

Help us fight for our NHS

Whether you have only a bit of time, or a lot, you can help save our NHS.

Join our campaigns

There are three campaigning groups in the areas covered by the Barts Health NHS Trust – in Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

The groups include hospital and other NHS staff, GPs and local residents from every community and all walks of life.

We believe the NHS belongs to all of us, so we're friendly and welcoming to anyone who wants to get involved.

We can send you regular email updates about what's going on locally, invite you to our meetings and tell you about our public events.



- Contact Newham Save our NHS via <http://newhamsaveournhs.weebly.com>
- Contact Tower Hamlets Keep our NHS Public by emailing THkeepournhspublic@gmail.com, following us on Facebook at @TowerHamletsKonp, or on Twitter at @THKONP
- Contact Waltham Forest Save our NHS by emailing wfsaveournhs@gmail.com – our website is at wfsnhs.wordpress.com

You can also support:

- the GP practice campaign petition at <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-inner-city-gp-surgeries>
- the campaign to get NHS England to prove or cancel plans to move cancer services – online petition at <http://chn.ge/1iAzGtC>
- the campaign to get Charlotte Monro reinstated – email us for a petition sheet
- the 4:1 campaign (www.4to1.org.uk) petition launched by London nurses to get safe nursing ratios made law – at <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/4-1-mandatory-minimum-staffing-levels-1>
- the national Keep our NHS Public organisation at www.keepournhspublic.com
- 38 Degrees, the online petition organisation at www.38degrees.org.uk

Stay informed – and pass it on

Even if you can't find the time for meetings or protests, you can stay informed about the NHS and tell other people what's going on.

Don't rely on the BBC! It has consistently failed to report controversial changes to the NHS.

You can stay up to date via our websites, email lists, facebook pages and twitter, but you could also check out:

- www.saveournhs-el.org.uk – covers health campaigns across east London

- www.patients4nhs.org.uk – has lots of straightforward information for patients, including details on the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes, the dangers of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), and what is happening with care.data (the scheme to pool our personal health records).

If you want to know more about how the NHS has got to this point, we recommend reading *NHS SOS: How the NHS was betrayed – and how we can save it*, by Raymond Tallis & Jacky Davis.

Join the protests

We think this summer will turn into a long (and long overdue) fightback in support of the NHS. Here are some of the events you can take part in.

- **5 June – support GPs & NHS staff**
Patients and health workers will be taking a Nye Bevan banner on a relay march linking 13 Tower Hamlets GP practices. The march starts at St Katherine's Dock practice at 2.30pm and ends in a rally at Kingsley Hall in Bow at 6pm, with speakers including Lord David Owen, Dr Louise Irvine, Virginia Patania & Candy Udwin. For a route map with timings go to <https://www.facebook.com/SaveOurGPsurgeries>

Barts Health UNISON branches will hold a midday protest outside the Royal London and Whipps Cross Hospitals as part of a national day of protest for fair pay for NHS staff.

- **21 June – People's Assembly**
The NHS is high on the agenda for the People's Assembly. Join their No More Austerity march on Saturday 21 June. Assemble 1pm, at BBC HQ in Portland Place (Tube: Oxford Circus) and march to Parliament.

- **5 July – birthday of the NHS**
Keep our NHS Public, together with local at-risk GP practices, are planning an event. Watch this space!

- **6 September – #marchfortheNHS**
A group of mums from Darlington, known as 999 Call for the NHS, are organising a #marchfortheNHS from Jarrow to London from 16 August to 6 September. They are getting massive support from NHS support groups, the People's Assembly, Unite the Union and the GMB.

Hundreds of walkers, runners and even cyclists will complete all or parts of the original Jarrow March route, as well as joining it from feeder marchers coming in from all over the country. We will be joining the march for its London leg, which will start in north London and end in a lobby of parliament.

Sign up to their email lists to be kept informed, or go to <http://999callformhs.org.uk/detailed-map-route/4583636068>

Our NHS is in serious trouble

Worried and confused about what's happening to our NHS? You aren't alone.

Over the past four years, our much-loved national health services have been under massive attack.

The problems are now so serious, we think the NHS will only survive if people are willing to fight for it.



Why are things going wrong?

The last Government began breaking up services and getting parts of the NHS to compete against each other, and against private health providers. But under the Coalition, the changes have been even more dramatic.

