

**BRITAIN  
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**IN**

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## **You can't trust Vote Leave with the NHS**

The lead campaign for Britain to leave Europe, Vote Leave, is run by figures who have a history of campaigning against the NHS. They have campaigned for:

- cuts to NHS spending and ending the NHS ring-fence
- cuts to NHS staff pay
- an increase in prescription charges
- allowing NHS trusts to fail
- increased NHS privatisation

**Any claims by Vote Leave that they want to protect the NHS are therefore a deception.**

## **Foreword: you can't trust Vote Leave with the NHS**

The NHS is our most treasured national institution. Those campaigning to leave the European Union know this and, as a result, are trying to pull a great deception on the British people.

They are propagating a myth that leaving Europe will somehow benefit our NHS when the opposite is true. Every single credible piece of economic analysis has argued that leaving means fewer jobs and lower growth. The inevitable result is lower tax revenues and public spending cuts, including in the health service. As Labour Party politicians, we would be failing in our duty to voters and to the country if we did not take the Leave campaigns to task for their wildly misleading claims about the NHS.

It's not just their shoddy maths that should be under scrutiny, it is their motives as well. We have spent our political lives campaigning on the NHS. The same cannot be said of those campaigning to leave the EU – particularly leading members of Vote Leave.

They now pretend to care about the future of the NHS but they have, in the very recent past, been vocal proponents of policies that would finish the NHS as we know it. Increased privatisation; cuts to NHS spending; reduced pay for NHS staff; allowing NHS Trusts to fail; and increasing prescription charges. All have been repeatedly proposed by leading members of Vote Leave. Indeed, the Taxpayer's Alliance, the right-wing pressure group who have consistently campaigned for NHS cuts, and Vote Leave have operated something of a revolving door when it comes to staff recruitment.

Vote Leave have already been criticised for shamelessly using the NHS logo on their disingenuous leaflets. They have been sent a legal letter by NHS England ordering them to stop doing so. It has not stopped them from continuing to pretend that they are on the side of the NHS.

It is time for the Leave campaigns to have their true colours revealed. That is not a job for Jeremy Hunt or the Conservatives, it is a job for the Labour Party, who have always stood up for our NHS. Now is not the time to bequeath the future of the health service to a group of ideologically obsessed right-wingers who have never cared about the NHS before. Vote Leave cannot be trusted on Europe and they certainly cannot be trusted on the NHS. Our health service, like our country, is stronger, safer and better off in Europe. The only way to protect it is to vote Remain on June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

*Ben Bradshaw MP, Emma Reynolds MP and Paula Sheriff MP are all members of the Health Select Committee.*

## You can't trust Vote Leave with the NHS: background

### Campaigning to end the NHS budget ring-fence

- The Taxpayer's Alliance have repeatedly called for the NHS ring fence to be ended and for the NHS to be treated like other Departments

"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](#)*

"Pumping ever more borrowed money into the Health Service is fundamentally unsustainable and would be disastrous for the nation's finances"  
*Jonathan Isaby, Taxpayers' Alliance, press release, 11 June 2015, [link](#)*

"All too often politicians measure their performance on how much money they can spend rather than what taxpayers get in return...The NHS appears to have been exempted from the efficiency savings the chancellor has demanded from Whitehall departments and local authorities...Politicians should consider the following before committing more taxpayers' money"  
*Taxpayers' Alliance blog, 2 December 2014, [link](#)*

"The problem, of course, is that with the NHS budget ring-fenced and the parties engaged in a bidding war to pledge more borrowed money to the Health Service there is precious little reason to innovate or save. Until we treat the NHS like every other Department, we'll keep seeing stories like this, and the real funding crisis within the Health Service will continue unsolved."  
*Taxpayers' Alliance blog, 4 June 2008, [link](#)*

- Liam Fox has opposed spending more on the NHS

"I think we've tested to destruction the idea that simply throwing lots more money at the health service will make it better. The increase over the last decade has been phenomenal and yet a lot of our health indicators lag behind other countries, particularly things like stroke outcome or a lot of cancer outcomes. We've become obsessed with throughput and not outcomes and that has been hugely to the detriment of the patients in our system."  
*Sky News, 2 January 2014, [link](#)*

- Lord Lawson has attacked the ring fence of NHS spending

"Several Tory MPs have expressed unease about the decision to ring-fence the NHS from government spending cuts. Nadine Dorries, a member of the Health Select Committee, told the BBC's Politics Show it was 'untenable' as other departments faced 25% cuts. Former chancellor Lord Lawson said the commitment was 'understandable' but he did not believe it 'would wash'."  
*BBC News, 27 June 2010, [link](#)*

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- Chris Grayling was reported to have attacked the NHS ringfence.

‘ministers, including...Chris Grayling...have mounted a collective attack on the "ringfence" protecting the NHS from budget cuts.’

