

Reintegrating our NHS? de-marketisation is just a start

Your recent cluster of healthcare articles headlined 'Johnson gambles on radical NHS overhaul' (*Guardian*, 11.7.20) indicates how this government, at last, may publicly acknowledge how damaging and stymying has been the marketisation of our NHS. Our cumbersome and fragmented response to the Covid challenge is, in large part, due to this.

You report on the growing acknowledgement that Lansley's *Health and Social Care Act*, (HSCA, 2012) has been particularly meaninglessly burdensome, alienating and fragmenting for staff and services: a view now voiced by the King's Fund, NHSE's Chief Executive and many Tory MPs.

As a veteran NHS doctor, I know that most of my peers have been warning about the foolishness and unviability of such reforms from well before the HSCA – from the successive neoliberal reforms already gathering twenty years earlier.

Abolishing marketised healthcare is only one part of what needs radical overhaul, however. Equally important is our contemporary NHS culture of 'no-one-knows-anyone-but-just-do-as-you're-told'. GPs and patients no longer know one another as they used to, nor do hospital specialists their junior or ward staff. These are examples of complex and serious problems only partially related to privatisation issues: they need equal acknowledgement and understanding.