**“It’s time to care about our NHS” - Labour’s plan for a world-class 21st Century health and care service**

**Ed Miliband today announces that the next Labour government will create a £2.5 billion a year NHS Time to Care Fund as part of his plan to save and transform our health service.**

**In his speech to the Labour Party Conference, he will say the first priority for the fund will be to support 20,000 more nurses, 8,000 more GPs, 5,000 more careworkers and 3,000 more midwives.**

This will address a growing problem which has meant one in four people not getting a GP appointment within a week, more than half of nurses saying their wards are dangerously understaffed, and community care services which can often prevent people from needing expensive hospital treatment in crisis.

This fund will give doctors and nurses the time to care properly for patients, as well as beginning to transform services in communities and at home so our NHS can meet the challenges of the 21st Century at a time of unprecedented financial pressure.

The NHS Time to Care Fund will help ensure safe levels of staffing in hospitals - together with the access to family doctors and community services needed to keep us healthy and ease the pressure on NHS frontline services.

This is a key part of Labour’s plan for a world-class, 21st Century NHS that provides better access to primary care, with high-quality information, advice, tests and screening; helps end the scandal of the neglect of older and vulnerable people, and ensures joined-up, preventative care outside hospital to avoid unnecessary admissions.

Crucially these investments will not only provide better care but help save hundreds of millions of pounds every year to ease the pressure on hospital services and help make our NHS sustainable for the future

Alongside this, Labour’s plan for our health service will enshrine a powerful new set of rights for patients in the NHS Constitution to address the 21st Century challenges that come from an ageing population, more people living with chronic conditions, the rise of mental health, and a higher premium on preventing illness.

The Time to Care Fund will not be paid for by raising taxes on everyday working people who are struggling with the cost of living crisis.

Instead, Labour believes that the very wealthiest in society, as well as those who not always played their full part, or firms who have contributed to the pressure on the NHS can do a bit more to safeguard the future of our health service.

So the money will be raised by asking those living in houses worth over £2m to pay more tax, a co-ordinated crackdown against tax avoidance, and asking the tobacco companies to contribute towards the costs they impose on the NHS.

**Mr Miliband is expected to say:**

“We need to make sure there is a NHS there when we need it. Our plan for Britain’s future means we will create a world-class 21st century health and care service because a hospital is only as good as the services in the community.

“If people can’t get to see their GP, if they can’t get the care they need at home, they end up in hospital when that could have been avoided, that’s bad for them, and it costs billions of pounds.

“Those services are creaking. One in four people wait a week or more for a GP appointment. We’ve seen the scandal of care visits restricted to just 15 minutes for the elderly.

“And we know there are huge future pressures facing the NHS. We are going to have to transform the way the NHS works in the years ahead.

“Conference, it is time to care about our NHS. So that doctors, nurses, care workers, midwives able to spend proper time with us -  not to be rushed off their feet.

“The next Labour government will set aside funding so we can have 3,000 more midwives, 5,000 more homecare workers, 8,000 more GPs and 20,000 more nurses in our NHS.

“An NHS with time to care - because there has never a more important time to care about our NHS.

“In total, there will be £2.5 billion in an NHS Time to Care Fund to start transforming services for the future. Tomorrow, Andy Burnham will present our plan for a truly integrated service, for physical health, mental health and care for the elderly.

“And we won’t borrow a penny to do it. And we won’t do it by raising taxes on everyday working people.

“We will raise £1 billion from tax avoidance, including by closing the tax loop-holes for the hedge funds. We will use the proceeds from a tax on houses worth over £2 million. And we will raise revenue from the tobacco companies, who make soaring profits on the back of ill health.

“Doing it together, means everyone playing their part to help fund our NHS. The stakes are incredibly high in this election. But nowhere more than on the NHS.

“The NHS is sliding backwards under this government. They are privatising and fragmenting it. Just think what it would look like after five more years of this government. It is not safe in their hands.

“We built the NHS. We saved the NHS. We will repeal their Health and Social Care Bill and we will transform the NHS for the future”

**NHS TIME TO CARE FUND – HOW IT PAID FOR:**

The next Labour government will raise £2.5bn a year for our NHS Time to Care Fund, by making choices based on our values – ensuring that hedge funds and other tax avoiders play by the rules, and asking those at the top to pay more.

Labour will raise £1.1 billion by clamping down on **tax avoidance** with measures to:

* Stop hedge funds avoiding hundreds of millions in tax on shares, so that they pay the same amount as individual investors and pension funds;
* Close the ‘Eurobonds’ loophole which is being exploited by some large firms to move profits out of the UK and avoid Corporation Tax;
* Prevent so-called ‘Umbrella Companies’ being used to avoid tax and National Insurance by exploiting expenses rules.

Labour will introduce a **Mansion Tax** to raise £1.2 billion a year on high-value properties over £2m. Under our plan:

* The £2m threshold will rise in line with property prices, to stop more properties being drawn into the tax;
* There will be protections in place for people who do not have a high income but happen to live in an expensive property;
* The tax will be progressive so that properties worth tens of millions of pounds make a significantly bigger contribution to those houses just above the limit.

Labour will introduce **fees for tobacco firms**, based on those introduced by President Obama in 2009, so that tobacco firms make a larger contribution towards the costs of tackling tobacco-related illness.

As in the US, the fee for individual firms will be based on their market share. We will raise at least £150 million through this levy.

**NHS TIME TO CARE FUND – NEW STAFF:**

Around two-thirds of the revenue raised for this fund will underpin additional staff by 2020 who can help save and transform our NHS.

* **20,000 more nurses**, getting the basics right with safe staffing in hospitals, and providing personalised care outside hospital to families with the greatest needs. We will work with the Royal College of Nurses on a plan to fill the thousands of extra vacancies that have opened up since 2010, fund the extra nursing posts that will be needed to meet increasing demand over the next five years.
* **8,000 more GPs**, to help people stay healthy outside hospital and to help tackle the GP access problems faced by hundreds of thousands of families every week. The Government is failing to deliver on its promise to get the extra GPs needed to keep up population growth. Labour is already working with the Royal College of GPs on plans to put this right and the Time to Care Fund will allow us to also fund the thousands of additional posts needed to deliver a step-change in access to primary care
* **5,000 new homecare workers** to work in integrated care teams – the beginning of a shift towards an NHS focussed on providing joined-up support to help people to stay in their home.
* **3,000 more midwives,** to provide safe, one-to-one care to women in labour.

ENDS

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