*Guardian, 30 April 2013, [link](#)*

## Campaigning to cut NHS pay

- The TPA have supported cutting GPs’ pay

“Renegotiate contracts to cut excessive pay for GPs”

Taxpayers’ Alliance spending plan, May 2015, [link](#)

- As well as the pay of dentists

“Amid the endless calls for more public spending and the context of a pay freeze, these [dentist] salaries show a shameless public sector elite taking taxpayers for a ride. It is outrageous that these telephone-number salaries have been hidden from the people who pay them for so long, especially when rank and file workers are feeling the effects of necessary savings. Taxpayers expect the money they put into the NHS to be spent on patients, not on pumped-up pay packets”

*Jonathan Isaby, Taxpayers’ Alliance press release, 11 April 2015, [link](#)*

## Campaigning for an increase in prescription charges

- They have called for reduced spending on prescriptions

“The whole prescribing system needs an overhaul. With over 1.1 billion prescriptions issued last year - more than 2,000 a minute and an increase of 3% - the cost has spiralled out of control. While regular patients pay £8.20 for each prescription the group that pays nothing - under 16s, pregnant women, new mothers, adults on benefits - are the ones who receive the majority of prescriptions. If they were asked to pay £8.20 too they would find that most of their ‘necessary’ items were much cheaper if bought over the counter. But of course, nothing is as cheap as when someone else is picking up the tab.”

*Taxpayers’ Alliance blog, 9 April 2015, [link](#)*

## Campaigning for allowing NHS trusts to fail

- And they have called for NHS Trusts to be allowed to fail

“Letting underperforming NHS trusts fail doesn’t mean that the actual hospitals they manage would close. The hospitals concerned would still remain open and the service provided to patients would not be affected, just like when an electricity company goes into administration, the power stations remain running and homes and businesses still get electricity. Management boards, however, would be closed and bosses would be fired. Without some form of market discipline in the NHS, taxpayers will not get the value for money they deserve.”

*Taxpayers’ Alliance blog, 5 July 2012. [link](#)*

## Campaigning for NHS privatisation

- The Taxpayers' Alliance have said we need "a new way to pay for healthcare"

"changes are certainly no substitute for the kind of more fundamental reforms we have previously suggested. Our population is aging, health needs are becoming more complex, and the sort of year on year funding increases that were seen in the 2000s are simply not sustainable. In short, we need to find a new way to pay for healthcare."

*Taxpayers' Alliance blog, 15 June 2015, [link](#)*

- They have supported Nigel Farage's proposal to move to an insurance-based system

"the truth is that reform of the way in which the NHS is funded does need urgent attention. At present, it's almost entirely funded through general taxation. It's always been the same and almost nobody is willing to suggest we should move on from the 1940s. Nigel Farage stuck his head above the parapet by suggesting the UK should move towards an insurance-based system, and he has even lost the argument in his own party. Unfortunately for UKIP, and the NHS congregation, he's right."

*Taxpayers' Alliance blog, 22 January 2015, [link](#)*

- They have said the current funding system is unsustainable

"the current model of funding the Health Service is basically unsustainable in the long-term. The premise that the NHS needs more money may well be true, but with an ageing population, demands on the NHS will only grow. If we continue to increase funding of the Health Service at the same rate as between 2000 and 2010, Britain would spend almost all of its revenues on the NHS by around 2050 - giving us the choice of further borrowing (with the unpleasant consequences) or shutting schools."

*Taxpayers' Alliance blog, 5 May 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](#)*

- 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*

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- Daniel Hannan has also called for a Singapore style system.

“the model I've been pushing for is one of personal healthcare accounts, a system most closely approximated in Singapore, whose people enjoy a higher level of healthcare than Britons do while paying considerably less for it.”

*Telegraph, 14 August 2009, [link](#)*

- The TPA have proposed increasing charges for NHS patients

“Increase the extent of charges in the NHS”. Proposals made include a £10 prescription charge with exemptions removed, and £20 charges for GP consultations and for each day spent in a hospital

*Taxpayers' Alliance spending plan, May 2015, [link](#)*

- The TPA have said that private companies taking over failing hospitals is “good news”

Commenting on a Telegraph article entitled “Private companies to take over failing hospitals”, the TPA said: “This is good news.”

*Telegraph, 3 June 2008, [link](#); Taxpayers Alliance, 4 June 2008, [link](#)*

- Iain Duncan Smith has suggested moving to a social insurance system.

“In a landmark document setting out an alternative vision for the health service, Mr Duncan Smith says Labour's tax rises have made little difference. 'The problems of the NHS are not just a matter of money, it is the system that is failing,' he says. 'Despite increasing taxes by £100billion since they came to office, they have failed to deliver any significant improvement.'... 'We could spend as much as France or the Netherlands and still not enjoy the quality of care they provide, because this Government refuses to change the way the NHS is run,' Mr Duncan Smith says. 'Britain is stuck with a 1940s solution to 21st century problems.'...the report, called Alternative Prescriptions,...hints at a possible switch to a social insurance system similar to those used in France, Belgium and Germany.”

*Daily Mail, [link](#)*

## Vote Leave and the Taxpayers' Alliance: background

- 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](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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