

Funding the Future

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Wes Streeting, Labour's health minister, whose remit only effectively extends to England, said last night that the NHS was full of brilliant people who were set up to fail.

He used this claim to justify the abolition of NHS England, which abolition will, no doubt, be incredibly costly. The costs of disruption will mean not a penny is likely to be saved during this parliament, I am sure. The legislation cannot even be passed for at least two years, apparently.

Importantly, there is no vision on health in this. All we have here is a management reorganisation at the very centre of the NHS as far as England is concerned. The impact will be as remote from the hospital corridors where the massive failure of this government is apparent. It is as if this government is continuing the plan that the NHS should fail.

My suggestion is that this is exactly what Streeting wants for the NHS. His plan for the NHS was hidden in plain sight in the words he used yesterday.

Streeting says his plan is to cut central admin and devolve responsibility. But, why is he so keen on that? I suggest that is because what this permits is privatisation. After all, why else has Streeting cleared out the leadership of NHS England? Could it be he had to do so to remove those who would stand up for a state NHS, when what Streeting, Starmer and Reeves want more than anything else is to sell it off?

In my opinion, nothing else can explain this decision to close NHS England.

The Tories are delighted at what Starmer and Streeting are doing. That's hardly surprising, but Streeting taunted them about it in the Commons yesterday, asking what role there was left for the Tories when Labour was shrinking the size of the state, reducing bureaucracy, investing in defence and cutting immigration?

My question is what is the role for Labour now that it is so very obviously what the Tory party was until very recently, but more so?

The obvious follow-up is, where in that case is the party that becomes Labour, as was?

Is there no ambition left?