

Where do the Parties stand on Health?

Labour

[>> Link](#)

Labour promises to increase NHS funding in line with inflation to March 2013, and to reduce management costs by 30 per cent over four years.

Targets would be phased out and replaced by "patient rights".

Patients would be given a legal right to hospital treatment within 18 weeks of referral by a GP, or within two weeks in cases of suspected cancer. The right to know test results for cancer within one week would be phased in from 2011-12. GP boundaries would be scrapped so that patients could register with a GP near where they work. Within five years patients would have the right to see a GP from their practice in the evening or at weekends. People aged 40 to 74 would have a right to a health check every five years by 2012-13. Hospital car parking charges would be scrapped for in-patients over three years



Conservative

[>> Link](#)

NHS funding would be "protected in real terms", ie rise in line with inflation.

All "politically motivated" targets would be scrapped and replaced by a focus on outcomes, including survival rates for cancer, stroke and heart disease as well as patients' satisfaction levels. The NHS would be "opened up" to private and voluntary providers to stimulate competition, backed by a payment-by-results

system, similar to the existing system. Mixed-sex wards would be phased out "as resources allow", financial penalties would be imposed on hospitals where patients contract "avoidable" infections, and the "forced closure of A&E wards" would be stopped. The Department of Health would be renamed the Department of Public Health, with a new focus on the "prevention of disease rather than just its cure", and the NHS would have an independent board.

Lib Dems

[>> Link](#)

Central targets would be scrapped and replaced by "entitlement to treatment."

Patients not treated on time would be offered alternative treatment by a private provider. Different waiting-time guarantees would be set for different conditions in place of the existing blanket 18-week target. Mental health services would be included. Primary Care Trusts, which run GP services, would be replaced by elected local health boards to give people a say in how NHS cash is spent. Strategic Health Authorities would be abolished to cut bureaucracy and waste. Spending on quangos would be cut by one-fifth and the pay of senior managers would be capped at the level of the Prime Minister's salary. The National Programme for IT would be scrapped, and the "choose and book" scheme for hospital appointments would be scaled back