

Scottish Labour Conference 2023

Motion

Socialist Health Association Scotland

Tackling the NHS crisis

This conference recognises that NHS Scotland is in crisis. From ambulances queuing outside A&E to long waiting times for treatments and life expectancy declining, patients and the public deserve better. While Covid-19 created additional pressures, many causes were evident before the pandemic. Delayed discharges now account for more beds than Scotland's largest hospital, staff vacancy rates are rocketing, and primary care services are struggling.

Scottish Labour has been at the forefront of reforming our NHS as it has evolved since Labour created it in 1948. After devolution, Scottish Labour ended marketisation and privatisation of many NHS services in the best interests of patients. However, this conference recognises that the current crisis is being used to promote reforms that would undermine the founding principles of the NHS.

This conference, therefore, calls upon the SEC to develop a response that addresses the root causes of the current crisis, including:

- Tackling the underlying public health problems caused by inequality, exacerbated by the cost of living crisis.
- Expanding the in-house capacity of NHS Scotland in hospitals, primary care and dentistry to meet increased demand.
- A National Care Service based on local accountability, which improves working conditions/pay for carers in Scotland, improving the quality of social care and relieving the pressure on hospital capacity.
- Workforce planning and fair pay and conditions to tackle recruitment and retention in health and social care, ending reliance on exorbitant agency costs, locums, staff banks, and the private sector.
- A strategy for rural health care services.

(246 words)