ELECTION 2019

Key priorities for the NHS
Forward

The NHS is our most treasured institution, providing care for us all at times of need, free at the point of use. For it to continue to provide world class healthcare for future generations we must protect it from privatisation and prioritise investment in its services and workforce.

The NHS workforce faces many challenges, from recruitment and retention problems due to real terms pay cuts, to pension taxation issues and rota gaps. Healthcare provision itself is threatened by Brexit and the prospect of further privatisation.

The forthcoming election is an opportunity to put our health service first. Our key priorities for a prospective government are outlined in this manifesto. We seek to put the NHS, its staff and patient care squarely back on the agenda.

Dr Rinesh Parmar
Chair, The Doctors Association UK
A Sustainable NHS

NHS expenditure has fallen from 7.6% to less than 7.2% of GDP since 2010, tipping the NHS into crisis. Half of NHS Trusts are in deficit – ‘red is the new black’ and patients are being left to suffer the consequences as the NHS cuts back on care.

**Restore the NHS budget to 7.6% of GDP by increasing funding by >£15 billion over the next three years.**

With even deeper cuts to social care budgets, the most vulnerable in our society find themselves without the care they need in the community, increasing pressure on our struggling hospitals.

**Increase Social Care funding by £7-8 billion over the next 3 years.**

The Lansley reforms have fragmented NHS care, exacerbated the postcode lottery, and led to a disastrous and costly tendering process; whether the failure of hospitals like Hitchingbrooke, or compensation for companies like Virgin, it is patients paying the price.

**Reverse the fragmentation of NHS commissioning, and bring all services back in-house.**
A Valued Workforce

Senior doctors are being forced to go part-time or retire early to avoid a new and crippling ‘pension tax’ This has led to the perverse situation where doctors are having to pay money from their own pocket to work overtime in the NHS. As our most senior clinicians are being forced to reduce their hours, waiting times are spiralling and the system is in crisis. Clearly, this is a no-win situation; doctors are losing, patients are losing, and the NHS is losing.

Abolish the punitive annual allowance and the taper, and work with doctors’ organisations to create a fair solution.

Doctors continue to earn less in real terms each year. Over the last ten years real pay has dropped by 20%, whilst workloads have increased. These factors have contributed to poor morale and a growing exodus of young doctors from specialty training. Meanwhile consultant vacancies are increasing across the country.

Commit to a series of above inflation pay rises to address the sustained real terms cut to doctors’ pay.
A Compassionate Culture

430 healthcare professionals committed suicide in the UK between 2011-2015; female doctors are 4 times more likely to commit suicide; 63% of doctors say they are burnt out at work. Yet, there is no mandatory reporting mechanism for physician suicide, and a toxic top-down blame culture persists.

Help us usher in a compassionate work culture in the NHS; we need to start caring for our nation’s carers.

Support our work to make national monitoring of physician suicides mandatory.

Bawa-Garba was a turning point for the profession; the resolve of doctors to condemn her scapegoating and the blame culture that caused it led to the creation of The Doctor’s Association, and our ongoing campaign, ‘Learn Not Blame’. For the sake of our patients and our staff, it’s time to roll out Learn Not Blame in the NHS.

Formally partner with us to roll out the ‘Learn Not Blame’ campaign across the NHS.

Implement the recommendations of the Williams Review.

Change the Medical Act to remove the power of the GMC to appeal its tribunal’s independent decisions.
A Safe Workplace

Recent high-profile cases, like those of NHS whistle-blowers Dr Chris Day and Dr Edwin Jesudason, demonstrate that the NHS remains an unsafe place to raise concerns. Those who do speak out are often bullied, victimised, and disparaged – they lose their job and their status. Their protections in the employment tribunal and courts are weak, and too often inaccessible.

Launch a parliamentary whistle-blowing review, with a view to reforming The Public Interest Disclosure Act, to better keep our whistle-blowers safe.

We support the recommendations from the GMC commissioned "Fair to refer".

Commit to eliminate unconscious bias and the hostile environment BAME doctors currently face through training and strengthened disciplinary policies.

The incidence of violence, as well as racial and LGBTQ abuse towards members of staff in the NHS has been increasing. NHS staff should feel safe at work, and their employers should ensure their security at all times.

NHS employers must develop robust zero tolerance policies towards abuse of their staff, whether from patients or fellow colleagues.
Protect the NHS from Brexit

EU workers are now leaving the NHS at an increasing rate, whilst fewer EU workers are joining. At a time when we are 10,000 doctors and more than 30,000 nurses short this trend is unsustainable.

Give EU health care professionals and students working and studying in the UK permanent residence status.

As the Operation Yellowhammer report details, there is likely to be disruption in accessing both vital medications and essential isotopes in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

Timely access to medical isotopes and short shelf-life medicines from Europe must be assured in any event, to prevent unnecessary morbidity and mortality. Such plans must be published.

A commitment should be made to maintain membership of Euratom.
A Good Deal for the NHS!

The NHS needs investment and financial stability if it is going to turn a corner; the Government’s own impact assessments reveal that a no-deal Brexit will have a serious deleterious effect on our economy. It is the worst of all options.

Rule out no deal. Any deal that might harm our economy, or disrupt our NHS, should be put back to the people in a second referendum.

NHS budgets are under considerable financial strain. Any corporation seeking to provide NHS services will be seeking a slice of budgets as profit, meaning less money for actual clinical care.

Take the NHS off the table in any trade deal.
A Greener NHS

We support the NHS carbon reduction strategy and the 2014-2020 sustainable development strategy for the NHS, public health and social care.

All NHS organisations and Trusts should produce annual sustainability reports on water consumption, waste production and food waste.

The Sustainable Development Unit reports that procurement was the largest contributor (61%) to the NHS carbon footprint. We want the next generation to inherit not just a sustainable NHS but a healthy environment that that no longer continues to harm the population we serve.

Comm it to the implementation of ethical and sustainable commissioning and procurement across the NHS in England and the devolved nations.