



nationalshopstewardsnetwork



Save London's Ambulance Service!

For united action to defend the NHS involving trade unions, anti-cuts campaigns and service users.

By Steve Harbord, Unison Rep Hayes B2 Ambulance Station, in a personal capacity

London Ambulance Service recently announced 890 job cuts over five years. This is staggering, especially when considering the year-on-year increase in emergency calls to the service, an increase we can expect to continue with an ageing population and deteriorating social conditions.

But just as staggering is the language used to sell the cuts to ambulance workers and the general public. The cuts are wrapped in a veil of management-speak gobbledegook, that sees a savage cuts programme turn into a - COST IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME! NHS chief executive Sir David Nicolson states, "It is critical that the NHS use efficiency savings to make real improvements to the quality of care for patients".

Our own Ambulance service chief Peter Bradley said on BBC news, "Unfortunately we are not immune from NHS cuts, but we will look to make savings while improving the care we give to patients".

This is language turned on its head, and an insult to NHS staff and the general public. Is it too much to ask that our own senior managers put their heads above the parapet and condemn these



cuts for what they are - an ideological attack on the very principle of the NHS and the welfare state. Unfortunately at the moment we have only silence and compliance.

The fact of the matter is that this is a continuation of the privatisation policies first put forward by the Tories under Thatcher and continued by New Labour, and now the baton has been taken up by the Con-Dem coalition. In the future any private firm, whose first priority is profit and its shareholders, will be able to apply to run any service within the NHS. And that goes for the ambulance service too.

You can envisage a future ambulance service where admin, training, and call-taking are outsourced, and private ambulance services compete for contracts to provide emergency cover. This will

come at the cost of attacking terms and conditions for staff and services for the general public.

Fight to defend the Ambulance Service

At the moment there seems to be no strategy to roll back these cuts from Unison's leadership, and it's becoming increasingly obvious that things will have to be pushed from below.

To that end we will call for an emergency branch meeting, and call for a ballot of members on industrial action to head off the threat of compulsory redundancies.

There should also be a recall of the Unison health conference without resolutions being ruled out of order on how to fight the cuts, and a link up with other service groups in a special all-London conference.



Fight to stop all cuts

Big businesses will be the only ones to gain long term if we don't fight the sell-off of the NHS and public services. The argument that there is no alternative to the cuts and that we are all in this together is false.

The fact is that this is a rich country, but that wealth generated by working people is concentrated in the hands of a few greedy individuals and corporations, and they will do anything to avoid paying their share for the greater good of society.

Take tax evasion by the major multinationals and individuals such as Vodafone, News International, and Philip Green of BHS. Vodafone simply turned round to HMS Customs & Excise and told them that instead of paying the £7 billion owed they would pay £1 billion, and the government said thanks! (Try the same when you get your next tax bill!) Rupert Murdoch's News International uses an elaborate network of offshore tax havens (remember that the next time the Sun newspaper rants against benefit cheats) and Philip Green uses his wife.

Pharmaceutical companies still overcharge the NHS for medicines. Banks, bailed out to the tune of hundreds of billions of pounds, are still paying obscene bonuses to the executives on their boards.

But there is an alternative. Workers must keep up the pressure on the trade union leaderships by supporting industrial ac-

COMETO THE...

nationalshopstewardsnetwork conference 2011

strike together
to defend jobs and pensions

save our NHS
stop cuts and privatisation

fight for the right to strike
fight the anti-union laws, stop blacklisting & victimisation

Speakers include: Alex Gordon RMT President Janice Godrich PCS President Keith Gibson Saltend Lock-Out Committee Frank Morris Blacklisted Olympics Worker



Saturday June 11th

11:30am - 4:00pm

South Camden Community School,
London NW1 1RG

Registration: will open at 10:30am

Email: info@shopstewards.net



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tion across all sectors, starting with the strike action on 30 June. All workers who can should come on the London demo on that day. We also need to build links with local community groups and anti-cuts alliances. The National Shop Stewards Network calls for a 24-hour public sector general strike as a step towards general strike action by all workers.

The National Shop Stewards Network was set up to bring together union activists across all sectors, public and private, to highlight the alternatives, to fight and organise against the cuts and

to give a clear lead to members in the workplace. The NSSN has already held four conferences which have gone from strength to strength.

The NSSN is open to all trade union reps who are not national full time officials so if you are a shop steward, local rep, or health and safety rep, your place is in the NSSN as well as your union. And all union members are welcome to attend NSSN meetings.

Stop the cuts!
End all privatisation!

The NSSN is supported by:

