

Where do we want the boundary to be between the public and private sectors

Labour wants to change the current boundaries between public and private provision of public services.

They have to accept that the bulk of public service will continue to be supplied by the private sector, as they acknowledge they cannot buy up all business in the UK to provide everything from the public sector. Bread and circuses would remain privately supplied were there to be a future Labour government as they always have been.

The two most sensitive battlegrounds where they wish to change things are health and railways. It is important to understand where the current boundaries are. These are boundaries agreed by both the previous Labour governments and the current Conservative government.

In the case of health, the private sector makes and supplies all the drugs. Most GPs are private sector contractors of the NHS, some with private practises as well and many with for profit pharmacies alongside. Most pharmacies are for profit private sector businesses, dispensing over the counter medicines.

Many hospitals use private sector cleaners, caterers, computer service providers and other suppliers from the private sector. Labour introduced the idea of buying in operations from the private sector where they were good or where the NHS lacked capacity.

The public sector owns and runs most of the hospitals, but not the surgeries. It provides many of the operations, and pays for most of the care however delivered.

What do you think about these current boundaries? Are there bits which you think should be done entirely in house in public sector owned assets with public sector staff? What parts of current private sector healthcare would you want a government to nationalise?

Should GPs be made to be salaried NHS employees? Should surgeries be bought up by the state? Should all pharmacies be public sector businesses?