Unlawful NHS mergers threaten Privatisation under cover of COVID

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Campaigners on Merseyside are demanding local health bosses reject massive merger plans which would clear the way for further NHS privatisation, removing public accountability in the midst of the pandemic.

"Covid-19 has not gone away," says Consultant Dermatologist Andrea Franks, "and this half-baked merger which lumps the whole of Cheshire and Merseyside into one artificial unit will interfere with patient care and keep the public at arms length."

The proposal, due to be discussed by Liverpool Clinical Commission Group on Tuesday (8 Sept), would see nine CCGs dissolve in favour of one CCG to purchase care for 2.3 million people across Cheshire and Merseyside.

The merger was dreamt up and dictated by NHS England, as part of a plan to convert the National Health Service into 42 separate "Integrated Care Systems". A raft of private companies including Deloitte, PWC, KPMG, Virgin and over two dozen US firms, are accredited by NHS England to develop Integrated Care Systems.

The plan is propelled by NHS England Chief Executive, Simon Stevens. Mr Stevens was previously the President of Global Health at US-based UnitedHealth, the world's largest healthcare company with a revenue of $242.2 billion.

There has been no consultation with Councillors, health staff, or the public, despite legal requirements when CCGs dissolve.

Last Friday, Fazakerly Councillor Paul Brant told KONP the Labour Party in Liverpool opposes "any proposals which might alter the local accountability of decision making bodies in the NHS, create structures which might not reflect natural boundaries or patient flows, and we are opposed to privatisation of the Commissioning or other functions of the Clinical Commissioning Groups."

Earlier proposals were halted by NHS England in April, as Covid-19 pushed health care to the edge of collapse. But the massive shake-up is now being forced through in the face of a looming second pandemic wave and Winter crisis.