



NORWICH

United we must stand to

Trades unions and protest groups staged a demonstration yesterday in Norwich to campaign against proposed NHS reforms.

Norwich and District Trades Union Council organised the bank holiday event in Chapelfield Gardens as a traditional May Day International Workers' Day commemoration.

However, given the cuts faced by many frontline public services, the day also provided a chance to

raise awareness of those and to focus on the coalition government's plans to overhaul the NHS, which, critics fear, would lead to the privatisation of many healthcare services.

While musicians entertained visitors from the bandstand and children played on a bouncy slide, members and representatives of a host of unions and organisations attended to put across their more



RALLYING POINT: Above and top, some of the gathering at the May Day event in Chapelfield Gardens, Norwich.



QUOTE
UNQUOTE: A campaign supporter wears a quotation from the great Labour politician and National Health Service 'founder' Aneurin Bevan during the demonstration in Norwich yesterday.

banish this NHS bill, say campaigners

serious message that the proposals could be disastrous for the National Health Service.

Jan Ainsley, of Norfolk branch of campaign group Keep Our NHS Public, said: "This is about a celebration of all that workers have achieved, and it is also a response to the monstrous health and social care bill which is in the pipeline. We want to spread the word that this bill can be defeated if we all work together."

The bill sets out plans to transfer most of the NHS budget to groups of GPs, who would be in charge of buying, planning and designing how patients are treated. But serious concerns have been raised about introducing more competition and private providers into the health service, and the proposed shake-up has been criticised for lacking accountability.

The bill's progress has been put

on hold after the government launched a "listening exercise" to take into account the worries of health professionals, patients and the wider public.

Dave Kent, secretary of the city trades union council, said: "We feel the coalition government are trying to privatise the NHS and will continue the process until there is nothing left. We need to have a local campaign, and that's what we are starting today."