

## For treatment “free at the point of delivery” – end prescription charges in all the UK

The government has said, in response to critics of its NHS ‘reforms’, that treatment will remain “free at the point of need”. In fact treatment is not free for some people, even if they are seriously ill\*. Not only are prescription charges still in place, and rising, but some patients with life threatening illnesses such as cancer have to pay for drugs, including chemotherapy (if not given in hospital). Such treatment often involves a cocktail of different drugs - a prescription charge for each one - so the whole treatment can be very expensive.

A recent report by the Citizens Advice Bureau estimated that as many as 800,000 people have not been getting the drugs prescribed to them because they cannot afford all of them. This includes people with cancer, asthma and HIV, which are not on the list of exemptions from charges (a list which dates from 1968).

In Wales and Scotland the administrations there have decided to end prescription charges because they discriminate against many poor people who do not qualify for free treatment.

We believe that it is unjust for patients in England and Northern Ireland to have to pay, when prescription charges are being phased out in Wales and Scotland. Moreover, so long as they remain in place then it cannot be said that treatment is “free at the point of delivery”. We are therefore calling on the government to end prescription charges in all of the UK.

\* They are only automatically free for children and people over 60.

### Initial Signatures:

Kevin Brandstatter, GMB Organiser

Dave Cox, Secretary Swindon RMT

Bob Cretchley, Sec Swindon UNISON

Sue Francis, PCS rep NERC

Peter Fisher, President NHS Consultants Association

Adriano Gentilcore, GMB rep Great Western Hospital

Michelle Gordon, GMB Organiser

Dr Julian Tudor Hart, Retired GP and author

Andy Harrison, UNITE shop steward

Brian Jones, UNISON rep Capita

Hugh Kirkbride, UNITE Regional Organiser

Bridget Lucas, Nurse Swindon PCT

John McDonnell, Labour MP Hayes & Harlington

Andy Newman, Wiltshire & Swindon GMB

John Newman, Wroughton Parish Councillor

Andy Parsons, PCS rep NERC

Allyson Pollock, Head of the Centre for International Public Health Policy, Edinburgh University

Andy Prendergast, GMB Organiser

Adrian Robinson, UNISON rep Swindon BC

Jean Saunders, ex-NHS Orthodontist

Peter Smith, Secretary Swindon NUT

Brian Tildesley, Sec UNITE Swindon General Branch

Joe Tray, Secretary Wiltshire FBU

Jerry Waylen, UNITE rep Honda

Gary Weston, Chair Swindon TUC

Martin Wicks, Secretary Swindon TUC

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Paula Yeo, Sec Newbury & Swindon USDAW

**Add your Name overleaf**

