EveryDoctor

Private Healthcare Money in Politics: Who's Funding Our MPs?

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Introduction

When we vote for Members of Parliament (MPs), we trust them to make decisions that are best for everyone – not just for wealthy donors. But our updated research shows that private healthcare companies and investors are giving millions of pounds to our politicians.

This raises serious concerns about whether these donations might influence decisions about our National Health Service (NHS).

Why does this matter?

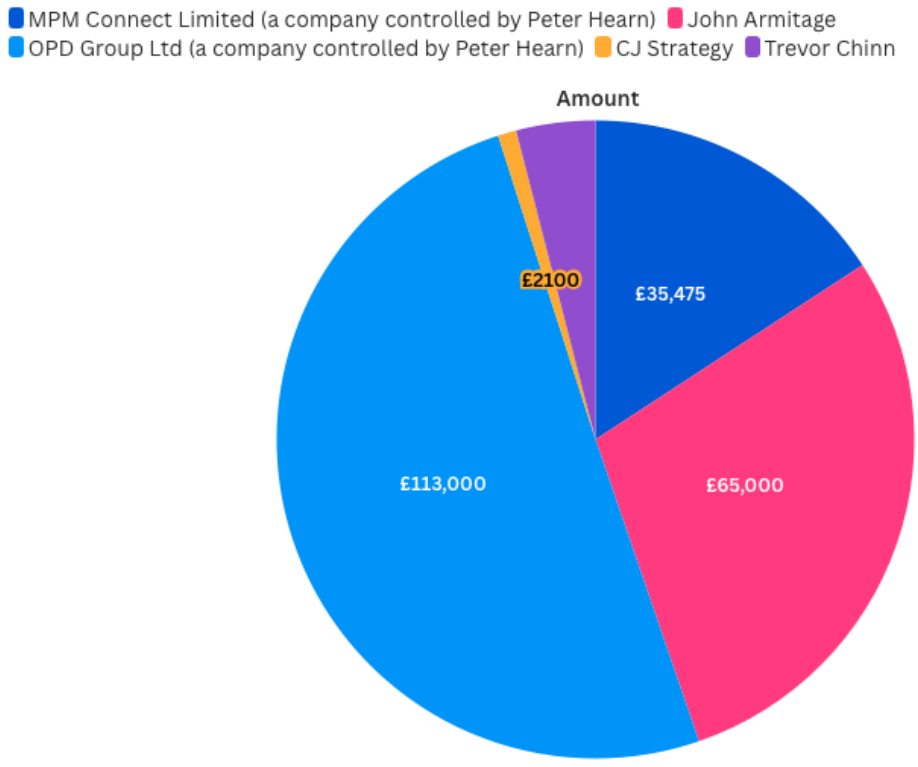
The NHS provides free healthcare for everyone. But there's a growing push to let private companies do more NHS work – which would mean these companies get paid with taxpayers' money.

When the same companies are donating large sums to politicians, we need to ask: Are decisions being made for public good, or private profit?

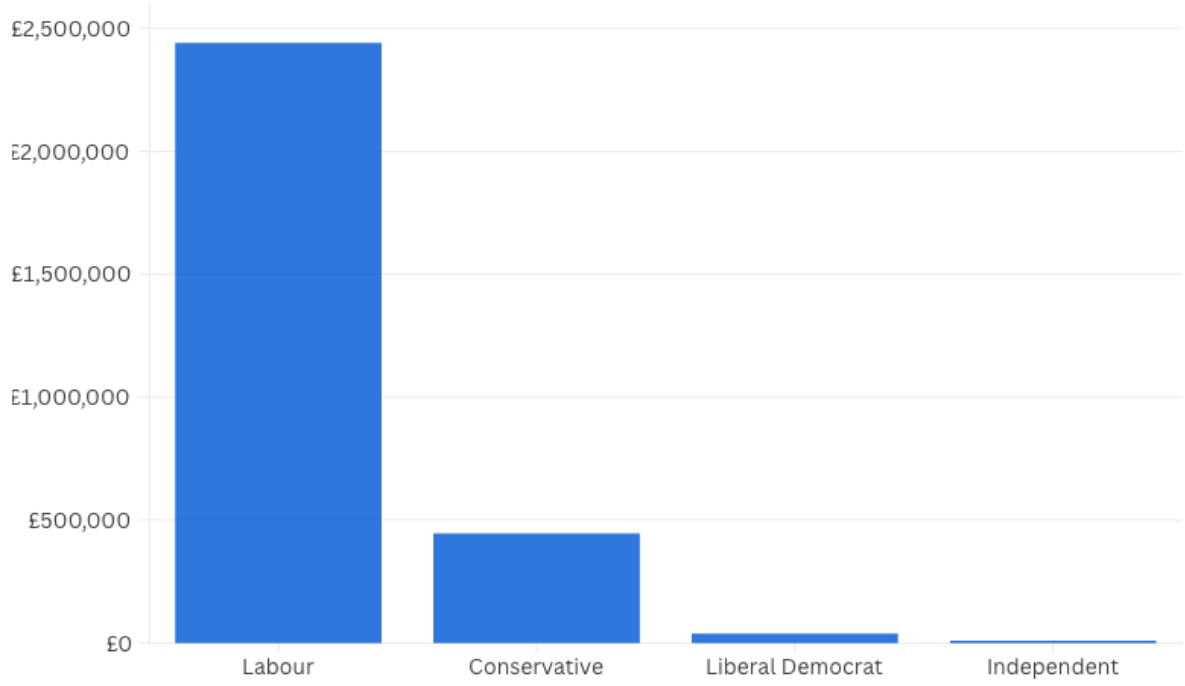
Private healthcare-linked donors gave more than £2.9m to MPs over a period of almost three years, new research by EveryDoctor reveals.

