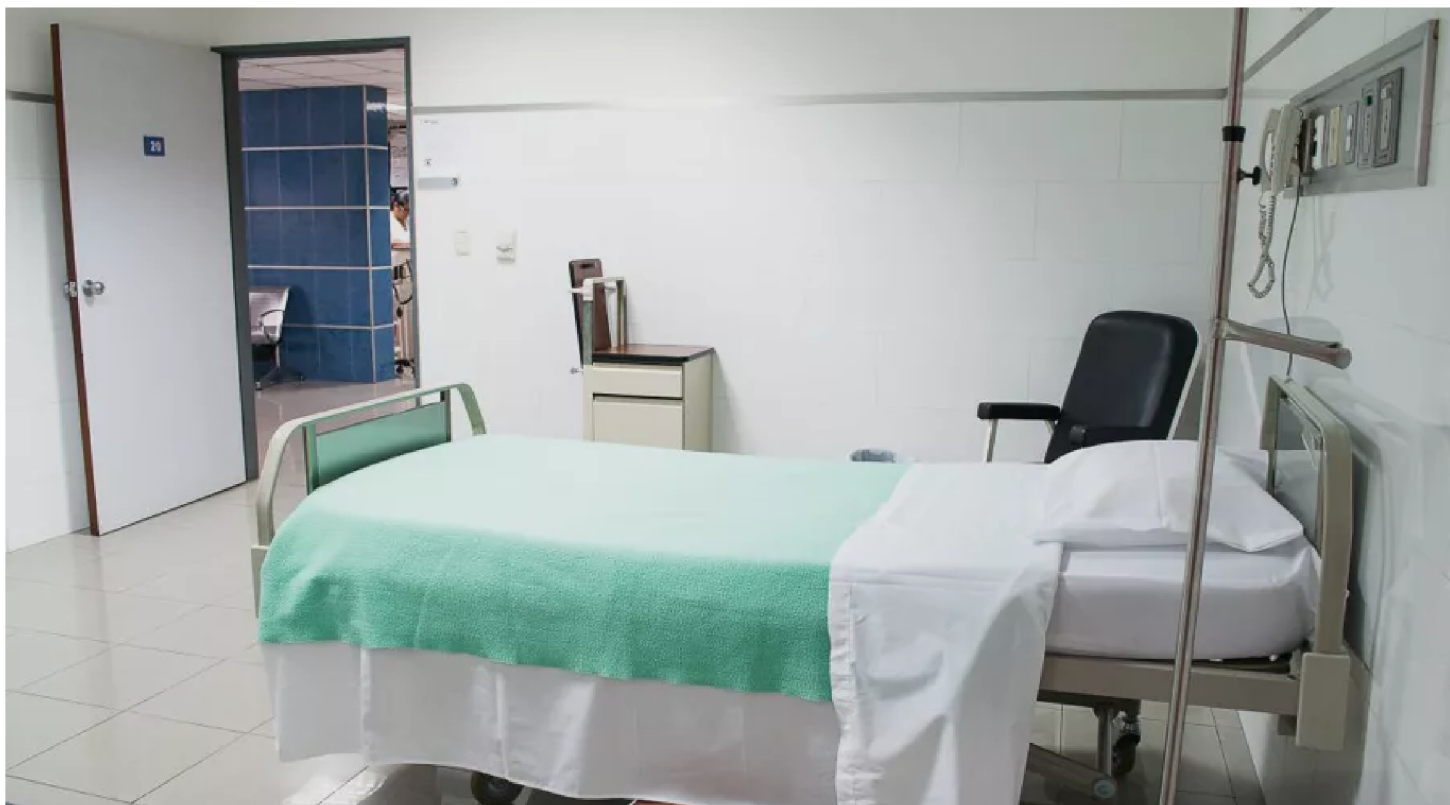


Labour backs GMB call for requisition of private hospital beds



Union demands support for NHS during coronavirus crisis

GMB, Britain's general union, and John Ashworth MP, shadow health secretary, have called for the requisition of private hospital beds in the fight against coronavirus.

The NHS is now expected to deal with a national health emergency despite already being under strain from years of privatisation and cuts.



There are approximately 128,000 overnight beds in the NHS in England. It's clear the health service may not have enough capacity to deal with this crisis alone.

Meanwhile there are at least 570 private hospitals in the UK and around 8,000 beds in private sector hospitals

Sign the petition

Tim Roache, GMB General Secretary, said:

"The Prime Minister says this is 'the worst public health crisis for a generation' – well he needs to start acting like it.

"It can't be right that we have plush private hospitals lying empty waiting for the wealthy to fall ill, while people are left in dying in hospitals for the want of a bed.

"Do the right thing and let these unused beds be requisitioned by the NHS to save lives."

Jonathan Ashworth, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care said:

"The Government should leave no stone unturned when it comes to supporting our NHS and making sure it is best equipped to protect life throughout the Covid-19 outbreak."

"That's why we support GMB's calls to requisition private hospital beds and increase capacity to meet the rising demand.

"As the Prime Minister said, this is the worst public health crisis for a generation. It would be completely wrong for the Government not to call on all the resources possible."

Warren Kenny, GMB London Regional Secretary, said:

"The Government and their advisers must have available to them the powers to requisition these hospital beds if required to increase capacity to deal with the crisis. In particular, using these beds to divert non-coronavirus-related treatments from NHS hospitals may make sense.

"The electorate will expect the government to be able to mobilise all health capacity – be it public or private – to deal with what the Prime Minister has described as 'the worst public health crisis for a generation'. The private health sector cannot be excluded from this mobilisation."



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