**KONP co-chairs’ report to DFNHS AGM, 7th October 2023**

**What we have done in the last year with your support**

**SOS NHS:** KONP and Health Campaigns Together (HCT) proposed the ‘SOS NHS’ coalition, which now has the support of over 50 organisations (including 18 unions, the BMA among them). The unifying demands were for emergency funding of £20bn, commitment to long term investment in the publicly provided NHS and a fair pay rise for staff. The coalition held a successful London conference in November last year, and work continues to cement SOS NHS as a broad-based fighting coalition. In March, a successful protest march was held in London with the slogan ‘End the crisis – support the strikes’ attended by around 10,000 people. Tasked with developing a vision of the NHS we want and need, KONP has written a draft document that will soon be shared for further discussion and provide a basis for campaigning in the run up to the general election. A number of other election resources are also being developed including briefing documents on important issues across health and social care.

**KONP-HCT merger:** In an important development, Health Campaigns Together (set up by KONP in 2016 to engage with the trade unions) has merged into KONP as a semi-autonomous committee leading the trade union-facing work of KONP. This simplification of how KONP works with trade unions was agreed by HCT affiliates and KONP membership, and welcomed by the health unions.

KONP-HCT’s work, including through SOS NHS, is impressive, directed mainly towards supporting striking NHS workers. Local groups have consistently joined picket lines of nurses, ambulance drivers, physios, radiographers and doctors. Many groups are supporting other workers in dispute such as the train drivers, recognising their support for the NHS and the common interest with protests over the cost-of-living increase, social justice and the environmental crisis. Highlighting the social determinants of health and joining together with other progressive campaigns remains an important element in our campaigning.

**Social media reach:** Our following on X (formerly Twitter) has increased to 65.4k; Facebook has 30k followers and a healthy reach despite changes to FB algorithms; our Instagram has 2,418 followers. There are an average of 153 daily visits to our website. The KONP newsletter is mailed close to 25k people (triple the number of two years ago), with an impressive 46% of mailings being opened. Individual membership has climbed steadily over the past few years from 500 to approaching 1100. There is new interest adding to our local groups around the country.