To put this in perspective, that's enough money to pay for about 90 NHS nurses for a whole year.

Health secretary Wes Streeting was the biggest recipient, accepting more than £220,000 from individuals and companies with ties to the sector between January 2023 and September 2025.



Labour MPs received almost five times as much in donations from donors connected to private healthcare as all other MPs combined, according to EveryDoctor's analysis of the MPs' register of financial interests.



Keir Starmer pledged to expand the role of private sector providers in the NHS last year – at a cost of £2.5bn a year – raising questions about the growing influence of the industry on the party.

Almost half of the donations were traced back to Labour Together, the influential group that bankrolled the general election campaigns of dozens of Labour MPs. The organisation's two primary backers, investors Martin Taylor and Trevor Chinn, both occupy senior roles at investment firms with multi-million pound interests in the private healthcare sector.

Taylor's hedge fund, Crake Asset Management, holds more than $20m (£15.8m) in UnitedHealth, the US giant that owns the UK health services provider Optum. Meanwhile, Chinn serves as a senior advisor to private equity firm CVC Capital Partners, which maintains a vast portfolio of healthcare companies across the UK, Europe, and Asia.

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Multi-Millionaire Private Healthcare Investors

EveryDoctor identified more than a dozen political donors who run or advise firms with millions of pounds invested in private healthcare.

Among them is Daniel Luhde-Thompson, an advisor at investment firm Quadrature Capital, who donated £25,000 to four Labour MPs ahead of the general election, along with a further £50,000 to Labour Together. Quadrature Capital has invested more than $200m (£158.7m) in private healthcare firms, according to the investigative outlet Torchlight.

Wes Streeting, meanwhile, received £65,000 from John Armitage, head of UK investment firm Egerton Capital, which holds substantial investments in US private healthcare companies. The firm had more than $216m (£169m) invested in the US pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly, and $357m (£280m) in healthcare technology firm GE, according to filings with the US Securities and Exchange Commission published in February 2025.

Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch also received a £40,000 donation from billionaire hedge fund manager Alan Howard, whose firm Brevan Howard Asset Management has invested millions in private healthcare firms including United Health and Cardinal Health.

Richard Fuller, a Conservative MP and a shadow Treasury minister, holds a second job as an advisory director at the Bahraini venture capital firm Investcorp, which also has significant holdings in the private healthcare sector.

The North Bedfordshire MP is paid £25,000 a year for just 15 days' work – equivalent to a full-time salary of over £430,000. Investcorp's portfolio includes Health Management Plus, which provides services to privately run GP practices in the US, as well as several companies operating private hospitals and clinics in India and Germany.

Donations from firms with NHS contracts top £300k

More than £300,000 in donations to MPs came from companies already making money from providing services to the NHS.

They include multimillionaire recruitment tycoon Peter Hearn, who donated more than £300,000 in total to several Labour MPs, including Wes Streeting, via two companies he ultimately owns. Hearn made his fortune through recruitment firms PSD and Odgers Berndtson. The latter has faced criticism over the suitability of senior executives it has helped place in the health service.

Elsewhere, Cabinet Office minister Darren Jones was provided with a free member of staff by management consultancy firm Baringa in the run-up to the 2024 election, a donation worth £34,356. Baringa has since secured several contracts with the NHS worth more than £1m in total.

Healthcare Lobbyists Donated to Labour's Front Bench

MPs received £100,000 from lobbyists whose clients have included private healthcare companies. Among them is the chancellor Rachel Reeves. Apparently FGS Global provided Rachel Reeves with a campaign advisor between February and May 2024 via a donation-in-kind declared to the Electoral Commission by the Labour Party and said to be worth more than £17,000 (according to The Times newspaper).

From the MPs' Register of Interests we can see this firm funded a further £12,929 of "logistical costs" for Reeves at the Labour Party conference in October 2024, and made numerous smaller donations that totalled £14,213.

We are working to ascertain if the figure of £14,213 is included in the £17,000 figure declared by the Labour Party, and how the discrepancy of c.£3,000 in the MPs' Register of Interest declarations can be accounted for, or if the £17,000 is an additional sum, in which case we would like to know why it was not included in the MPs' Register of Interests.

FGS Global went on to lobby the government on behalf of Optum, the UK subsidiary of US private healthcare group United Health, between July and September 2024, according to the official registrar of consultant lobbyists. The firm's other clients have included Ernst and Young, which has been criticised for billing the NHS more than £2,000 a day for its consultants, and Accord Healthcare, a UK drug company previously fined for overcharging the NHS.

Education secretary Bridget Phillipson and Cabinet minister Jonathan Reynolds also accepted a total of £5,900 in sponsorship from lobbying firm Public First for a pre-election media reception. Public First's clients include the Independent Healthcare Providers Network (IHPN), an industry group representing private health firms operating in the UK.

Why Should We Be Concerned?

When private healthcare companies and investors give money to politicians, they might expect something in return. This could mean:

- More NHS contracts going to private companies
- Less money for public healthcare
- Decisions that benefit profit-making companies instead of patients

What Can We Do?

- Pay attention to who funds our politicians
- Ask our MPs to explain their connections to private healthcare donors
- Support campaigns for stricter rules on political donations

- Remember these issues when we vote

The NHS belongs to everyone. It was created to provide healthcare based on medical need, not ability to pay. When private healthcare companies gain more influence over our politicians through donations, it puts this fundamental principle at risk. We must ensure that decisions about our health service are made in the interest of public health, not private wealth.