

## More Election Promises for the NHS by the Political Parties

In an increasingly bitter battle for voters' hearts over the beloved NHS, the two main parties have unveiled further plans to win the general election this May. After Labour's recent announcement of their plans to require GPs to perform safety checks on the homes of the elderly, the Conservatives responded by saying that if they won the election, they would not only get GPs to carry out Labour's idea of safety checks, but also get GPs to deliver free hot meals during their mandatory twice weekly home visits to all patients over 60 as part of new overall responsibilities as named GPs. They said each meal would be accompanied by a range of condiments, such as English mustard, horseradish sauce, tartar sauce and the nation's favourite, salt and vinegar sachets. Again these would be free to the over 60s.

Labour attacked this plan, saying it was unworkable, advising that the vital 'hot chain' for such meals could not be adequately maintained by GPs. Labour then launched an extension to their previously announced plans, outlining a scheme where GPs would ring every elderly patient on their panels at least once a day for a brief 10 minute tele-health assessment. Those elderly patients who lived alone or self-reported that they were particularly lonely would receive an extended 20 minute assessment. Labour said this would ensure that all physical, psychological and social needs would be met, completely negating the need for any hospital admissions in the future. They appreciated that this would be an intensive scheme, but said that the time and funding required would be freed up from disbanding the Conservatives controversial 'Admission Avoidance' scheme.

The Conservatives responded by calling Labour's plans 'ridiculous blue-sky thinking'. Almost immediately, they launched another initiative, calling on all GPs to embrace their efforts to improve the health of the nation. They promised that any patient feeling the need to do anything remotely unhealthy, like eating a Greggs pasty, picking up a cigarette, or binge watching Netflix could contact their GP for some immediate fairly near-patient highly-directed motivational counselling. They said that GPs would have to offer a special hotline to their surgeries manned at all times by dedicated staff. Eventually, the service would morph into a more national centrally manned telephone service, called NHS LIFE, or 5433 using the keypad.

Labour said such a plan was 'nonsense', and further reiterated their election promise to enable patients to get a GP appointment within 48 hours. They said that, despite the severe shortage of GPs, they would manage this by making such appointments available round the clock using the existing GP workforce working 15-18 hours daily, rather than the rather restrictive 9 to 5 opening hours only on four days of the week currently being offered. Additionally they said that because of this new 24 hour culture, GP surgeries would in effect become society's new 'Community Care Hubs', therefore the CQC would be required to assess new compliance with provision of waiting room hot beverages and warm pastries, convenience retail outlets, crèche facilities and the offering of a wider non-discriminatory selection of waiting room magazines.

Meanwhile the Green Party responded with their own plans, saying they would require GPs to hook themselves up to bespoke NHS developed 'Green Machines' whilst sat at their desks consulting. Any heat generated from hot air expelled during consultations with complex cases, random leg movement, and excessive flatulence from missing lunch would be channelled via heat exchangers and used to heat homes for the elderly. This would reduce the number of deaths every winter caused by inadequate heating.

Dr Maureen Baker, chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners, speaking about the plans, said, "We at the RCGP are heartened that all political parties remain deeply committed to keeping the GP in the centre of any plans for the NHS, and we welcome such changes that will restore General Practice back to its former brightness, completely in keeping with our view that not only is British General Practice the 'Best Job in the World', but the 'Best Job in the Entire Universe, ever'."