The NHS in England is now:

- **Starved of funding**
The Coalition promised no NHS cuts. But it has wasted £3bn on reorganisation, raised budgets by less than inflation and expects the NHS to treat a growing population with no extra money. Yet, NHS England still plans to cut a further £4bn by 2021.
- **Crippled with debt**
Hospitals built in the past 14 years have been paid for with private money borrowed at high rates of interest. These Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes cost the NHS far more than it borrows and much more than it can afford.
- **Rapidly being privatised**
From April 2013 to January 2014, 70% of new contracts in the NHS moved to profit-making private companies instead of NHS providers.
- **Suffering low staff morale**
Staff are overworked, losing their jobs or having them downbanded, being bullied for whistleblowing but held responsible when things go

- wrong. They have also gone years without real pay rises.
- **Badly disorganised**
The new Health and Social Care Act focuses more on competition than patient care. The Coalition has handed over responsibility for the NHS to NHS England and a complex bureaucracy of managers. But no-one is really sure who is responsible for what, so the NHS is becoming dangerously unstable. Plans to reorganise services are too often about readying them for privatisation or saving money – and not about improving services.
- **Struggling to provide good patient services**
All these problems mean patient care will suffer. But

the Coalition's answer is to hand over more of the NHS to companies like Serco and Virgin Healthcare – even though they have a history of cheating and failure in the health and other sectors.

- **Under threat from the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)**

A broken-up privatised NHS could be permanently damaged by the secretive new EU/US trade agreement that the Coalition is currently helping to negotiate.



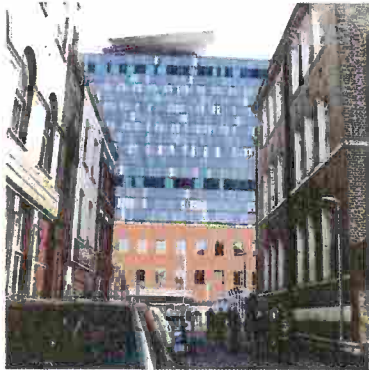
All these problems are affecting our NHS in Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

On pages 2-4, you can find out what's happening locally, what we've been doing about it and how you can get involved.

In the area covered by Barts Health NHS Trust, we campaign:

- to protect and improve our local health services
- to keep our NHS public and free at the point of delivery
- to support our NHS staff.

What's happening to our local services & what the three campaigning groups are doing about it



PFI debt threatens Barts Health's future

To build the new Royal London Hospital, Barts Health NHS Trust ran up a PFI debt of £1.1bn. This is the largest PFI deal in the NHS. Repaying the loan and associated costs is now costing £2m a week, but this will grow to £3m over the next 10 years and to £5m by 2047.

The Trust's deficit by the end of the last financial year was around £39m. It is now making drastic cuts to staffing and services to try to save £108m. These cuts affect all the hospitals and services in the Trust's area – which covers City of London, Newham, Waltham Forest and Tower Hamlets.

Many of the problems we describe on these pages are caused by this unaffordable debt. We think the PFI deal must be renegotiated and we will campaign for this at every opportunity.

Services privatised

In London, privatisation has been on a small scale so far – but the trend nationally is clear.

Barts Health is currently handing over the pharmacy at the Royal London to the Lloyds chain, with other pharmacies likely to follow.

Now that our public health services have been passed over to local authorities, we are also seeing areas like sexual health services go out to tender to big players like Virgin Healthcare.

We are monitoring the creep of privatisation in our local NHS and we will campaign loudly when the stakes get higher.

GP practices faced with closure

Funding changes mean that five of our GP practices in Tower Hamlets, five in Newham and another 12 in Hackney may be forced to close.

A total of 98 practices across England are at risk, because funding is now skewed in favour of older patients and away from patients who are deprived.

Under the new formula, the Jubilee practice in Limehouse faces cuts of more than £900k over the next seven years. It may have to close within a year.

In May, more than 80 GPs, practice staff, patient reps and health campaigners met at Mile End Hospital to plan a campaign against the cuts. Poplar & Limehouse MP Jim Fitzpatrick is pictured above, offering his support to the meeting.

The GPs are concerned that the funding cuts are the tip of the iceberg, as NHS England plans to cut £250m from primary care.



As health campaigners, we fear there is a deliberate plan to start closing down traditional GP practices, in favour of practices set up and run by large profit-making companies – despite the fact they often have no knowledge or commitment to local communities and patients.

The east London GPs have now launched a petition and are planning their first protest for 5 June, with full backing from the three local campaign groups. See back page for details.

