



Worries over privatisation

UNISON members are calling on the Government to abandon their plans to privatise parts of the NHS, as concerns are growing about the impact of the changes on patients and staff.

Private firms are increasingly being given the option to take over the running of certain NHS services - such as the recently privatised logistics

There are concerns that the patient will suffer

service as well as aspect of clinical care including some hip and eye operations.

Councillor John Campbell, branch secretary of Unison at the Northern General Hospital said: "Unison is working with the other NHS Unions and fighting the reform agenda for the NHS.

"We are concerned that changes will have a detrimental effect on patients."

By Kate Lahive

He fears that money will be drained from the NHS with private medical companies dealing with the simple cases, while NHS hospitals are left to tackle complex cases which cost more to treat.

The transfer of resources will leave the NHS worse off, it is claimed.

There are concerns that patients will suffer.

More people may have to travel away from their local hospital for care, if it decides to discontinue some of its routine services which could be offered instead in another district hospital.

The elderly and poorer people in society are thought most likely to be disadvantaged, because of the difficulties of travelling further afield.

For NHS staff too it is a worrying time.

So far in South Yorkshire there have not been any job losses as a result of cost savings being made in the NHS. Some posts have been frozen but there have not been redundancies.

But as jobs have been lost elsewhere in the country, there are concerns the trend could be repeated here.

"Because of what is happening elsewhere it could happen here and people are very worried about their jobs," warned Mr Campbell.

He is encouraging health workers to join a union, as a way of expressing their concerns and of joining together with thousands of members to fight against the trend towards privatisation.

A lobby is to be staged in London on November 1, where MPs will be made aware of the growing anger over health reforms.

And on November 11 a regional lobby is to be held in Leeds. Meetings are also to be held in Sheffield to draw attention to the cause.

Sue Highton, branch secretary of Sheffield Community Health says she cannot stress enough how important it is for health workers to join a trade union.

"It is important to join a trade union to protect jobs and services," she said.

She is urged members of the public to show their support by joining in the lobbies.

She believes that the lobbies are essential in getting across to MPs the message that change is needed.



Concerns: John Campbell and Sue Highton

If you're slimming in secret, lying about your dress size, and unable to stick to a diet for more than a couple of days, you're not alone. According to a new survey by Nimble bread to celebrate its 50th anniversary, this is the average experience of half of British women.

Around 39 percent of those surveyed said they avoided fats and preferred to lose weight through a healthy, balanced diet. Even so, 21 percent believed they'd be dieting until their 80s.

Nutritionist Dr Carrie Ruxton, who has surveyed 50 years of dieting, says it's no wonder that women shy away from revealing their diet habits.

"The word 'diet' these days has negative connotations - it immediately makes us feel set apart and different, and most importantly it raises other people's expectations of us.

"Once you tell people you're on a diet they expect you to look different within a week or a month. If that doesn't happen not only does the person feel a failure inside but they also feel publicly judged on the outside."

Many women also have unrealistic expectations of what they can achieve - vainly hoping to emulate superthin models and celebrities like Kate Moss and Victoria Beckham.

"It has got progressively harder for women," Ruxton says. "In the '50s the hourglass figure was coveted and that was more achievable by wearing corsets and flattering clothes. But nowadays the image is so far off the mark that ordinary women can't come anywhere near it."

1950s: Early Days

Marilyn Monroe thrilled America by being photographed jogging. Dieting became popular in post-war America among men as a

50 years of slimming



Kate Moss

rebellion against traditional masculine behaviour.

Ruxton says: "Low calorie sweeteners can help weight loss but only if we avoid counterbalancing them with high calorie treats. 'Lite' products, such as Nimble, help consumers cut calories without sacrificing taste and play a useful role in weight management diets."

1960s: Twiggy Fever

Supermodel Twiggy launched a thousand diets as women struggled to emulate her figure. Group therapy dieting began - with the founding of Weight Watchers and Slimming World, and the first diet pills launched in America.

Ruxton says: "Diet pills can give a boost to a diet but don't change the underlying reasons for weight gain, namely eating too much and exercising too little. They need to be part of a long-term lifestyle programme. Herbal pills should be backed up by evidence."

1970s: Extremes

Dr Atkins wrote the controversial book, Diet Revolution, that put potatoes and rice on a par with chocolate eclairs. The

Last Chance Diet by Dr Robert Linn introduced the idea of extreme dieting and liquid diets emerged spawning products such as SlimFast.

Ruxton says: "Any extreme or faddy programmes, whether re-lating to food or exercise, can't be maintained long-term and could be harmful. Very low calorie diets strip the body of nutrients and muscle mass, leading to rebound weight gain once normal eating resumes. Better aim for an eating plan that cuts around 500 calories from your usual diet."

1980s: Lets get physical

UK gyms became a growing trend. Aerobics and dance routines became mainstream exercise and the 'Cabbage Soup' diet became popular with women as they attempted to fit into fashionable leggings.

Ruxton says: "Dieting is really about general health, not weight. Daily exercise fights fat and preserves muscle tone, leading to a leaner, more attractive body.

"Experts recommend 30-60 minutes of vigorous activity each day which can include walking, sport, housework or gardening."

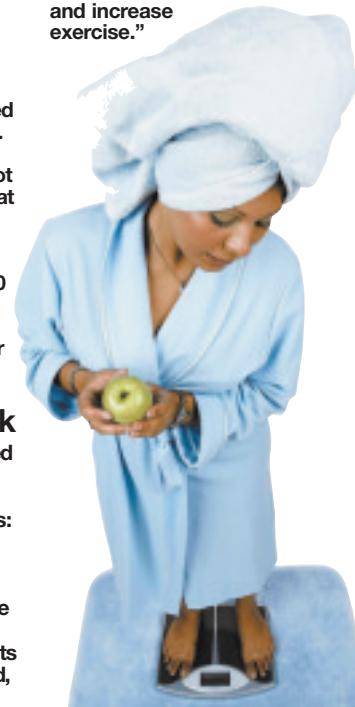
1990s: Carb Attack

The super-waif look - epitomised by Kate Moss - becomes popular as the Atkins and GI diets gain ground. Ruxton says: "Low carb diets work for a short time because overall food intake is restricted. However, long-term, they are no better than a healthy, balanced diet that contains lots of starchy foods such as bread, potatoes, rice and pasta."

2000s: Super Size Me

More than 50 percent of adults have a weight problem - media reports that there are more obese people than starving people - yet magazines are full of lollipop-thin celebrities such as Victoria Beckham whose look spawns the term 'thinspiration'.

Ruxton says: "Harsh diets that rant on about giving up all the things we enjoy - treats like an occasional drink, sweet snack - are doomed to failure. Instead we should aim to limit ourselves to just one treat a day, up our intake of fruit and vegetables, cut down fats and increase exercise."



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