

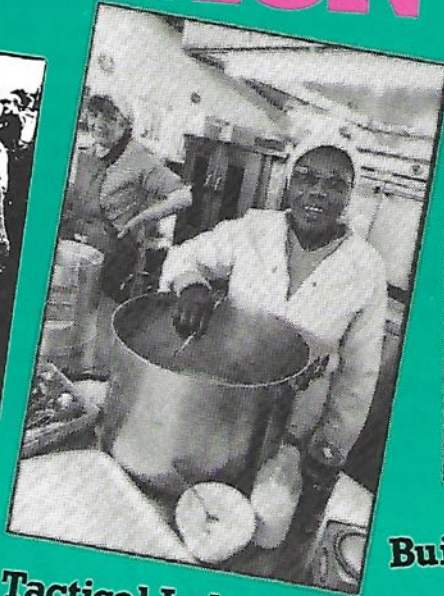
CAMPAIGNING FOR CARE

in social services

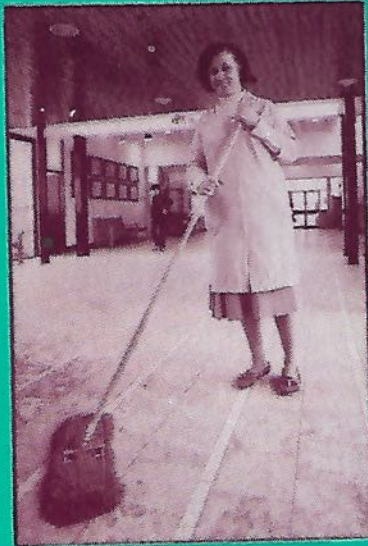
NUPE ACTION PACK



Developing Alternatives



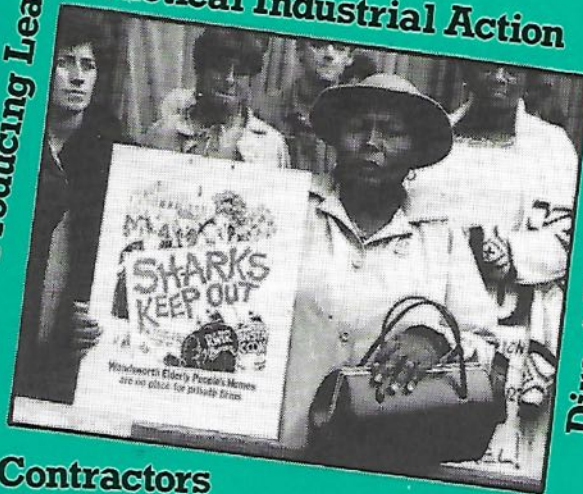
Building Stronger Organisation



Getting Information

Producing Leaflets

Tactical Industrial Action

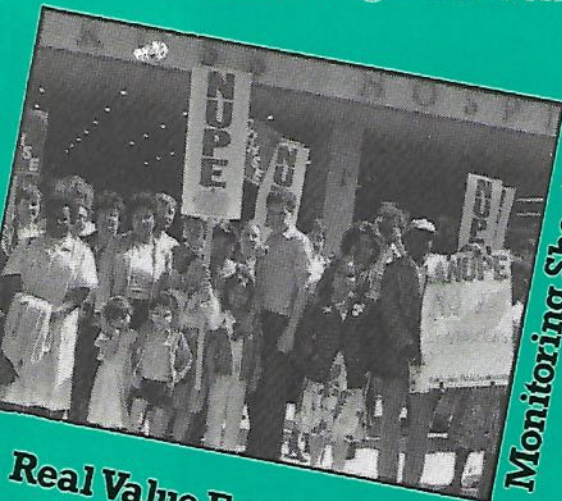


Direct Action

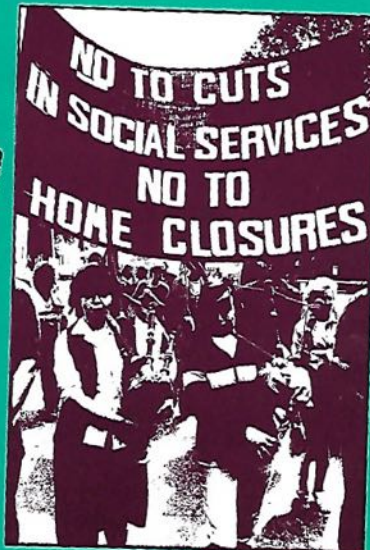


Counter Offensive Against Contractors

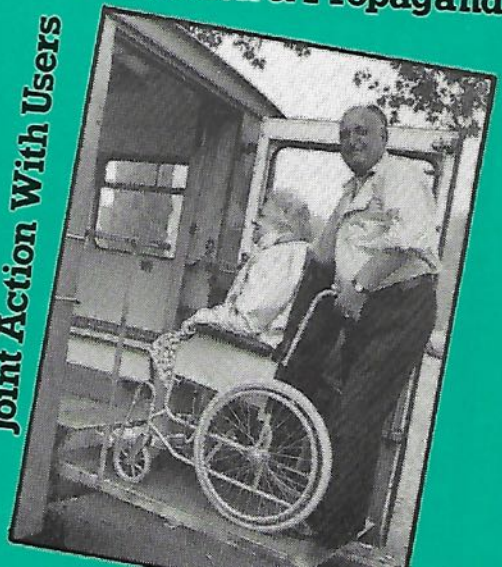
Education & Propaganda



Monitoring Sheets



Joint Action With Users



Real Value For Money Guide

Red Alert card

FORWARD

A year ago the London and East Midlands Divisions of the union produced, with the help of Services to Community Action and Trade Unions (SCAT), a searing indictment of government policy towards the elderly, the mentally ill and the mentally handicapped.

'Cashing in on Care' detailed the consequences of public neglect, of government policies deliberately designed to encourage an ill-regulated private sector. It described terrifying examples of the inhumanity that our old people are having to endure.

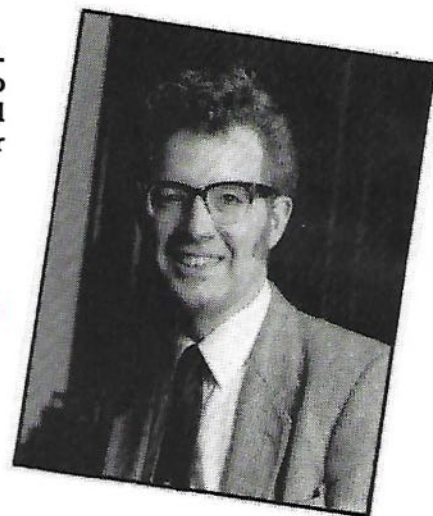
The Action Pack 'Campaigning for Care in Social Services', provides the practical guide for defending our services that we have long needed: simple checklists for identifying the extent that contractors, private agencies and volunteers are being used; broadsheets on how to produce effective leaflets; a guide to audit studies. It sets out a strategy, specifically for the social services, to be discussed at workplace, branch and shop stewards' meetings.

Above all this is a campaign pack to be used and discussed as a basis for action. I encourage all our members to read it and act upon it.

Congratulations again to the Working Party for their hard work. More than our members' jobs depend upon the campaign to provide a public and responsive social service. Without hope and dignity for those most in need there can be no justice or hope for any of us.



Rodney Bickerstaff
NUPE General Secretary



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(SCAT) is a national housing, planning and public services project. Its work includes advice and assistance on campaign organising and strategies, research and analysis, educational workshops, and workers and users alternatives for a wide range of local and national labour movement organisations. SCAT Publications publishes Public Service Action, the anti-privatisation newsletter for the labour movement. It also produces a wide range of reports, pamphlets and broadsheets covering privatisation, public services and housing.

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INTRODUCTION

The care of children, the sick, the handicapped and the elderly is under attack. The whole basis of the social services is threatened by spending cuts, privatisation, and other Government measures.

This Government would like to see the present services provided by social service workers replaced by an army of volunteers, MSC trainees, private companies and agencies, and inevitably push an unmanageable burden of caring back onto women in their homes. Those who work in social services would face redundancies, cuts in pay and conditions, and be forced to continue with little job satisfaction in a third rate service.

