

Press Release on behalf of Health Campaigning Orgs Keep Our NHS Public, Every Doctor and The Doctors Association UK (DAUK)-- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health Groups Condemn Spring Statement as NHS Crisis Deepens - A Collective Statement

Keep Our NHS Public [1], in partnership with The DAUK [2] and Every Doctor [3], warns that failing to urgently invest in the NHS and tackle the wider causes of ill health risks deepening economic decline, worsening patient harm, and eroding public trust.

The spring statement is an occasion for unveiling plans for the UK economy. Investment in the NHS and addressing the social determinants of health across government departments are critical if the economy is not to fail. According to Treasury sources, on this occasion there were to be no policy rabbits pulled out of the hat to astonish and delight the electorate, and this has indeed proved to be the case. However, a last minute solution to the seemingly intractable issue of poor NHS performance would have been massively welcomed by the vast majority of people.

Indeed, this is an issue which demands urgent attention, starting off with a major cash injection emulating the successful approach to boosting funding taken by New Labour. This resulted both in a marked improvement in services and a huge rise in public satisfaction. Money is desperately needed to repair crumbling estate and address the ever rising maintenance deficit, now standing at £16bn; to build the promised new hospitals and bring down the waiting list from 7.3 million; to recruit staff to the 110,000 vacant post and improve retention; to invest in community and social care so that 1 in 7 hospital patients are no longer unable to be discharged; to end the annual half a million trolley waits of more than 12 hours for admission, resulting in 16,600 unnecessary deaths; to end the horrific, dangerous and undignified spectacle of corridor care, once unthinkable but now normalised; to increase the number of GPs (as promised); to implement the recommendations of multiple inquiries into the state of maternity services and end the appalling treatment of some women and babies; to get those on waiting lists with long term conditions back into productive employment and working again to boost the economy.

None of these things should have been passed over in a spring statement that supposedly looks to the future but was deliberately designed to be bland and unexciting. Such a contrivance may please those who regard the government as being shackled and hostage to the gilt markets, but for the millions crying out for Labour to honour its manifesto commitments to rebuild the NHS and roll back outsourcing, an indication was sorely needed that it is not just the rich 1% who matter, but the people as a whole. After the recent byelection saw Labour in third place, a serious financial boost for health and social care could well have done something to reverse Labour's electoral decline. This spring statement was indeed a lost opportunity.

Dr John Puntis - co-chair Keep Our NHS Public, said:

"An economy cannot thrive while its health service crumbles. This Spring Statement was a missed opportunity to invest in our NHS and to tackle the root causes of ill health as well as addressing the thousands of avoidable deaths happening as a result of sustained and systemic underfunding and neglect. Rebuilding our NHS is not a luxury; it is the foundation of a fair and functioning Britain."

Dr Julia Patterson, CEO of Every Doctor, said:

"This labour government promised the public that they intended to rebuild the NHS - and their progress thus far has been woeful, despite many experts repeatedly advising politicians about what needs to be done. They need to listen to frontline staff and support them, and honour the commitment they made, because right now they are profoundly failing millions of people."

Dr Sarah Jacques – GP Co-Lead, Doctors Association UK, said:

"While progress is being made in decarbonising the grid, the scale of funding and ambition still falls short of what the science demands. Without urgent investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency, nature restoration and climate adaptation, we risk escalating pressures on the NHS and worsening health inequalities across the UK. Protecting biodiversity and strengthening climate resilience is not optional — it is essential to safeguarding the health of millions and the sustainability of our health service."

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Spokespeople are available for broadcast interview. Contact in the first instance for all spokespeople - Samantha Wathen, Press Officer for Keep Our NHS Public
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Notes to editors

1. Keep Our NHS Public is an independent organisation campaigning for a properly funded and fully publicly owned NHS: www.keepournhspublic.com
2. The DAUK was founded in 2018 by frontline NHS doctors who saw the need for an independent voice representing doctors' interests. They are a democratic, doctor-led organisation committed to improving healthcare for patients and working conditions for doctors <https://dauk.org/>
3. Every Doctor is a campaigning organisation fighting for patients, staff and the future of the NHS: <https://everydoctor.org.uk/>