

Keep Our NHS Public's response to today's King's Speech (13th May 2026)

King's Speech must be the start of rebuilding the NHS – not another reorganisation

Responding to today's King's Speech, Keep Our NHS Public [1] said the Government's promises on NHS reform will only succeed if they are matched by sustained investment, workforce expansion and a commitment to protecting the founding principles of the NHS. The legislative programme includes major changes to the structure of the health service, including plans to abolish NHS England, introduce a single patient record, and reform health service oversight and accountability.

Dr John Puntis, Co-Chair of Keep Our NHS Public and a retired Consultant Paediatrician, said:

"Patients and staff desperately need an NHS that works better for them - with shorter waits, safer care and easier access to services. But structural reform will not fix a health service that has been stretched to breaking point after years of underinvestment and workforce shortages. Ministers must avoid repeating the mistakes of past top-down reorganisations which distracted staff and consumed time and money without delivering the transformation patients were promised. There has been no impact assessment carried out by government around the abolition of NHSE; redundancies here include clinical posts and are not confined to back office staff."

"Any move toward a single patient record must come with robust safeguards on privacy, transparency and democratic accountability. Legislation to expand patient data sharing must do nothing to undermine public trust. Patients should be asked to give informed consent and be able to opt out if they wish, private companies must not be given access to confidential data or be allowed to re-identify anonymised personal data using AI tools. Strong safeguards must be in place to reassure the public that data will be used for the benefit of the NHS and not to generate profits for business corporations. The contract with Palantir too is not acceptable to the public, and must be ended."

"Today's speech was notable for what it did not include: a long-term workforce plan backed by funding, stronger commitments on social care reform, and urgent action to tackle widening health inequalities. The NHS cannot recover unless the Government tackles the staffing crisis at its root. While stricter immigration controls including restricting residency rights may well have severe detrimental effects on staffing in health and social care given the high numbers of overseas trained staff on whom services depend. We need more doctors, nurses, mental health professionals and social care workers, alongside fair pay and better retention. Any ambition for the NHS must now be backed by investment in public health services, community healthcare and tackling poverty, poor housing and inequality - the real drivers of ill health across the country. This Parliament is a chance to rebuild the NHS as a truly universal public service fit for

the future. Patients and staff will judge these plans not by the headlines, but by whether they can finally get the care they need, when they need it."

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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. Keep Our NHS Public is an independent organisation campaigning for a properly funded and fully publicly owned NHS: www.keepournhspublic.com