

LONDON
SCHOOL of
HYGIENE
& TROPICAL
MEDICINE



LSHTM Research Online

Macfarlane, A; Heyman, B; Dorling, D; Gordon, D; Davey-Smith, G; Dolk, H; Roberts, H; Basnett, I; Roberts, I; Lewis, J; +9 more... Popay, J; McKee, M; Mugford, M; Barker, R; Raine, R; Baldwin, S; Glen, S; Platt, S; Sheldon, T; (2002) PFI is here to stay - Select committee's report used parliamentary privilege unacceptably. *BMJ (Clinical research ed)*, 324 (7353). p. 1584. ISSN 0959-8138 <https://researchonline.lshtm.ac.uk/id/eprint/16589>

Downloaded from: <http://researchonline.lshtm.ac.uk/16589/>

DOI:

Usage Guidelines:

Please refer to usage guidelines at <https://researchonline.lshtm.ac.uk/policies.html> or alternatively contact researchonline@lshtm.ac.uk.

Available under license: Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>

<https://researchonline.lshtm.ac.uk>

Select committee's report used parliamentary privilege unacceptably

Alison Macfarlane, Bob Heyman, Daniel Dorling, Dave Gordon, George Davey-Smith, Helen Dolk, Helen Roberts, Ian Basnett, (consultant in public health), Ian Roberts, Jane Lewis, Jennie Popay, Martin McKee, Miranda Mugford, Rodney Barker, Rosalind Raine, Sally Baldwin, Sally Glen, Stephen Platt, Trevor Sheldon
 (A.J.Macfarlane@city.ac.uk)

University College Worcester, Worcester WR2 6AJ

(City University)

(City University)

(University of Leeds)

(University of Bristol)

(University of Bristol)

(University of Ulster)

(City University)

(London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

(University of Oxford)

(University of Lancaster)

(London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

(University of East Anglia)

(London School of Economics and Political Science)

(London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

(University of York)

(City University)

(University of Edinburgh)

(University of York)

EDITOR—We are deeply concerned at the misrepresentation in the House of Commons Select Committee on Health's report, *The Role of the Private Sector in the NHS*, of evidence critical of the private finance initiative (PFI) given by University College London's Health Policy and Health Services Research Unit. [1](#) [2](#)

We believe that the committee's criticism of research by the unit is an unacceptable use of parliamentary privilege to attack academic scholarship. Paragraphs 65 to 69 of the report give an inaccurate account of statements made in evidence and in published research. In particular, they misrepresent evidence that the unit gave to the committee and allege that the unit's research was unsound without providing any evidence of this.

This will undoubtedly deter other researchers from acting as expert witnesses to select committees in the future, especially if their findings do not accord with prevailing government

policies.

It is important that parliamentary select committees take evidence from witnesses with a wide range of views and examine them critically and robustly in relation to government policies. Contrary to the comments made in the report, the unit's published research on public health and the private finance initiative is respected both internationally and nationally.

We call on the House of Commons Health Committee to withdraw these unsubstantiated comments and urge others who support fair reporting and use of evidence given to select committees to reinforce this request. This can be done by writing to the House of Commons Health Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA or emailing the committee at healthcom@parliament.uk

References

1. House of Commons Select Committee on Health. *The role of the private sector in the NHS*. London: Stationery Office, 2002. (HC 308-I.)
2. PFI is here to stay. *BMJ* 2002; **324**: 1178. (18 May.)