

The following letter has been published in at least one local paper and was sent to others. It is written by Hannah Basson, Treasurer of Stroud Against the Cuts. References for the points made follow the text.

Dear Sir,

Stroud has a history of supporting health services being publicly-owned and funded. This is the most economical and fair way to distribute services, yet this government keeps attacking the NHS.

Of promised funding, less than half is new money. Once maintenance backlog and PFI repayments (including very recent ones) are factored, the real terms increase is about 13% of what's being offered. Costly tenders for contracts, enforced since 2012, and forced savings of £22 billion hurt even more. Are these privatised contracts any better? Locally Out of Hours, hospital pharmacies, buildings maintenance, smoking cessation clinics, and transport services suggest not.

We are told investment is being made to GP services but unprecedented numbers are leaving and surgeries are shutting. GPs are told to refer patients on earlier, yet being told to refer less. Admissions to nursing schools have reduced by 23% since the government stopped training bursaries, there have been 90% fewer job applications from EU nurses since the referendum and there are still 1000s of vacancies.

The government says that the NHS will remain 'free at the point of use', but this does not necessarily mean comprehensive, universal, or treatment according to need.

The national media publish stories of the cost of 'health tourism' (0.3% of NHS budget actually), yet seem at ease with a system that costs about 15% to simply fragment services in order to

feed a growing private sector.

Our NHS costs less than most other comparable countries in the world and the Commonwealth Fund named it the most efficient. Seven years ago, it was at the top of the Commonwealth Fund league tables in most categories.

Think that we can't afford the NHS? This is a fiction to divert your eyes from the truth, by a Health Secretary who co-authored a book that called for the NHS to be replaced by an insurance system. He is ably abetted by colleagues, such as a Conservative policy advisor who advised that the NHS would "cease to exist" within five years of a Tory government.

Sincerely,

Hannah Basson

(Treasurer, Stroud Against the Cuts)

This letter was sent without references but should you wish to follow up claims made, a few links are pasted below:

" [Stroud has a history of supporting health services being publicly-owned and funded](#) "

"[public ownership and funding] is the most economical and fair way to distribute services" - read e.g. ["At what cost? Paying the price for the market in the English NHS"](#); (direct link to pdf)

"[Of funding promised by the Conservative government], less than half is new money. Once maintenance backlog and PFI repayments (including very recent ones) are factored, the real terms increase is about 13% of what's being offered" - read e.g. ["NHS spending per person will be cut next year, minister confirm"](#);

"Costly tenders for contracts, enforced since 2012" / "a system that costs about 15% to simply fragment services in order to feed a growing private sector" - read Caroline Molloy from Stroud's essential article ["The billions of wasted NHS cash no-one wants to mention"](#);

"forced savings of £22 billion" - read Caroline Molloy's ["NHS cuts - are we in it together?"](#);

"Are these privatised contracts any better? Locally Out of Hours, hospital pharmacies, buildings maintenance, smoking cessation clinics, and transport services suggest not" - read e.g. ["Private health contractor comes under fire for "putting profit before](#)

[service""](#);

"We are told investment is being made to GP services but unprecedented numbers are leaving and surgeries are shutting." - read e.g ["if general practice fails, the whole NHS fails"](#);

"[Admissions to nursing schools have reduced by 23% since the government stopped training bursaries](#) "

"there have been [90% fewer job applications from EU nurses since the referendum and there are still 1000s of vacancies](#) "

"The national media publish stories of the cost of [‘health tourism’ \(0.3% of NHS budget actually\)](#) "

"Our NHS costs less than most other comparable countries in the world and the [Commo](#)

Commonwealth Fund named it the most efficient

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“Seven years ago, it was at the top of the Commonwealth Fund league tables in most categories”

“a Health Secretary who co-authored a book that called for the NHS to be replaced by an insurance system”

“a Conservative policy advisor who advised that the NHS would “cease to exist” within five years of a Tory government”