

The NHS is in crisis

Whose fault is it?

- Not enough GP appointments
- Long ambulance waits and 'corridor care' in A&E
- Long hospital waiting lists
- Little real support for people with mental health problems
- Too few NHS dentists
- Services in the community slashed
- Social care in crisis
- Crumbling hospitals and poor equipment
- Not enough NHS staff, or hospital beds

**And who
can we
trust to
fix it?**



Satisfaction with the NHS has dropped from **70%** in 2010 to just **21%** in 2024*

What's gone wrong?



Why can't I get a GP appointment?

It's harder to get a GP appointment – but it's not due to lazy GPs. With more and sicker patients, GPs are now providing 5 million more appointments a month than they were in 2019; despite their funding being cut by 7% in real terms.

Since 2010, every government has failed to fund primary care properly. We desperately need more GPs, but the Tories failed to meet their promise of providing 6,000 more. Labour have added just 1,500 – not all full time – far short of what we need.

Are migrants to blame for long waiting lists?

Multiple studies show that migrants are *less* likely to use the NHS. On average they are younger and healthier than our ageing population – not waiting for hip operations! They pay more in taxes than they take out in services and most migrants on visas also pay hefty annual health surcharges.

Do too many migrants work for the NHS?

Foreign staff have been essential to the NHS since day one. Today, one in five NHS staff are non-UK nationals, including 30% of nurses and 36% of doctors. Last year, despite recruiting abroad, the NHS was unable to fill 106k vacancies – a quarter of them nurses. The same problem affects care homes.

It's alarming that Reform UK, the Tories and Labour all plan changes to the rules that typically allow legal migrants to settle in the UK permanently after five years here. While the Tories and Labour would double the qualifying period to 10 years, Reform plan to abolish indefinite leave to remain altogether.

As well as being deeply unfair to existing staff, these changes are shortsighted. Training more UK staff would take years, but successive governments have all failed to make realistic workforce plans. Reform have no plans to explain how they would replace staff who leave the country. Only the Green Party say they would properly fund workforce planning.



**Taken from British Attitude Surveys*

What happened to the 40 new hospitals?

Boris Johnson's Tories failed to build 40 new hospitals as promised. Now Labour is focusing on work at some of the worst sites, while others will wait up to 14 years. Compared with other western countries, we are poorly equipped, with poorly maintained buildings. This is because successive governments failed to invest in the NHS.

Is the NHS too expensive?

Ours is the world's 6th largest economy. It's not true that we can't afford to fund the NHS. Politicians easily found the money to bail out the banks in 2008 and to get us through the Covid pandemic. Investing in the NHS would boost our economy, as well our nation's health.

Does using the private sector improve things?

The UK's private health sector is small, has little spare capacity and is already being heavily used to prop up the NHS, thanks to decisions made by previous governments. We now spend £2bn a year sending mental health patients to private hospitals, while 30% of NHS hip replacements and 60% of cataract operations are performed privately.

Relying on private providers, instead of funding NHS services, is more expensive, can be less safe for patients and makes health inequalities worse – private companies only treat the easiest cases.

The NHS also spends £2bn every year repaying Private Finance Initiative (PFI) debt, because past Labour governments chose to borrow from the private sector to construct new buildings.

Yet, Labour is now promising more PFI, more private providers and healthcare based around 'tele' and tech companies.

Reform UK want to boost private health companies by reducing their taxes and giving patients vouchers to use in the private sector.

Only the Green Party is committed to reducing privatisation – promising extra funding to run services and to invest in equipment and rebuilding.

Would an insurance-based system work better?

Reform UK's leader Nigel Farage has repeatedly said he wants to change the NHS to an 'insurance-based' model run by private companies. He is "open to anything" along these lines. In December 2024, he told *The Daily Telegraph*: "The funding of the NHS is a total failure. The French do it much better, with less funding."

In France, while some of the very sickest get healthcare free at the point of need, most French people:

- pay higher taxes than we do, as well as social insurance
- pay health costs upfront, before applying to get 70% paid back
- choose to pay for top-up insurance (95% do this), but
- end up paying any amounts not covered by their insurance.

France spends more than the UK on its healthcare system – the real reason why it is in better shape than the NHS.



The British public don't want a different model for the NHS – we want to restore the one we've got.

What should we be asking for?

We know that when it's funded to succeed, the NHS model is world beating. When politicians next come knocking for your vote, don't fall for false promises.

Tell them:

- We can't fix the NHS without significantly more funding.
- We don't need a new model – whether it's Nigel Farage's insurance-based model, or Labour's digital-first, heavily privatised model.
- We need to bring services back into the NHS – privatisation hasn't worked for water, gas, electricity or trains. It doesn't work for the NHS either.
- We need proper workforce planning to provide more GPs and other staff.
- Politicians must live up to their promises and prioritise fixing social care.
- We value our non-UK NHS staff. Changing immigration rules so that non-UK staff leave the country will only harm our NHS and the social care sector.



NE London Save Our NHS is an umbrella group covering local NHS campaigns in Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest. We are all affiliated to Keep Our NHS Public. To contact your local group, use the QR code or go to: <https://keepournhspublic.com/local-groups>