

Response to Spring Budget and NHS Day of Action this Saturday

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

The NHS was ranked as the number one election issue in a recent YouGov poll commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation [1]. The poll of around 5,000 people found that almost three quarters were worried about NHS funding. Meanwhile a recent survey from the ONS [2] reported that 88% of respondents identified the NHS as the most important issue facing the electorate.

Seeking to harness this public mood, campaigning organisation *Keep Our NHS Public* [3] will be holding numerous activities around the country this Saturday (9th March) in what they are calling a Day of Action [4] on the NHS. These events will gather together NHS staff and campaigners in protests, street stalls and marches through major cities in an attempt to highlight thirteen years of underfunding and neglect of the health service by this government.

Dr John Puntis, Co-Chair of *Keep Our NHS Public* and retired consultant paediatrician said:

"The additional £3.4bn committed by Hunt to modernise antiquated NHS IT systems will be beneficial in day-to-day working, though government must be realistic about how AI and technology alone will create the efficiencies they seek. When sufficiently well-funded, the NHS was independently ranked as one of the most efficient health services in the world. This announcement therefore should not be billed as a solution to the far more pressing issues of underfunding and understaffing of clinical services compared to need."

"The £2.5bn of NHS investment announced by the Chancellor looks unlikely to make any difference as in reality it will almost certainly be utilised in addressing the immediate strike-related costs, or on future pay awards. Further detail over exactly how it is to be employed must be urgently provided. Last week it was announced that almost £1bn had been raided from NHS capital budgets, so this increase is much less than it first appears in real terms. Government must commit to meaningfully restoring the people's NHS and that is why we are holding a Day of Action for the NHS this Saturday with numerous events around the country to draw attention to the real issues the public want highlighted."

[ends]

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

Notes to editors

1. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/political-mindsets/placing-households-at-the-centre-of-the-economy>
2. [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain - Office for National Statistics](#)
3. Keep Our NHS Public is an independent organisation campaigning for a properly funded and fully publicly owned NHS: www.keepournhspublic.com
4. <https://keepournhspublic.com/events/> (Links are interactive)