

Let's cut the crap, #NHS organisations can't go bankrupt...

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As [Channel 4 reports this morning](#):

The House of Commons public accounts committee has accused the Department of Health of "inventing rules and processes on the hoof" to deal with hospital trusts in financial difficulty

Ministers were unable to provide the committee with reassurance that financial problems will not impact on the quality of or access to care provided by troubled trusts, at a time when the service is struggling to find £20bn of cuts.

The report claims that while NHS bodies reported a surplus of £2.1bn in 2011-12, the healthy financial picture masks a "significant minority" of bodies which are in difficulties.

Ten NHS trusts, 21 foundation trusts and three primary care trusts have reported a combined deficit of £356m, £115m of which was accounted for by two London trusts.

I think this is an occasion when cutting the crap is essential, if you'll excuse my use of the vernacular. The NHS is a branch of government: so too are all HNS organisations such as PCTs and Foundation trusts. As such these bodies cannot go bankrupt as such; that would be to say the government itself is bankrupt and it is not and nor is there any prospect of it being so. The only thing that is happening is that the Department of Health is deciding, for its own reasons, not to fund demand for NHS services in some areas, and to punish the populations of those areas for accounting and funding issues arising, largely as a result of the application of completely artificial rules that have no bearing on real on the ground issues.

To put it another way: there is no funding crisis in the NHS; there is just a problem of the Department of Health's creation to suit its own political agenda. And that's something very different indeed. Channel 4 confirm this. As they note:

Commenting on the findings, Health Minister Lord Howe has revealed that the NHS will not "endlessly" support trusts with "historic financial problems".

That, I think, is called reckless disregard for the obligations of government by pretending they are the creation of someone else, when they're not.

And that is the NHS funding crisis for you in a nutshell.