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Coverage
United Kingdom
Theme
The Economy

Health spending up

Spending on health in the UK grew more quickly than spending in the economy as a whole reaching 7.7 per cent of GDP in 2002, according to new figures from the Office for National Statistics.

Government, households and charities spent £80.6 billion in 2002, compared with £74.8 billion the year before. Public expenditure increased by £5.1 billion (8 per cent) in 2002 compared to a rise of just under £700 million (5 per cent) in private expenditure. However, this faster growth was not sufficient to change the public share of health expenditure, which remained unchanged at 83 per cent.

The health spending figures include more than just public spending on the NHS – they also cover, for example, spending by the armed forces, in prisons, on 'over the counter medicines', on private medical care and on health care by religious organisations and charities.

Total, public and private UK health expenditure 1997-2002

	Total	Public	Private
<i>£ billion</i>			
1997	55.5	44.6	10.9
1998	59.2	47.6	11.6
1999	64.7	52.2	12.5
2000	69.2	56.0	13.2
2001	74.8	62.1	12.7
2002	80.6	67.2	13.4

Total, public and private health expenditure figures for 2002, as well as revisions to previously published figures for 1997-2001, are being published as part of the development of Health Accounts for the UK.

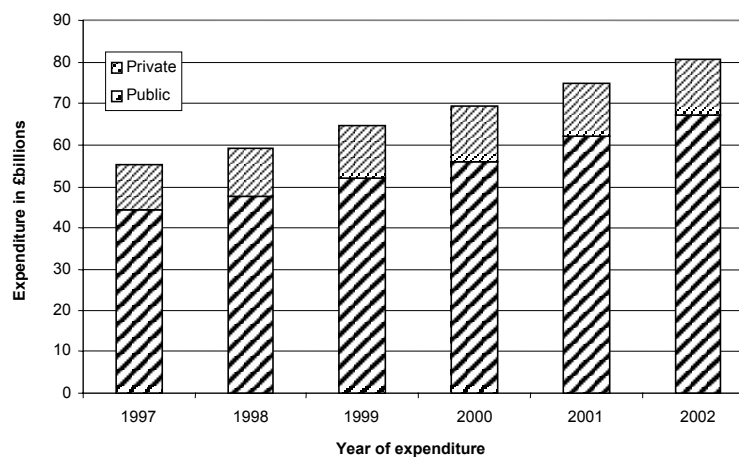
These estimates will be provided to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which compares health spending at an international level. Every year the OECD publishes internationally comparable health statistics and today's figures will be included in *OECD Health Data 2004*, which is planned to be published in June 2004.

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Chart 1: Total, public and private UK health expenditure 1997-2002

Further detail on the UK figures, including the methodology behind them and the full data series are published on the ONS website:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/healthaccounts>.

Figures for 2002 for only two of the other fifteen countries in the EU are currently available. Austria and Italy spent 7.9 and 8.6 per cent of GDP on health in 2002.

Other countries' health expenditure figures are published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and can be found at <http://www.oecd.org>.



BACKGROUND NOTES

1. Further information on these figures can be found at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/healthaccounts>.
2. ONS has reviewed the data sources and methods used in compiling the UK figures and is satisfied that they are consistent with the principles set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. ONS is therefore publishing total UK health expenditure for 1997-2002 as National Statistics. ONS previously published experimental estimates of total UK health expenditure for 1997-2001 in February 2003 and for 1997-2000 in February 2002.
3. The methods used in compiling the UK data have been discussed and agreed by a Project Board, membership of which is made up of representatives from ONS, an academic, all UK health administrations and HM Treasury.
4. Details of the National Statistics policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
5. **National Statistics** are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2002.