

The NHS could be and should be, well funded so that it ...

Published: January 13, 2026, 1:47 am

The NHS is under threat today, precisely because it is failing to deliver what the people of this country expect of it.

A report [in the Guardian](#) this morning says:

Just 24% of people across England, Scotland and Wales – the fewest on record – are satisfied with the [NHS], according to the latest British Social Attitudes research.

Satisfaction has plummeted by 29% since before Covid-19 emerged in early 2020 and by an enormous 46% from the highest-ever 70% recorded in 2010, when the Conservatives took power. It fell five points alone from 29% in 2022 to the 24% seen last year.

I am not surprised. Nor, I suspect, will any other long-term NHS observer be so. This is the inevitable outcome of Tory policy on the NHS.

That policy was predicted many years ago by Naom Chomsky, [who said](#):

There is a standard technique of privatization, namely defund what you want to privatize. [F]irst thing to do is defund them, then they don't work and people get angry and [then] they want a change.

The Tories have now defunded the NHS sufficiently to leave it in a state of such chaos that it does not work for too many people, meaning that they are angry with it and are open to change. Bizarrely, the Tories have laid the groundwork for the NHS privatisation that Labour's Wes Streeting seems so desperate to deliver.

The important point to remember is that none of this was an accident. All of it was deliberate. All of it was policy. [I explored these issues back in 2018](#). I think that very little has changed since. As I said then:

The NHS need not be under threat. The NHS could be and should be, well funded. It could be and should be the basis on which opportunity for new generations in need in

this country could be built. But that requires a new generation of economists, politicians, healthcare professionals and others to believe, as some did in 1948, that they can make a more effective difference in people's lives through the provision of state-provided healthcare than they could by promoting a market-based system. Those who believed that in 1948 were right. The current threat to the NHS suggests that their vision is at risk. That vision of universal care for people who are, whatever their economic situation, considered to be of equal value, needs to be restored. Nothing else will tackle the threat to the NHS.

The profoundly worrying thing is that this does not appear to be a vision that Labour shares.