

HEALTH EMERGENCY

SPECIAL



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After 50 years, we say:

- **No more cuts!**
- **No charges for care!**
- **No rationing!**
- **No Private capital!**



"Society becomes more wholesome, more serene, and spiritually healthier if it knows that its citizens have at the back of their consciousness the knowledge that not only themselves but all their fellows have access, when ill, to the best that medical services can provide."

Aneurin Bevan:
In Place of Fear

IT'S OUR NHS!



THERE has been growing press speculation on the government plans for a boost in spending as a 50th "birthday present" for the National Health Service.

Estimates vary as to how much might be on offer - perhaps an extra £6 billion over three years. If this much were to be available as genuine EXTRA money, over and above inflation - now running at 4% - it would certainly enable some of the gaps to be filled.

But if the baseline budget for the NHS were only to rise by £6-£8 billion, most of which would be wiped out by inflation, this would represent a further squeeze on services and trigger a new, bigger round of cuts.

Already a majority of health authorities and three quarters of all Trusts are embroiled in another round of cash cuts as they struggle to balance their books by April 1999.

The recent pronouncements on public spending by Gordon Brown give health workers and campaigners new reason for concern: levels of spending are set to rise by even less than they did under the last government, with Brown's main aim to deliver a massive cash surplus for the Exchequer each year.

Health unions have been told the squeeze on public sector pay will continue to eat away at salaries, worsening shortages of qualified staff, and clobbering low-paid support workers.

50 years after the post-war Labour government braved the financial pressures of the day to launch the NHS, their latter-day equivalents seem to lack the vision, courage and commitment to pump in the resources needed to restore it to health.

The fight for resources and policies will go on. It's OUR NHS, and we will defend it!

INSIDE: * Spirit of 1948. * LHE's Rescue Plan. * Staff that make it tick