Yet all this need not happen. This Action Pack spells out how NUPE members can take action to defend and improve their services. It is a practical kit, not just a collection of useful background information. It is based on hours of discussion, criticism and improvement by NUPE members and officers in the London and East Midlands Divisions. Moreover, it draws important lessons from past struggles against cuts and privatisation.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Over 18 months ago the East Midlands and London Divisions predicted that social services would increasingly be threatened by privatisation and cuts, following the government attack on the NHS and its increasingly stringent measures to reduce public spending.

The two divisions were concerned to alert and prepare the membership both to these dangers and to ways of defending and improving the service. Services to Community Action and Trade Unions (SCAT) was asked to work with the two divisions in developing

materials and strategies.

The first step was to produce a 4-page broadsheet: **Social Services For Sale — Caring for Profit**, aimed at alerting the membership to dangers. Copies of this leaflet are still available.

Secondly, far more through research into current and future trends resulted in the 32-page pamphlet: **Cashing in on Care**. This pamphlet was aimed at the wider labour and community movement as well as providing a useful background document for NUPE stewards and officers.

The third stage is this Action Pack.

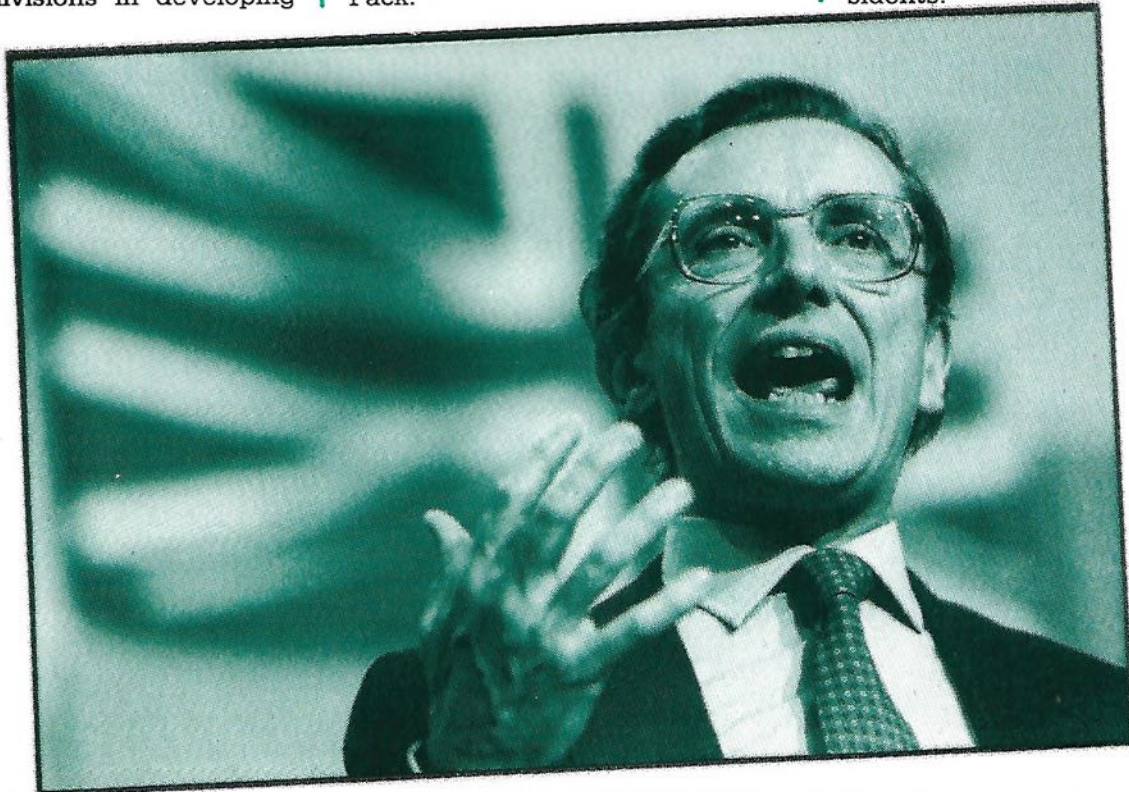
THE THREATS TO SOCIAL SERVICES

Cashing in on Care looked in detail at the very real threats now facing both workers within social services and all who need the services. It showed how:

