

## Meet the new candidates

Nominations for General Election candidates closed this week, and the SNP has reselected all sitting SNP MPs – [the hardest working politicians at Westminster](#).

We've also selected five brand new candidates to help protect Scotland from the dangers of an unopposed Tory government at Westminster.

Meet your new SNP candidates.

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## I've told Britain's property developers: if you won't build houses, the Lib Dems will

The Conservative government has given developers a carte blanche to play the property market at the expense of our citizens. And now the country's in crisis.

Not enough homes. Properties sitting empty. Exorbitant prices. The market is closed and exclusive: a fat cats' game. That's not good for people and it's not good for business.

Today the Lib Dems are laying down the law to developers: **unless you build the homes that Britain needs, we will.**

We're tired of the commercially unsound and short-sighted greed of developers, who buy up local authority land and sit on it until it appreciates. We're tired of absent foreign investors, who's attractive up-front cash is a false economy – contributing nothing to the improvement of the surrounding public realm.

**The Lib Dems are taking decisive action on the housing crisis.**

As a modern, pro-business party, we think commercial sense and social justice go hand in hand. That's why we've put a progressive housing package at the heart of our new manifesto. It will include: building 300,000 homes a year by the end of the next parliament and giving local councils the power to charge absentee landlords up to 200% council tax on empty homes.

### **Why prioritise housing?**

Making sure that the housing market is both profitable and socially beneficial is just pure good sense. But I also have personal reasons for

standing behind this issue. As a teenager, I was inspired to get into politics by watching Cathy Come Home – a heartbreaking film about a couple who were made homeless – and I joined the housing charity Shelter as a result.

As an MP, I've seen first-hand the misery caused not having a proper home. For many people in the next generation, it is virtually impossible to get on the housing ladder. I think they deserve a helping hand.

If you want a government who will fight for everyone's basic human need for shelter, who has the commercial clout to unpack the property monopolies which hold the market in a vice, then add your name here and say you're voting to change Britain's future on Thursday 8th June:

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## Labour calls for action over NHS cyber-attack

Jonathan

Ashworth, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, has today written to Jeremy Hunt condemning "the cyber criminals whose flagrant disregard for our health service has placed patient wellbeing at risk".

Jonathan

Ashworth said:

"The

incident highlights the risk to data security within our modern health service

and reinforces the need for cyber security to be at the heart of government planning.

"As

Secretary of State, I urge you to publicly outline the immediate steps you'll be taking to significantly improve cyber security in our NHS. The public has a

right to know exactly what the Government will do to ensure that such an attack is never repeated again."

The

letter from Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, calls on the Government to set out:

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Why

NHS organisations failed to act on a critical note from Microsoft two months ago?

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What additional resources are being given to the NHS to bring the situation under control as soon as possible?

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What arrangements are currently in place to protect our NHS, and its sensitive data, against cyber-attacks?

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Whether the Government will launch a full, independent inquiry into the events of yesterday?

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Reassurance for patients that no patient data has been accessed or compromised in yesterday's attack?

**Ends**

**Notes  
to editors:**

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**Please see below for full text of the letter:**

Dear  
Secretary of State,

I am writing to ask for urgent clarification regarding yesterday's major ransomware attack on our NHS. I hope you'll join me in condemning the actions of the cyber criminals whose flagrant disregard for our health service has placed patient wellbeing at risk.

As you know, the attack has had a serious impact on services, with some hospitals diverting emergency ambulances and cancelling elective operations. A large range of IT services have been affected, including pathology test results, x-ray imaging systems, phone and bleep systems, and patient administration systems.

In total more than a third of NHS Trusts have been impacted, and NHS England has consequently declared a Major Incident. This is terrible news and a real

worry  
for vulnerable patients and our hardworking staff.

The  
incident highlights the risk to data security within our modern health  
service  
and reinforces the need for cyber security to be at the heart of government  
planning.

As  
Secretary of State, I therefore urge you to publicly outline the immediate  
steps you'll be taking to significantly improve cyber security in our NHS.  
The  
public has a right to know exactly what the Government will do to ensure that  
such an attack is never repeated again.

However,  
this is not the first time NHS Trusts have been attacked. In February,  
Freedom  
of Information Requests found that 79 English Trusts, more than 33 per cent,  
had suffered ransomware attacks since June 2015.[\[1\]](#)

For  
example, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust was attacked 19 times in 2016,  
and the Leeds Teaching Hospital faced five attacks in the past year.[\[2\]](#) In  
November, a major ransomware  
attack on the Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Trust affected three hospitals,  
forcing the cancellation of hundreds of routine operations and outpatient  
appointments.[\[3\]](#)

As  
recently as in January, the largest NHS Trust in England, Barts Health Trust,  
was infected with a ransomware virus affecting thousands of sensitive  
files.[\[4\]](#)

I am  
therefore extremely concerned that extensive warning signs appear to have  
been  
ignored by yourself and your department.