Children's beds at Whipps Cross close... for lack of nurses

Nursing shortages at Whipps Cross Hospital have forced Barts Health to close seven of the 27 beds on Acorn Ward from 20 May to 1 July.

On behalf of the campaigning groups, Mary Burnett from Waltham Forest Save Our NHS told *Waltham Forest Guardian*: "The news that beds on Acorn ward are being reduced by 25% will be of real concern for local parents.

"Sadly it is of no surprise given the downbanding of experienced staff across Barts Health Trust.

"Our campaign group has been raising concerns for months about cuts to posts, downbanding of staff, and a culture of bullying within Barts Health.

"Given all this, the real worry is that the cut to beds will continue beyond July 1 because Barts will not be able to recruit enough experienced staff."

Behind the headlines, the three health campaign groups are particularly worried about what the future holds for Whipps Cross and Newham General hospitals.

Whipps Cross was saved from closure in 2008 only after two years of local campaigning. We fear that both hospitals could see services reduced over time.

On 13 May, Waltham Forest Save Our NHS held a public meeting on the theme of "Whipps Cross Hospital – In Safe Hands?".

Around 70 people came to the Quaker Meeting House in Walthamstow to hear from frontline staff, as well as Drs Louise Irvine GP and Chidi Ejimofe (an A&E Consultant), from the hugely successful campaign to save Lewisham Hospital.

Barts Health staff in crisis

In January, a Care Quality Commission (CQC) report on Barts Health found very low staff morale – which was no surprise to us or local health unions.

The Trust's cuts have affected hundreds of staff. Experienced people have lost their jobs or been downbanded, while wards have been downgraded to reduce staff to patient ratios.

Many staff have now left, leaving the Trust struggling to recruit new people. By February, 1,917 permanent posts were unfilled – 810 more than in January, despite 977 new starters.

To plug the gap, the Trust is using costly agency staff – 73% more of them by February 2014 than in March 2013.

The staff who remain tell us they are being pushed beyond safe limits for patient care, but they aren't allowed to speak out. As the CQC also reported – there are worrying levels of staff bullying.

Occupational therapist Charlotte Monro is a good example. A respected member of staff at Whipps Cross Hospital for 26 years, she was sacked last year on trumped-up charges after speaking out in her role as a Union rep. She is now taking

Barts Health to an Employment Tribunal, with full backing from Union and its General Secretary, Dave Prentis.

As health campaigners, we fully support Charlotte (pictured) and the rest of the Barts Health staff. We value our NHS staff and we think they deserve better.



Major cuts to health advocacy service

Plans to make major cuts to the Bilingual Health Advocacy and Interpreting Service in Tower Hamlets, with no public consultation, have kicked off a wave of community protest.

In April, 100 people came to the Royal London Hospital for the official handover of a widely supported petition against the cuts.

The petition, which gained 1,300 signatures and the backing of community leaders, GPs, local councillors, and MPs Rushanara Ali and Jim Fitzpatrick, was launched by the Darul Ummah Mosque in Shadwell, with our support.

After the handover, 70 people joined us for a public meeting. Speaking through volunteer interpreters, service users from the Bengali and Somali communities spoke of the face-to-face support they rely on from health advocates they have known for many years.

Local GPs despair at losing a service they fought to get – to give their patients equality of access to healthcare.

Barts Health has now agreed to scale back its savings from £900k to £600k, but some staff will lose their jobs, the rest face pay cuts and posts will be cut as people leave.

We have also learned that the Bangladeshi health advisors who support families with disabled members, face job and wage cuts too.

We will continue to campaign to save and extend these services across Barts Health, because they offer so much more than phone-based interpreting.



Specialist cancer services to move to central London

Local GPs, consultants and health campaigners are very worried about plans to move complex surgery for brain, kidney, bladder, prostate, stomach, oesophagus, head and neck cancers away from Barts Health NHS Trust to hospitals in central London.

In February, the three campaign groups together with Rowan Haines Barry kicked off a public meeting for the people at the Hospital Centre in Whitechapel where job managers from NHS England and Barts Health came to the handover.

The plans are being billed as better for patients, but local doctors think moving key staff to central London will affect other services provided by Barts Health – such as the Royal London's work as a specialist accident centre.

Campaigners are also worried about a 'trifecta' – moving services away from the district hospitals and leaving patients with long distances to travel.

NHS England has agreed to consult more widely, but we still fear the aim is to save money, not improve patient care. We have launched an online petition calling on NHS England to prove its case or withdraw its plans (see back page).