

From The Sunday Times

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225,000 public workers to be axed

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MORE than 225,000 public sector jobs cuts are quietly being forced through by councils, the NHS and police forces, despite Gordon Brown's pledge to protect frontline services.

The losses, disclosed in a wide-ranging analysis by The Sunday Times, include tens of thousands of nurses and midwives, social workers, teachers and police officers. Management and administrative workers will face the biggest cuts.

The cutbacks are already being implemented. Deeper cuts are expected to emerge after the general election, whichever party takes power.

- Internal NHS documents indicate 120,000 senior managers will go by 2014 after David Nicholson, the NHS chief executive, ordered £20 billion of cuts.

- Councils are likely to cut 100,000 jobs over the same period, a Sunday Times survey of 75 local authorities suggests.

- A quarter of England's police forces have warned that they will have to lose officers and staff to meet a £150m funding shortfall. Seven forces have already decided to cut 1,200.

- Universities and colleges are planning to cut more than 6,000 jobs in anticipation of a fall in public funding, according to the University and College Union, which represents academics. The Institute for Fiscal Studies calculates that if Labour stays in power, it will need to cut the universities budget by just over 24%; the Tories will need a cut of 27.4%.

The health service will bear the brunt of the cuts. Documents obtained by The Sunday Times show that three of the country's 10 strategic health authorities are planning to reduce their staff by 30,132, an average of 8.7% of their workforces. If similar cuts are imposed across the NHS, more than 120,000 jobs will be lost.

In the South Central region, which covers Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, up to £1.3 billion must be saved. A report for the authority's board reveals it is preparing to axe 14,100 posts over the next three years, equivalent to 16% of NHS workers in the region.

Money will also be saved by cutting the number of hospital beds and reducing the number of patients admitted to A&E. Caesareans will be reduced while postnatal care will be provided by maternity assistants instead of midwives. Cosmetic surgery will be banned.

The West Midlands authority has been asked to make £2.4 billion of savings, a freedom of information request reveals. It is planning to cut more than 6,000 staff, equivalent to 5% of the region's NHS workforce. A thousand nurses and midwives will lose their jobs.

In the South East Coast NHS, which covers Surrey, Kent and Sussex, between £1.2 billion and £1.6 billion must be saved by 2014. A draft circulated to board members states 10% of staff, equivalent to 10,000 people, must go. It said staffing in the hospitals acute sector could be expected to decline further and faster than elsewhere.

The authority has removed the reference to the cuts from its final report, and declined to say whether they will go ahead.

The East of England strategic health authority has to make £2 billion in savings, while Yorkshire and the Humber health authority, which covers Sheffield, York, Hull and North Lincolnshire, has to make £2 billion in cuts.

Councils also face severe job losses, with 50 in the Sunday Times survey confirming plans to cut a total of 24,553 jobs over the next five years. This represents an average of 7% of their workforce. The remaining councils said it was too early to tell if cuts would be made. Almost 100,000 jobs will be lost if the same level of cuts is applied to the 1.4m council workforce across England and Wales.

Birmingham city council is planning to shed 2,000 jobs this year, including 1,300 in children's services – a department rated one of the worst in the country.

In Nottinghamshire the county council is planning to make 1,500 job cuts, focusing on adult social services where the council is selling 13 care homes to help balance its books.

Other councils planning to cut 1,000 or more posts include Shropshire, Kirklees, Stoke-on-Trent and Cornwall and **Somerset**.

In Devon and Cornwall more than 180 police officers will be lost as the force attempts to save £14m. West Midlands Police is cutting 300 staff posts to save £50m, while the Metropolitan Police is cutting 445 posts, a third of which are likely to be frontline officers.

Your Branch Secretary Nigel Behan says:

Dear Colleagues

Technically we have not been informed/consulted so the first news of this is from The Sunday Times. We have contacted SCC about this matter.

Nigel