



On the march at Banners Held High Wakefield May '18 & '19

NEWSLETTER 20th May 2020

LEEDS KONP

met via Zoom on Wed. 13th May. Dawn couldn't join us but we had John, Nick, Helen, Mike, Owen, Kevin, Gay, Nicola and Gilda. It is great to have an opportunity to share thoughts and inch forward in campaigning! Do join us. Our next meeting on **Wed 27th May 6.30** will be particularly interesting as we are going to focus most of the meeting on Social Care, looking at the disasters that have been unravelling in care homes in particular and immediate and long term demands. Stacey Booth from GMB will be speaking, along with Jeremy Pritlove who has done work with Unison on bringing home care back into the public sector. If you are on our e mail circulation you should receive joining instructions for Zoom a few days before the meeting. If not contact leedskonp@yahoo.co.uk and I will send them.

NEWS, VIEWS AND RESISTANCE

No return to work until it is safe!

There has been an outcry from trade unions and other bodies about Johnson's sudden insistence that people get back to work and schools take in significant numbers of pupils including 4-6 year olds from June 1st.

The National Education Union has mobilised huge support for postponing opening schools and set out 5 pre-requisites:

- ❖ Much lower numbers of Covid-19 cases
- ❖ Extensive testing and tracing protocols in place
- ❖ A national plan with parameters for social distancing and mixing in school plus PPE
- ❖ Protocols to be put in place to test a whole school or college when a case occurs and for isolation to be strictly followed
- ❖ Protection for vulnerable staff and children

Almost 400,000 people have signed a petition for parents to be given the right to decide not to send their children back to school.

Both Doctors in Unite and the British Medical Association (BMA) have backed delaying opening schools. The Independent SAGE group of scientists suggest that delaying school opening by just 2 weeks until mid June would cut the risk of transmission of the virus via schools by half.

Calderdale, Liverpool, Bury and Hartlepool Councils have refused to comply with 1st June and many other Councils have expressed concern. Leeds "People Not for Profit Covid 19 Action Group", <https://www.facebook.com/groups/236870664035284/permalink/254797672242583/>: in which KONP is represented, has been plastering local areas with posters and petitioning Leeds Council. They have not declared against 1st June but have issued a statement supporting school by school risk assessments and individual decisions re when it is safe enough for them to take in more children.

It's not just schools that are the worry.

By the beginning of May, 28 bus drivers had died of Covid in London. A recent Office for National Statistics (ONS) report suggested that security guards, transport workers, bus and taxi drivers, retail and social care workers are disproportionately represented in deaths from Covid. Unfortunately Hancock has twisted this to suggest health workers have not been so badly hit which is handy for minimising failures re PPE. John cautioned that figs are not very reliable because occupation data (given when a death is registered) for 40% of women and 20% of men was not recorded.

The Independent Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies has also published a long list of recommendations about what needs to happen to

enable the easing of lockdown, many of which are not yet in place.

<http://www.independentsage.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/05/The-Independent-SAGE-Report.pdf>



A number of trade unions have also reminded members that existing legislation supports them refusing to work in unsafe conditions.

Risk to BAME groups

There is a call for special consideration to be given to the safety of workers from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (BAME) returning to work as they have died in disproportionately high numbers from Covid 19.

Diane Abbott and Chand Nagpaul, chair of the British Medical Association council, have called for an enquiry into BAME deaths

What's happening with 'Test and Trace'?

Allyson Pollock and many others have been vociferous in criticising the abandonment of testing and tracing early in March contrary to World Health Organisation (WHO) advice. Independent SAGE has again emphasised the need to Test, Track, Isolate, Support, Integrate! Testing has been inadequate and chaotic, recruitment of contact tracers slow, and concern about the Govt. sucking up data from the proposed app being trialled on the Isle of Wight considerable. All developments have been hampered by a top down, fragmented approach with services farmed out to the private sector. Pollock said that if you have a fire in Blackpool you don't call out the fire brigade in Westminster!

A group of retired GPs in Sheffield have set up a local contact tracing pilot which has combined daily support to people who have Covid with careful contact tracing. 999 Call for the NHS in Kirklees and Calderdale have been pushing this locally and John has written to Leeds Public Health,

CCG and Health and Wellbeing Board asking if they will follow suit.

Social care or social neglect?

A tragedy has been unfolding in Care Homes with the official death toll from the virus now more than 11,600 (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-52721737>) and the real numbers likely to be much higher. Homes were not protected at the beginning of the outbreak when hospitals rushed to discharge untested patients back to homes to clear space and are still scrabbling to get the PPE, testing and medical back up they need. There is also concern that older people needing treatment are being kept out of hospitals. Yet Hancock has the barefaced gall to talk about "the protective ring that we have cast round all our care homes"! In Leeds the local health and care system has been making an effort to assist homes but by the beginning of May the CQC were reporting 110 deaths in Leeds Care homes.