**Headlines**

* We have continued to grow in prominence, with [increased media presence](https://keepournhspublic.com/keep-our-nhs-public-contributes-to-news-agenda/) (TV, radio, print), with requests for interviews nationally and locally, significant offers of support and enquiries which we try and answer.
* We have strengthened our position as the lead NHS campaign, with around 60 active groups.
* KONP was invited to speak at a [United Nations House Scotland roundtable](https://keepournhspublic.com/the-human-right-to-healthcare/) on the Human Right to Healthcare, and more recently to an [Italian conference on public health services](https://keepournhspublic.com/the-future-is-public-health-is-a-human-right-and-the-fight-for-it-is-international/) together with a number of other activists from around Europe.
* Our campaign for a national social care service has evolved into the independent **‘**[**End Social Care Disgrace**](https://www.facebook.com/EndSocialCareDisgrace%20T)**’** campaign for a National Care, Support and Independent Living Service; it held a fringe meeting at the Labour Party conference in Liverpool last year and then a successful on-line meeting with disabled activist speakers, MP Margaret Greenwood and Lord Prem Sikka. A further meeting was held on the topic of a ‘fair deal for carers’ and a third is planned this month (‘a fair deal for care and support workers’) - <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtfuGgqjosGNTmqytKghSwTax156FCCwQL#/registration>); ESCaD produces a regular newsletter, provides speakers for meetings, and in addition to a Steering Group, has work groups on trade union liaison, publicity and working with politicians.
* KONP has [established working groups](https://keepournhspublic.com/campaigns/) on Integrated Care Systems (now monitoring and collecting data on IC Boards around the country); trade deals; health data; General Practice; mental health; ear wax removal - all providing detailed information for our website together with campaigning materials. Recently [databases for both ICS and Trust spending](https://keepournhspublic.com/investigating-private-contracts-with-icbs-new-database/) on contracts with the private sector have been developed, linked to information about the companies involved including any history of regulatory violations and subsequent sanctions. We hope this will be used by activists to challenge commissioners over contracts.
* Groups regularly send members to ask questions at ICS Boards, Partnership Boards, Place Boards, Health and Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny meetings, challenging local health leaders and demanding transparency and accountability.
* A ‘pathfinder’ hospital group meets periodically to review and highlight the non-progress of the largely fictional ‘New Hospitals Programme’ (NHP); the very critical recent National Audit Office report on NHP provided the basis for a KONP briefing sent to all MPs in the cohort 3/pathfinder group of hospitals. Problems with crumbling reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) have also been raised (with 5 affected hospitals now added into the NHP) together with concerns about the standardised building design template (Hospital 2.0) and the novel building methods being proposed for pathfinder sites.
* Several local groups continue work with other campaigners (Patients not Passports) in defence of migrants.
* We have highlighted the problems with access to NHS dentistry, a major concern to the public and a service now commissioned by the ICS.
* Despite our unsuccessful campaign with others for a Judicial Review into the **takeover by Centene of GP practices,** this company has now given up these practices (and its chain of 53 Circle/BMI hospitals), citing unprofitability and pressure from campaigners as one of the reasons. A campaign is developing around what should now happen to these practices looking after over 600,000 patients.
* Our **‘NHS Staff Voices’** group publish a regular newsletter and is bringing in a younger demographic of NHS workers. It links up with valued colleagues and activists from **‘NHS Staff Say No’** a founder of which is co-opted to our Steering Group.
* We have been working closely with other organisations, such as We Own It, the Socialist Health Association, Doctors in Unite, Unite Community, Just Treatment, 999 Call for the NHS.
* Following our briefing paper on **‘What we expect from opposition parties’** (<https://keepournhspublic.com/what-we-expect-from-opposition-parties/>) we have requested discussions with health leads for Labour, Lib Dems, Greens and SNP, and met with SNP and Labour representatives (but not been given time by Wes Streeting).
* We have worked with the 99% Organisation in producing a report: ‘[The Rational Policy-Maker’s Guide to the NHS](https://99-percent.org/the-rational-policy-makers-guide-to-the-nhs/)’, arguing for more funding and a return to founding NHS principles as the most rational way of rebuilding health services and supporting the economy; this had a well-attended launch in the House of Commons and is now being used to build consensus and amplify the arguments set out.
* KONP continues to take on a wide brief: activism, lobbying, educational; as always, we recognise the need to generate greater resources, a huge challenge in itself.
* We remain primarily a broad-based campaign seeking the successful reinstatement of a public NHS and public health system, and a publicly funded service to end the social care disgrace.

**KONP became a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG)** in January 2022. We have made the transition from self-employed staff contracts to a PAYE employer and salaried staff. Our team remains small but has expanded by one day a week. Tom Griffiths (4 days), our Head of Campaigns, has played a major role in growing our campaigning work since June 2018. Our campaigns officer Lewis (4 days) is also excellent. We welcomed Finn Smith as our new national administrator post (3 days) after a difficult gap. Samantha, our press and media officer (10 hours/week) continues to build positive and rewarding links with the media and press. We have a sessional bookkeeper Heera, and valuable support from our financial adviser, Naveed. Our website is maintained currently with voluntary support from Olivia O’Sullivan. KONP is very grateful to all of these for their hard work.

**Expanding our resources further**

It remains our belief that the impact of KONP could be even greater. Clearly this is now more important than ever with the current state of crisis in both health and social care and neither government nor opposition indicating policies that are likely to see our long-term objectives realised. We are always looking to expand further our campaigning resources to maximise our impact and to meet the demands of the coming years leading up to the next election and we remain very grateful for the support of Doctors for the NHS.

***John Puntis and Tony O’Sullivan, co-chairs of KONP***