

Dear

**Re: Andrew Lansley's Health and Social Care Bill**

I believe this Bill will destroy the NHS as we know it. Unless there are substantive amendments at report stage, I hope you will vote against it at third reading.

The debates are scheduled for the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of September, immediately after the House resumes following the summer break. After the listening exercise and the government response, 180 amendments were tabled. The reconvened Bill Committee finished on 14.7.11 so there was scant opportunity to read and discuss the new amendments published on 17.7.11, when Parliament was due to rise. I still have serious concerns about the Bill.

Mr Lansley's stated aims of reducing bureaucracy, giving clinicians more control and putting patients at the heart of care, with which all would agree, can be achieved without legislation. So one has to ask why this complex bill is needed. I believe that its aim is to set up a fully fledged commercial market. My four main concerns, which remain after the pause and the new amendments, are:

- The duty of the Secretary of State to provide a comprehensive health service has still not been restored and lawyers are arguing about the meaning of the new clause. Why not revert to the 2006 Act (based on the 1946 Act) which has served us well for 63 years? The Bill committee discussed this issue for ninety minutes and the minister did not explain why the government would not do so.
- The question of our NHS being subject to European Competition Law is complex, but the risk of this being applied to the NHS if these changes go ahead is real. The Department of Health refused to show their legal opinion to Professor Steve Field, chair of the Future Forum, who led the 'listening exercise' but reassured him. Do we want EU competition law involved in our NHS?
- The Role of Monitor as an economic regulator has not significantly changed, nor has the proposal that it should have a duty of collaboration (as recommended by the Future Forum) been included in the amendments.
- The Royal College of GPs has pointed out that – rather than reducing bureaucracy – the amended Bill would increase the number of statutory bodies from under 200 to over 500, greatly increasing the complexity of the NHS structure. These changes are likely to cost more money rather than less.

Surveys show that the English people do not want the NHS turned into a market. They will not forgive any party which destroys the NHS. David Cameron said before the election 'no more top-down re-organisations' and when challenged at Prime Minister's Question Time said 'I am not re-organising the NHS I am abolishing PCTs and SHAs'. How can you defend this position to your constituents? Polls have also shown that the electorate do not trust the Conservatives on the NHS so voting for this Bill may damage your position locally.

A poll conducted by Yougov Cambridge after the listening exercise on 1.6.11 found that 21% of the sample said they would be less likely to vote Conservative if these changes went ahead against 6% who said they would be more likely to do this. The remainder were committed to a party or did not express a view. If you would like to see the full poll results visit [www.yougov.polls.cam.ac.uk](http://www.yougov.polls.cam.ac.uk).

We know that several members of your party have grave reservations about this Bill; Lord Tebbit has spoken out against it and Stephen Dorelll has said the priority is to make the planned efficiency savings of 4% per year. This surely cannot be done at the same time as a major upheaval, especially when the bodies charged with making the savings are to be abolished. Please vote against the Bill when it returns to the House, or at least abstain.

I would like to make an appointment to come and see you to discuss the matter as soon as possible unless you can assure me that you will be voting against at third reading.

Yours sincerely,

(I am one of your constituents)