- * There are already large areas of need unmet by services and these needs are growing.
- * Successive rounds of government-imposed spending cuts have already damaged the effectiveness of health and social service provision and will continue to do so.
- * The Government has encouraged a massive growth in private residential homes and sheltered housing, financed by public funds, while denying local authorities the resources to increase public provision.
- * Comprehensive, publicly accountable services provided by direct labour are being increasingly diluted by the use of untrained volunteers, casual agency labour, and the use of MSC schemes.
- * The Government's 'Care in the Community' policy is a smokescreen for cuts, closures and privatisation, a far cry from the real and effective system of community care advocated for decades as a humane alternative to institutional care.

Since the publication of the pamphlet, new developments have served to emphasise these dangers:

- * Increasing numbers of councils are closing residential homes, or selling them off complete with residents.



Philip Wolmuth

* Rate capping and other spending controls are pushing councils into handing over parts of their services to voluntary organisations, leaving vacancies unfilled and increasingly using agency and other casual staff.

* National voluntary agencies have been offered 7,000 MSC places, which threaten to undermine existing jobs and services.

* Secretary of State Fowler's proposals for social service departments indicate the shape of future threats: **'Departments need to mobilise self help, the support of individuals, families or community groups, and only if this is not possible, to provide direct services'**.

* The Government has announced that it will introduce new laws in the 1985-6 parliamentary session to force councils to put a wide range of services out to competitive tender with private companies.



Format

* Reports on the American experience show big business gaining an increasing hold on the provision of health and social ser-

vices. Companies like HCA and AMI which dominate the US scene already have a major foothold in private health care in the UK.

HOW TO USE THE ACTION PACK

The Action Kit has been designed mainly for use by stewards and officers, but the material is relevant for all NUPE members. It is divided into several sections, all of which have a different purpose:

A) NUPE's seven-point strategy for fighting cuts and privatisation

This is an action section, not just to be read but acted upon. It gives a whole range of ideas and examples, specifically geared to the experience of workers in social services, of different types of action which workers can take, starting now.

It can be used for discussion at workplace, branch or stewards' meetings and at joint union committees. An educational session or series of workshops could be planned to discuss it in detail. However it is used, it is important to include members in developing their own ideas and priorities for action.

B) The monitoring sheets

These sheets are designed as a means of finding out the exact extent of privatisation, cuts and the use of contractors, agencies and volunteers in your section and department. They are also useful in gaining the interest of members

and involving them in your campaign. The sheets can be used as they are or adapted to suit your needs. More exact instructions are printed on the sheets, but it is important that the results gained from using the sheets are discussed and used, to start a campaign or to fit in with an existing campaign.

C) Red alert card

This card is aimed at all members. It is designed to encourage members to be aware of the danger signs of impending cuts or privatisation and to be involved in deciding the action to deal with threats.

More copies of the card can be obtained from the Divisional Office.

D) Value for money – a trade unionist's guide

This broadsheet explains the implications of the government's use of the term 'value for money' and the machinery it has established to ensure that public services are assessed and re-structured on the cheapest possible basis, whatever the social cost. It outlines the various kinds of studies, audits and reviews which threaten jobs and services and suggests ways in which audits can be used by trade unionists to assess the social costs of cuts and privatisation.

E) Working for contractors

This section provides evidence to convince NUPE members that privatisation does not mean 'just a change of management', and contains actual examples of the experience of workers whose service has been taken over by private contractors, as well as a sample of pay and conditions in private residential homes.

F) Producing leaflets

Leaflets are essential to any campaign. This broadsheet shows you how to produce effective leaflets, even if you have no experience.

G) Useful information

This is a reference section containing both basic background information for campaigning in social services and also advice about how to get information you might need. It includes:

- The law and legal duties of councils to provide services
- The structure of social services departments and how and by whom important decisions are made
- How to get information out of the council
- The companies who are bidding to take over the council services and how to find out more about them
- Useful organisations and contacts, useful reading material.