

# THE NHS IS UNDER THREAT

Devious and incompetent Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, is going for broke in announcing the imposition of new terms and conditions on junior doctors. Doctors and other hospital staff already work at the week-end but Hunt claims that a "seven-day NHS" is necessary to prevent unnecessary deaths.



Junior doctors brave the weather on the James Paget Hospital picket, 9 March, 2016

He intends to do this by forcing staff to work Saturdays and Sundays while cutting their pay for unsociable hours. His claims that additional deaths at the weekend were the result of doctors not being available were totally rejected, not just by the doctors but by statisticians, health experts and MPs.

The doctors say that stretching resources over seven days, forcing them into longer and more arduous rotas and removing safeguards against excessive working hours will worsen the state of an already demoralised workforce. The dispute is about safety and the future of the NHS. A "seven-day NHS" needs seven-day resources.

Last week the James Paget Hospital in Gorleston reported that it was short of 280 medical staff and three patients were held on trolleys for over 12 hours. In the last few weeks the hospital was put on "black alert" and reported a "major incident" - both ways of saying that the hospital was unable to cope with the quantity of patients. It will be running a deficit of £4.9m this year.

Local community hospitals are being closed; mental health services, the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital and the Ambulance Trust all are in crisis. There is a shortage of GPs and surgeries are closing. Demands for more "efficiency savings" at a time of increasing demand are a fraud and it is a fiction that the NHS is "protected". Repetition does not make it true. The NHS is deliberately being starved of funds. A deficit one year points to rationing, charges for treatment and privatisation proposals the next.

*THIS INVOLVES US ALL*

Junior doctors are not just fighting for themselves. These dedicated staff who already work under stress and with burdens which approach breaking point. They work in a service which is deliberately being run down. The implication for the rest of NHS staff and for the NHS itself if they are beaten is enormous.

Urge your union to support the junior doctors. **Come to the public meeting with the junior doctors on 18 April (see overleaf).** Tell your councillors, your MP, your party (if you have one) that you expect them to support the doctors. It is vital.

There is an alternative. The government intends to spend up to £100bn on Trident, it has cut taxes on the corporations and on the wealthy. Tax evasion flourishes. This country has never been so wealthy. Who can claim that the money isn't there?

## WHAT YOU CAN DO...

- Support LCAC by joining our leafleting every Saturday, 11-1pm, in the town centre precinct, outside the Britten Centre.
- Join our email list - keep up to date with activity in your area.
- Forward this leaflet and pass it onto friends and workmates.
- Want to know more? We can supply a speaker for your group or trade union branch.

Contact us

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## PUBLIC MEETING

# Junior Doctors: FIGHTING TO SAVE THE NHS

Monday 18 April, 7.30pm

Speakers:

**Dr Arjun Kattakayam**  
*Junior doctor Yr 2*

**Dr Trevor Killeen**  
*Junior doctor and BMA representative*

**United Reformed Church**  
*(upstairs room, top of precinct,  
opp Poundstretcher)*

**London Road North**  
**Lowestoft**



Lowestoft Coalition Against the Cuts (LCAC) visited the junior doctors mounting a picket outside the James Paget Hospital on the first of three 48hr strikes. Junior doctors are protesting against the imposition of a new contract which they believe will push them and the NHS beyond breaking point.

The doctors who braved the cold and the constant driving rain were cheered by the number of passing drivers who tooted their horns to show support. There is no doubt that the public do not believe the Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt's, attempt to blame junior doctors for the dispute nor do they believe that a seven-day NHS is achievable without proper funding for proper staffing levels.

LCAC spoke to junior doctor Arjun Kattakayam who has worked in virtually every department in the hospital over the past two years.

"Present staffing levels and shift patterns are already affecting the treatment I can give. The proposed new shifts mean that I will not be able to

be the good physician that I know I am. Pay is not the issue for the doctors, it is about being able to care for people, to make people well."

Dr Kattakayam also expressed deep concern about the future, "The NHS is still the best health system in the world and one of the cheapest. This contract will worsen treatment and impact on recruitment. Half of the doctors I graduated with have already been lost to the NHS. A run-down NHS will be ripe for privatisation and I fear that is the government's intention. Most of our patients are elderly, how can they afford to pay for treatment?"

Because of Jeremy Hunt's failure to talk doctors have announced their intention to withdraw emergency cover on their next strike dates on 26<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> April. Hunt has had five weeks notice and has remained silent. He should withdraw his threat to junior doctors and to the future of the NHS. This damaging contract should be dropped not imposed.

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