.keepournhspublic.com

4. SOS NHS is the largest coalition yet formed in defence of the NHS comprised of over 50 campaign groups, trade unions, health and care staff, social movements and civil society organisations <https://sosnhs.org/>

5. <https://fullfact.org/health/accident-emergency-delays-excess-deaths/>