

Huge national NHS Demonstration 'End the Crisis - Support the Strikes!' to take place in central London - tens of thousands expected to march

When: Saturday 11th March 2023

Where: Beginning opposite Warren Street tube station on Tottenham Court Road, finishing near to Downing Street, Whitehall

Times (all times are approximate)

- 12:00pm - Pre-march speeches/rally starts
- 12:30pm – Tottenham Court Road/University Street junction – form up front
- 12:45pm – As above – Front banner press photo call
- 1:00pm – March leaves
- 2:00pm – Whitehall – March starts to arrive
- 2:30pm - Speeches start
- 4:00pm – Event closes

NHS staff and health campaigners from the alliance SOS NHS [1] will take to the streets of London on March 11th in what is fully expected to be a huge national demonstration [2]. This emergency action has been called in response to the worst NHS crisis we have ever seen with up to 500 people dying avoidably every week, and in solidarity with striking workers who are taking industrial action for the very future of the national health service. The *SOS NHS* coalition believe it will be an excellent vehicle for workers to rally, but also for the public and patients to be able to show their support with NHS staff and with the service generally. The coalition are hopeful of putting further pressure on the government and encouraging them to act to improve the NHS crisis and end all industrial action by negotiating with workers ahead of the forthcoming budget.

Speakers so far announced include BMA Council Chair Professor Philip Banfield as well as NHS frontline workers, union leads and cross-party MPs.

A full and detailed press release will follow on Thursday 9th March.

Spokespeople available ahead of and at the demonstration (all London/SE based):

Dr Tony O'Sullivan, Co-Chair of Keep Our NHS Public (founder of the SOS NHS coalition) and retired Consultant Paediatrician

Top Lines:

- There is a tragedy unfolding before our very eyes: 500 avoidable deaths every week on the NHS emergency pathway - the Government is 100% to blame.
- The Government must act now to invest properly in the NHS - after 13 years of running it down and preferentially funding private hospitals.
- I have never seen such a crisis of low morale amongst health staff - pay NHS staff properly now and repair this current crisis.

- We stand by all NHS staff making the difficult decision to take strike action: they deserve pay justice and they are fighting not just for themselves but for the entire future of the NHS

Availability for interview:

Sunday 5th March
 Mon 6th March
 Tue 7th March (evening only)
 Wed 8th March (afternoon/evening)
 Thu 9th March (any time after 11am)
 Fri 10th March

Holly Turner, specialist CAMHS Nurse and founder of grassroots organisation *NHS Workers Say No!*

Top Lines:

- Cuts across the public sector are impacting on our ability to do our job: The knock on effect of a 300,000 staff deficit across social care is impacting every family I work with.
- Cost of living crisis impacts public health: Health inequalities increasing, poverty and inadequate housing (mould etc) are impacting on people's health and placing increased pressure on the NHS.
- No focus on retention from any political party: 40,000 nurses left the NHS in the past year alone. We need to retain skilled and experienced staff or who will train the nurses of the future?
- Increased financial hardship across the workforce: My husband (also a nurse) and I both work overtime shifts extra month, sacrificing our rest days and family time to top up our income. We have nearly 40 years experience between us, and still have to do this.

Availability for interview:

Monday 6th March 1 - 5pm
 Tuesday 10.30 - 2pm phone calls possible
 Wednesday 7th March
 Friday 9th March 9 - 11am

Dr Andrew Meyerson, Junior Doctor working in A&E

Top Lines:

- We are now seeing up to 500 people die every single week from catastrophic delays in A&E departments due to government mismanagement of the NHS. That's equivalent to 5 Hillsborough disasters every single week, but the government shockingly does not consider this an emergency.
- A good shift nowadays for those working in A&E departments is one where someone doesn't die in our waiting rooms or show up dead on arrival in the

back of a delayed ambulance. That this is happening in the 6th wealthiest country on the planet is an unacceptable failure of government.

- After years of warning the government of these worsening problems and them doing nothing significant to fix them, after we doctors and nurses have put our lives on the line fighting for patients during the pandemic, and after seeing a real-terms pay cut of up to 30% since 2008, we're fed up. Striking is now the only way to stand up for and defend our NHS, our patients, and our professions, and that is why I'm striking and why I'm proud to be joining the SOSNHS coalition on 11 March. It's time to send a message to this government: We will no longer tolerate the destruction of our NHS and we are prepared to fight back. Enough is Enough.

Availability for interview:

Monday 6th March

Tuesday 07 March

Wednesday 08 March (after 5pm)

Thursday 09 March

Friday 10 March

[ends]

For interview, further information and logistics ahead of and on the day, please contact Press and Media Officer for *Keep Our NHS Public*, Samantha Wathen on 0777 6047472 (including text/WhatsApp) or email press@keepournhspublic.com

Notes to editors

1. <https://sosnhs.org/> 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
2. More demonstration information (including speakers) can be accessed here <https://keepournhspublic.com/sos-nhs-demonstration/>