In terms of overall deaths from Covid, Leeds has had 68 deaths per 100,000 putting us somewhere in the middle of the ghastly league table which has Hull, 24, Bristol 43, Manchester 55, Birmingham 88 Liverpool 98 and Sunderland 103. There is massive concern about deaths from other causes escalating as people with potential life threatening cancers etc. have not received treatment.

Drop all NHS charges

We now have an open letter in circulation calling for MPs, Councillors, LTHT, trade unions and other organisations to do all they can to pursue dropping the NHS surcharge for overseas staff and charging migrants and people of undocumented status for health care. The letter has been signed by our chair and national co-chair of KONP, Dr John Puntis, Dr Martin Schweiger, Retired Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, Jane Aitchison President of Leeds TUC and Wilson Tweed (Unite) who is staff side chair at Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust. Please send to your MP or councillor and ask Trade union, political party branches and community orgs to endorse. The NHS charges letter has been circulated to our supporters email list. Just email leedskonp@yahoo.co.uk if you would like a copy.

Covid Bonanza for private firms

The Government has given over £1bn worth of contracts to private firms of their choosing mostly bypassing tendering. These include accountancy firms Deloitte, PriceWaterhouse Coopers and Ernst and Young.

Cat Hobbs from “We Own It” wrote in the Guardian 7th May that Matt Hancock has put Serco in charge of the phone lines for contact tracing, a vital part of the government’s public health strategy. This is a company that mismanaged data at a GP surgery, and failed to train staff properly for a breast cancer hotline service. Along with G4S, it claimed money from the government for tracking prisoners who were later found to be dead!

G4S – which is helping out with the new testing centres as well as security for Nightingale hospitals totally failed to provide security for the Olympics. Capita who wrongly archived 148,000 patient medical records has been given a contract to help the NHS recruit returning nurses and doctors.

Matt Hancock has chosen Deloitte, one of the “big four” accountancy giants, to advise on PPE nationally, as well as manage logistics for testing centres and new labs for processing samples. This is one of the consultancies that has advised the NHS on how to cut and privatise itself for years. Research shows that private sector management consultants not only fail to improve efficiency in our NHS, they actually make things worse.

Finally, in the realm of tech, the US data mining group Palantir, headed by a Silicon Valley billionaire, is gathering information from NHS trusts on PPE; and Amazon is delivering testing kits, despite being criticised by its own workers for its response to Covid-19.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/may/07/outsourcing-coronavirus-crisis-business-failed-nhs-staff>

A £234 million contract was awarded to French owned firm Edenred to administer a voucher scheme to feed pupils who normally get free school meals. Other big contracts have been awarded without competitive tenders to foreign multinationals, such as the US–owned Brake Brothers and the South African-run BFS Group, both of which have been given contracts worth a combined £208m by the environment department to deliver food

boxes to vulnerable people. Randox, a healthcare firm which employs the Conservative MP Owen Paterson as a paid consultant, had been given a £133m contract by the health department to produce Covid-19 testing kits.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/15/firms-given-1bn-of-state-contracts-without-tender-in-covid-19-crisis>

Leeds KONP alert but roaming again!

We have produced a new banner trying to move on from thanks to the sunny uplands!



Here’s one outside Roundhay Park but we hope to get lots more up round Leeds. Email leeds konp below if you would like put one up near you.

Upcoming events

❖ Monday 25th May Leeds People Not Profit mtg

ONLY REOPEN SCHOOLS WHEN IT'S SAFE!	MONDAY 25.05.20
ALL WELCOME! PLEASE SHARE!	ZOOM Meeting Details:
	Monday 25.06.20 6PM
	Meeting Link: https://bit.ly/2Xhr29N
	Meeting ID: 816 1048 7286
	Password: 066474
<small>A Leeds People Before Profit COVID 19 Action Group. PUBLIC MEETING to discuss the position of 'no going back to schools until it's safe'.</small>	<small>Speakers include: Richard Burgon, Labour MP, Daniel Kebede, Senior VP NEU, Piers Roberts, Parent who's child is recovering from Kawasaki disease and is chaired by Jane Alchison, Leeds TUC.</small>

❖ Wed 27th May 6.30pm: Social Care Disaster and Opportunity. Leeds KONP discussion with Stacey Booth GMB, Jeremy Pritlove, Hospital Alert, Unison et al.

❖ Friday 29th May 4 - 5.30 Yorkshire Health Campaigns Together network meeting

❖ Tues 2nd June 7 – 8.30 Fatal Inequalities, national Zoom and facebook event from KONP’s Staff Voices group with Gary Younge, Dame Donna Kinnair, RCN, Dr. Sonia Adesara, KONP. https://www.facebook.com/events/264529244748765/?active_tab=about

e mail : leedskonp@yahoo.co.uk

facebook: [Keep Our NHS Public Leeds](https://www.facebook.com/leedskeepournhspublic), T. 07419 295754

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