

Privatisation of NHS contracts worth £15bn since 2015 – new research



The scale of the privatisation of NHS service contracts has been revealed in new research published by GMB, the union for NHS workers.

The research – which was commissioned by GMB from Tussell, a data provider on UK government contracts and spend – found that:



- The value of identified outsourcing contracts awarded to private companies almost doubled from £1.9 billion in 2015 to £3.6 billion in 2018, the most recent full year for which figures are available (an increase of 89 per cent)
- NHS contracts worth £3.6 billion were awarded to private companies in 2018 – an increase of 20 per cent on the year before
- So far in 2019 private companies have won NHS outsourcing contracts worth £3.3 billion

Of the top twenty private providers to the NHS, Care UK Clinical Services and Virgin Care Services have won the most contracts since 2015 (the companies were awarded 17 and 13 contracts respectively).

The new figures will call into question the Conservative Party's recent claim, made in purchased Google advertisements, that "the NHS is not for sale – and it never will be." (*Ad shown below*)

Virgin Care **was widely criticised** after it reportedly sued the NHS in 2016 after it failed to secure an £82 million contract to provide children's health services in Surrey.

The single most valuable contract was won by Sirona Health and Care. The firm, which is constituted as a Community Interest Company, was awarded a £1.09 billion contract to provide adult community health services in areas of the South West for ten years.

The second most valuable contract was a PFI extension awarded last year by St Helens & Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust which was worth half a billion pounds (£500 million).

GMB has long campaigned against outsourcing in the NHS and for the scrapping of the 2012 Health and Social Care Act, which opened up more NHS services to the market.

Academic research has found that the risk of MRSA infection is nearly 50 per cent higher in wards where cleaning services are outsourced.

Rehana Azam, GMB National Secretary, said:

"These shocking figures expose the extent to which our NHS is increasingly falling into private hands.

"Outsourcing is bad news for patients and NHS staff. Time and time again, we have seen private providers fail to deliver while our members' terms and conditions and the NHS national agreement have been undermined.



“ These shocking figures expose the extent to which our NHS is increasingly falling into private hands. Outsourcing is bad news for patients and NHS staff.

Rehana Azam, GMB National Secretary,

“We are clear that it is safer and in the long-run it is better value for services such as care, patient transfers and facilities management to be brought back in house.

“NHS services should be provided in the public interest, not for private profit.

“Urgent action is needed to end outsourcing in the NHS, and we urge NHS workers and everyone who relies on the service to make that case to their local candidates during the election.”

The NHS is Not for Sale | And it Never Will Be

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