

The Plot against the NHS

Colin Leys and Stewart Player

What will Mr Lansley's new health care market mean for patients? Is there really no alternative? Do the coalition government's plans for the NHS really mean a big change of policy? Or do they just bring into the open what New Labour was already doing? This book shows what has really been going on:

The plot: For ten years a 'policy community' around the Department of Health has schemed to replace the NHS. They want a US-style health-care market coming in by the back door. Why tell us, or parliament?

The template: Listen to Kaiser Permanente - the US health insurance company. Expand its influence in the Department of Health. Make the American market the model.

The players: the insiders: the 'policy community', corporate heavies, management consultants, thinktankers, freelancers and hired hands, including some academics and doctors. They can use the 'revolving door': company envoys can get jobs in the Department of Health, and ex-ministers and officials can get well-paid jobs in the private sector.

How? Make more openings for the private sector at every stage of 'reform'. Start 'pilot schemes' but don't evaluate them, have them 'rolled out' across the country. Buy off critics, or (if that fails) ridicule them.

Terrorise the NHS workforce, divide and rule. Spin, Spin, SPIN

Who pays? Patients and doctors tell us: 'reforms' are driving up costs, services are being cut, and quality is falling – unless you can pay to go private. This is the shape of things to come.

Who profits? the private health industry takes over NHS hospitals, runs GPs practices: their interest, profit, will subordinate the public interest.

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