

# 5 things you need to know about the NHS bill

## 1 The bill will cost at least £2 billion

Estimates of the cost of implementing the Health and Social Care Bill range from the government's £1.3 billion to Labour's £3.5 billion, but most independent analysts estimate **at least £2 billion**. The government claims the bill will save money in the long run but even the **Conservative-led parliamentary health committee** says this is unlikely unless standards of care are cut. £1 billion is being spent on **redundancy for managers**, only for many to be rehired as consultants.

## 2 The bill will create more bureaucracy

The NHS bill replaces **three levels of management** (Department of Health, Strategic Health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts) with **seven** (Department of Health, NHS Commissioning Board, Strategic Health Authority clusters, Commissioning Support Organisations, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Clinical Senates, HealthWatch), and creates two unaccountable **super-quangos** (Monitor and the NHS Board).

## 3 Waiting times will grow – unless you go private

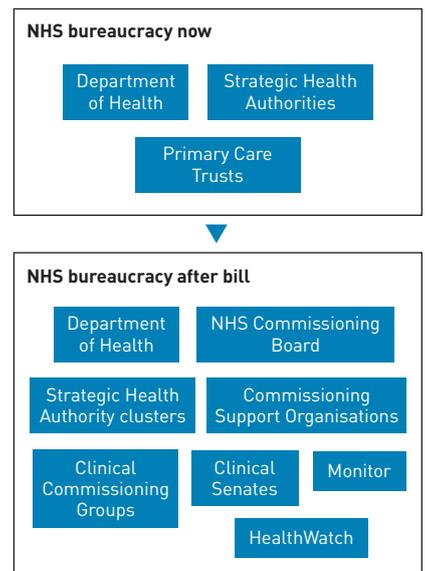
The bill allows hospitals to fill up to **half of their beds** with private patients, and **waters down guarantees** on NHS waiting times. NHS patients will increasingly find themselves at the back of the queue, even for their own local hospital.

## 4 Care will depend on a postcode lottery

The bill will break up the NHS and create a postcode lottery on a scale not seen before. With no national standards, there will be **widespread variation** in the treatments available on the NHS. In some areas, people may have to go private to get services available for free elsewhere. Scotland and Wales, which are not covered by the bill, will continue to provide services **denied to patients in England**.

## 5 Private companies, not GPs, will be in control

The bill says GPs will plan and commission healthcare. But this **complex role** cannot be done on the side while providing the same level of care to patients. We expect pilots to have excellent flying skills – not to design and purchase their own planes. In fact leaked papers show the government expects private companies called **Commissioning Support Organisations** to take over this role. CSOs will decide how care is delivered but there will be no democratic control over them.



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