Moreover,  
your own colleague Ben Gummer, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, warned in  
October that "large quantities of sensitive data" held by the NHS and the  
Government were being targeted by hackers, with the potential for significant  
disruption.[\[5\]](#)

Speaking  
about the threat to the health service, Mr Gummer stated: "The Government has  
a  
clear responsibility to ensure its own systems are cyber secure. We hold and  
the rest of the public sector- including the NHS- hold large quantities of  
sensitive data and provide online services relied on by the whole

country.”[\[6\]](#)

Furthermore,  
in March a joint report from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and the  
National Crime Agency (NCA) warned that cyber-criminals could increasingly  
lock  
computers, phones and watches to run cyber extortion and blackmail rackets.

At the  
time, Ian Levy, technical director of the NCSC, warned that the best defence  
against ransomware was to ensure software on devices was up to date.[\[7\]](#)

However,  
it appears that many of those hospitals affected by yesterday’s attack had  
not  
updated their Windows operating systems to include a security patch. This  
unacceptable cybersecurity neglect has clearly made the NHS extremely  
vulnerable to an attack.

NHS

Trusts have been running thousands of outdated and unsupported Windows XP  
machines despite the Government ending its annual £5.5 million deal with  
Microsoft, which provided ongoing security support for Windows XP, in May  
2015.[\[8\]](#)

It  
effectively means that unless individual Trusts were willing to pay Microsoft  
for an extended support deal, since May 2015 their Operating Systems have  
been  
extremely vulnerable to being hacked.

Given

your Government’s sustained underfunding of our NHS it is of little surprise  
that many Trusts have reported taking minimum action. Indeed, research  
through  
previous FOIs has found that at least seven NHS Trusts, which treat more than  
two million Britons, spent nothing at all on cyber security infrastructure in  
2015.[\[9\]](#)

This is  
extremely serious and as Shadow Secretary of State of Health I share the  
public’s concern at these revelations.

Yesterday’s

attack is unprecedented in scale, but it is abundantly clear that our NHS  
should have been better prepared for ransomware attacks.

Therefore,

will you firstly explain why NHS organisations failed to act on a critical  
note  
from Microsoft two months ago?

Secondly,  
what additional resources are you giving the NHS to bring the situation under control as soon as possible?

Moreover,  
will you clarify publicly what arrangements are currently in place to protect our NHS, and its sensitive data, against cyber-attacks? Will you ensure that every single NHS organisation receives an on-site assessment from CareCERT to improve security?

Will you  
additionally launch a full, independent inquiry into the events of yesterday?

Finally,  
will you reassure patients that no patient data has been accessed or compromised in yesterday's attack?

Secretary  
of State, the prevalence and sophistication of cyber-attacks on our NHS is only  
set to increase. I therefore urge you to take immediate action so that a  
crisis  
on this scale is never repeated again.

Yours  
sincerely,

Jonathan  
Ashworth

Shadow  
Secretary of State for Health

[1] <https://www.ft.com/content/e96924f0-3722-11e7-99bd-13beb0903fa3>

[2] <https://www.ft.com/content/b9abf11e-e945-11e6-967b-c88452263daf>

[3] <https://www.ft.com/content/b9abf11e-e945-11e6-967b-c88452263daf>

[4]  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/01/13/largest-nhs-trust-hit-cyber-attack/>

[5]  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/31/nhs-at-risk-of-cyber-attacks-minister-says-as-he-warns-hackers-a/>

[6]  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/31/nhs-at-risk-of-cyber-attacks-minister-says-as-he-warns-hackers-a/>

[7]  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/14/smartphones-tvs-watches-could-held>

[-ransom-hackers-cyber-security/](#)

[8]

<http://www.silicon.co.uk/security/nhs-hospitals-data-risk-outdated-windows-xp-201761>

[9] <https://www.ft.com/content/b9abf11e-e945-11e6-967b-c88452263daf>

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## **Our Party Election Broadcast for June 8**

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## **UKIP responds to the NHS Cyber attack**

**Suzanne Evans, the UKIP Health spokesman, has responded to the cyber attack on NHS services today.**

“This is an absolutely despicable and cowardly attack on Britain’s best-loved public service. I simply cannot understand the mentality of the pathetic geeks behind this crime, who must know they are putting lives at risk.

“I would like to express my sympathy to NHS staff who, in addition to already having to cope with heavy workloads, now have to deal with this crisis. I trust NHS Digital will be able to restore systems to normal and soon as possible, and whoever set this malware in motion will face the full force of the law.