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Leave campaigners cannot be trusted on the NHS

Vote Leave are masquerading as the protectors of the NHS, claiming that a vote to leave Europe would increase NHS funding.

The truth is, independent experts have shown that a vote to leave would damage the UK economy, which would lead to public spending cuts.

In 2010 the Chief Executive of Vote Leave argued for public spending cuts of £50bn, equivalent to 142 new, fully staffed hospitals.

He then went on to campaign for cuts to £9bn of NHS charges on the old, unwell and disabled:

- This would be a £442 million tax on people ill in hospital – an average hospital visit would cost £140
- This would be a £2.7 billion tax on GP visits – an average £70 per person per year
- This would be a £5.4 billion tax on people in need of medicines, including vulnerable people, cancer patients, pregnant mothers, and disabled war heroes

This comes as the leave campaigns' full history of campaigning for NHS cuts, privatisation and for NHS charging is now exposed:

- Boris Johnson has said that "people have to pay" for the NHS
- Daniel Hannan and Douglas Carswell have called for a "price mechanism in healthcare"
- Leave campaigners argued against ring-fencing NHS spending
- Leave campaigners supported Nigel Farage's call for NHS privatisation
- Douglas Carswell has said he wants an "open market" in health provision

Background

Chief Executive of Vote Leave campaigned for £50bn in spending cuts

- Matthew Elliott is Chief Executive of Vote Leave, the lead campaign for Britain to leave Europe. Until October 2015 he was a Director of the Taxpayers Alliance, which has a long history of campaigning for NHS cuts and NHS privatisation.
- Speaking in 2010, Matthew Elliott advocated £50bn of government spending cuts.

"What we want is spending cuts. That's how they should solve the fiscal equation we are in at the moment. I think very much so. With some political guts...um...yeah absolutely. We've actually outlined ourselves how you could cut spending by £50bn so it is doable."

February 2010, Interview with Matthew Elliott of The TaxPayers' Alliance, [Link](#)

This is equivalent to 142 new, fully-staffed hospitals

- Vote Leave has said that £350 million is enough to fund "a new, fully-staffed NHS hospital every week". So using Vote Leave's own calculations, £50bn is the equivalent to 142 fully staffed NHS hospitals. [Link](#)

Vote Leave's boss wanted to raise £9bn by charging the old, unwell and disabled for NHS services

In March 2015, when Vote Leave Chief Executive Matthew Elliott was still Director of the Taxpayers' Alliance, the TPA released a report, 'The Spending Plan', which set out details how they would increase charges for NHS services.¹ The details of this are below.

- **The Taxpayers' Alliance drew up plans to raise prescription charges, end exemptions for them, and introduce a charge for visiting a GP, going to hospital, or missing an appointment.**
Their spending plan includes "a £10 prescription charge", "abolishing all exemptions from prescription charges except for low income groups"; a "£20 flat-rate GP consultation charge"; a "£20 daily 'hotel' charge for overnight hospital stays"; and a "£25 fine for missed outpatient hospital appointments"
Taxpayers' Alliance spending plan, May 2015, [link](#)
- **This would be a £442 million tax on people ill in hospital.** This is the Taxpayers' Alliance own costing.
Taxpayers' Alliance blog, 4 June 2015, [link](#)
 - **The average hospital visit would cost £140.** The average length of stay for in-patients in the UK in 2013 was 7 days – costing £140 at £20 a day.
Eurostat, In-patient average length of stay, 2 July 2015, [link](#)
- **This would be a £2.7 billion tax on GP visits.** This is the Taxpayers' Alliance own costing.
Taxpayers' Alliance blog, 4 June 2015, [link](#)
 - **This would average £70 per person per year.** The estimated average consultation rate per person per year for a GP in England is 3.49 – meaning the tax on GP visits would on average cost someone £69.80 a year.
Nuffield Trust blog, 3 March 2015, [link](#)
- **Vulnerable people, cancer patients, pregnant mothers, and war heroes disabled in battle would be amongst those who would face expensive charges to get the medicines they need.** The current system of exemptions, which the Taxpayers Alliance have said would be removed, mean you don't pay a prescription if you are: are 60 or over; under 16; 16-18 and in full-time education; pregnant or have had a baby in the previous 12 months; have a specified medical condition; have a continuing physical disability that prevents you from going out without help from another person; hold a valid war pension exemption certificate and the prescription is for your accepted disability; or are an NHS inpatient. Or if you or your partner receive: Income Support; Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Income-related Employment and Support Allowance; Pension Credit Guarantee Credit; or Universal Credit and meet the criteria.
NHS in England – help with health costs, [link](#)

