

Embargoed until 10.00 Thursday 20 March 2014

Landmark report highlights London's health crisis

A landmark report, launched today (Thursday 20 March), on London's NHS highlights a cash strapped and fragmented health service – and proposes an 18-point plan to save the capital's NHS.

The report, *London's NHS at the crossroads*, outlines an unravelling of services as the NHS becomes more fragmented and financially squeezed. This is coupled with a management vacuum at the strategic level – with the public having no real voice in decisions that affect them.

The report – the result of seven public meetings and hearing contributions from 95 people – was launched at the House of Commons with the six-person panel that presided over the People's Inquiry. The report was funded by Unite, the country's largest union, with a 100,000 members in the health service.

The chair of the inquiry Roy Lilley said: ***"I was truly shocked at the unravelling services, the complexity and the enormity of the difficulty involved in trying to plan and deliver cohesive, integrated services from the wreckage of a fragmented care landscape.***

"The financial squeeze that services are under and the lack of certainty is made all the worse by a management vacuum at the strategic level.

"It is clear there is no 'London Voice' in planning its healthcare future. It is next to impossible for the public to have any meaningful engagement with changes and future development. That cannot be right."

The panel is convinced that the levels of proposed financial restraint for the next seven years are ***"unsustainable without serious damage to the quality and availability of NHS services, both in London and in England as a whole"***.

The key recommendations include:

- a review of funding in London, given the increasing population
- the creation of a new type of London strategic health authority with democratic involvement – at present commissioning is fragmented across 32 clinical commissioning groups (CCGs)
- an end to the costly and complex piecemeal tendering of NHS community services
- a moratorium on any further reductions in mental health provision
- the closing down of Healthwatch England and that patients' interests are represented by new bodies fashioned in the style of the former community health councils
- an urgent review of emergency ambulance services to establish the resources needed to sustain target standards
- further research into the clinical safety of stand-alone midwife-led units in the context of London's social conditions
- the need for greater transparency over how decisions are taken, including the holding of well-publicised public meetings
- the repeal of the Health and Social Care Act, with the restoration of the health secretary's explicit duty to provide a universal service
- adequate protection for whistleblowers
- fresh efforts to reduce the cost of existing private finance initiatives (PFIs) and stem the flow of PFI payments to tax havens.

Unite regional secretary for the London region Pete Kavanagh said: ***"This report is possibly the first attempt to understand how the Health and Social Care 2012 is 'working' on the ground across London.***

“What we found was, sadly, not surprising. That Act has drained the NHS of an essential £3 billion which ought to have gone on patient care, and imposed horrendous and needless upheaval on the service.”

The full report and executive summary can be accessed via:

Full report

<http://tinyurl.com/qb7ap94>

Exec summary

<http://tinyurl.com/nzjddmg>

ENDS

Journalists are warmly invited to attend this launch event which will be held in **committee room 5, House of Commons SW1A 0AA at 10.00 on Thursday 20 March.**

For further information - or to signify your attendance - please contact Unite senior communications officer Shaun Noble on 07768 693940

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Notes to editors

- Unite is Britain and Ireland's largest trade union with over 1.4 million members working across all sectors of the economy. The general secretary is Len McCluskey.