¹https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/taxpayersalliance/pages/5255/attachments/original/1425976126/The_Spending_Plan_WEB2.pdf?1425976126

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- **This would be a £5.4 billion tax on people in need of medicines.** This is the Taxpayers' Alliance own costing of how much would be raised by removing exemptions on prescriptions. They have based this on their plan to exempt 30% of prescriptions, rather than the current 90% which are currently exempted. This means that two-thirds of existing exemptions would be removed, but the Taxpayers' Alliance haven't set out specifically which would be removed and who would be affected.
Taxpayers' Alliance blog, 4 June 2015, [link](#); Hansard, Written Question, 12 June 2014, [link](#)

- **And it would be a £465 million tax on missed hospital appointments.** This is the Taxpayers' Alliance own costing.
Taxpayers' Alliance blog, 4 June 2015, [link](#)

Leave campaigners, including Boris Johnson, have supported charging for the NHS

Today's leading leaving campaigners have a history of arguing for NHS cuts, NHS privatisation and NHS charging.

- Boris Johnson has said that "people have to pay" for the NHS

"There is a moral point. If NHS services continue to be free in this way, they will continue to be abused like any free service. If people have to pay for them, they will value them more. Above all, there is an economic point. In a very modest way, this extension of private funds into the NHS would help the Chancellor's straitened circumstances"
Boris Johnson, The Essential Boris Johnson, 2003
- Daniel Hannan and Douglas Carswell have called for a "price mechanism in healthcare"

"If there were some price mechanism in healthcare, people might make more effort to avoid developing conditions that require expensive cures."
Daniel Hannan and Douglas Carswell, The Plan: twelve months to renew Britain, 2008
- Leave campaigners argued against ring-fencing NHS spending

"the TaxPayers' Alliance recommends:...An end to the NHS ring-fence so that wasteful practices can be eliminated, and challenge the NHS to find savings"
Taxpayers' Alliance press release, 15 May 2015, [link](#)
- Leave campaigners supported Nigel Farage's call for NHS privatisation

"Nigel Farage stuck his head above the parapet by suggesting the UK should move towards an insurance-based system...he's right."
Taxpayers' Alliance blog, 22 January 2015, [link](#)
- Douglas Carswell has said he wants an "open market" in health provision

"When tax payer money is spent on buying goods and services, it ought to go to the firm that provides the best value (...), government needs to go for genuine open market rules for everything from health contracts to IT and defence."
Douglas Carswell's blog, 9 January 2012, [link](#)

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Background: Vote Leave and the Taxpayers' Alliance

- Matthew Elliott co-founded the Taxpayers' Alliance and was a Director until October 2015. He is now Chief Executive of Vote Leave.
 - <https://companycheck.co.uk/company/04873888/THE-TAXPAYERS-ALLIANCE-LIMITED/directors-secretaries>
- Rob Oxley was Campaign Manager at the Taxpayers Alliance, and a spokesperson. He is now Head of Media at Vote Leave.
 - http://www.taxpayersalliance.com/jonathan_isaby_joins_growing_taxpayers_alliance_campaign_team
 - <https://twitter.com/roxley?lang=en-gb>
- William Norton was an "External Reviewer" at the Taxpayers Alliance and authored a number of reports for them. He has held "various roles" for Vote Leave, and is currently in the Data Team. He also helped set up Vote Leave, with his name appearing on the incorporation certificate.
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-norton-63693a19>
 - <https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/taxpayersalliance/pages/240/attachments/original/1427896713/PayingfortheCreditCrunch.pdf?1427896713>
 - <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/09785255/filing-history?page=2>

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