



Foreign &
Commonwealth Office
London

INSIGHT UK

Health and Social Welfare Services



1908 – Lloyd George introduces first state pensions.

1910 – First labour exchanges set up to help unemployed find work and monitor rates of unemployment.

1911 – National Insurance Act sets up system of workers' sickness and unemployment benefits.

1946 – National Insurance Act sets up compulsory payments from all workers and their employers to fund 14 separate kinds of allowance.

1946 – National Health Service Act creates free medical treatment system in Britain.

1948 – National Health Service starts.

Government expenditure on health:

1939 – £920 million;

1950s – £5 billion;

1999/2000 – £43.3 billion.

HEALTH: THE CHALLENGES

The UK has an ageing population:

1901 One person in 20 over 65 years old

One person in 100 over 75 years old

1998 One in six people over 65 years old

One in 14 people over 75 years old

Number of years a person can expect to live in good or fair health related to current life expectancy (in brackets):

Men: 66.4 years (74.2) Women: 68.7 years (79.4)

Smoking – 26% of people over 16 smoke in the UK (1999)

Drinking – 15% of people over 16 in UK drink more than 'safe' amounts each week (1999).

4 in 10 people in the UK will develop some form of cancer during their lifetime. It causes 156,000 deaths a year in the UK.

Some 19% of men and 21% of women are obese.

The UK has the third highest rate of death in Europe from circulatory disease – 65 per 100,000 people under 65.

At any time, one in six people in the UK are suffering from depression or anxiety.



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PROVIDING for HEALTH

£43.4 billion was allocated to fund the National Health Service in 1999/2000

82p in every £ is paid from taxes.

12p National Insurance payments (paid by workers and employees).

3p from fund raising and private patient care.

2p from prescription and dental treatment charges.

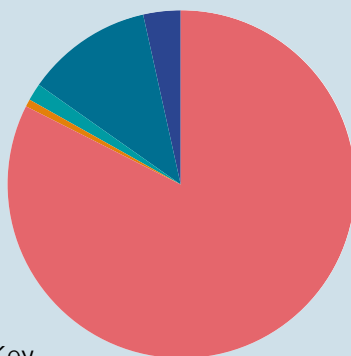
1p comes from land sales.

Responsibility for health provision lies with the Department of Health in England, the Scottish Executive, the National Assembly in Wales and the Northern Ireland Executive.

Ratios:

Patients per doctor	(1976/77) (2,400)	1998/99 1,900
Patients per dentist	(1976/77) (4,100)	1998/99 2,900

Health spending in England 1999/2000 (Total £43.4 billion)



Key

- £35.7 bn hospital and community health services, current and family health services discretionary
- £0.3 bn departmental administration
- £0.7 bn central health and miscellaneous services
- £5.1 bn family health services current, non-discretionary
- £1.5 bn hospital and community health services, capital

Source: Department of Health

On a typical day in the UK:

750,000 people visit their doctor (general practitioner – GP);

500,000 prescription items will be dispensed by pharmacies;

ambulances will make 8,000 emergency journeys;

2,000 babies will be delivered;

90,000 will visit a hospital outpatient clinic;

500,000 households will receive health care in the home.

NHS workforce – 1,000,000 people (500,000 are nurses and midwives).

Specialist hospitals' expertise is recognised nationally and internationally.

These include:

Great Ormond Street, London (Children)

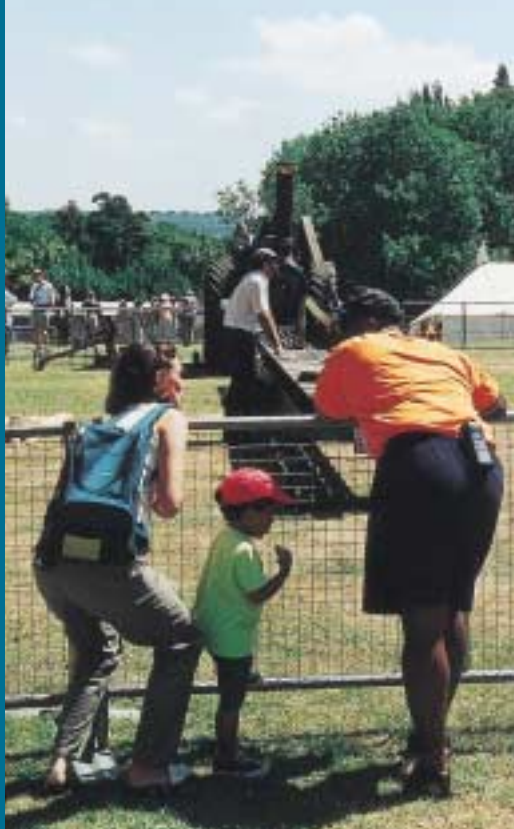
Moorfields, London (Eye Hospital)

Royal London Homeopathic Hospital

The voluntary sector is supported by government funding and private donations. Numerous organisations across the UK fund research and support those suffering from particular conditions.

PREVENTION

- nine in ten UK children will have been immunised for diphtheria, tetanus, polio, whooping cough, measles, mumps and rubella by their second birthday
- 87% of women between ages 25 and 64 have been screened for cervical cancer in the last five years (1999)
- three quarters of the women in the age group invited for breast cancer screening underwent it in 1998/99



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INITIATIVES

1992 and on-going: The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) encourages private companies to invest and run NHS facilities.

The Health Act 1999 has introduced significant reforms.

One-stop primary health provision brings doctors, community nurses and other professionals into teams offering a wide range of services and control of budgets.

The Government sets an objective of preventing 300,000 premature deaths by 2010.

NHS Direct launched – 24-hour telephone helpline providing advice from trained nurses. Between April and June 1999, it handled 202,000 calls.

Patients' Charter pledges to reduce waiting times for operations and treatment. Ambulance arrival times: down to 14 minutes in cities; and 19 minutes in rural areas.

April 2000 – Health Development Agency born. It aims to find ways to improve the nation's health by gathering evidence and then promoting good practice.

SOCIAL NEED: THE CHALLENGES

Low Income: an income 60% or less of the median household disposable income of about £260 a week.

17% of households in the UK live on low incomes. 3.2 million children lived in low income households in 1997/78.

Three in five UK families receive some kind of benefit.

KEY BENEFITS

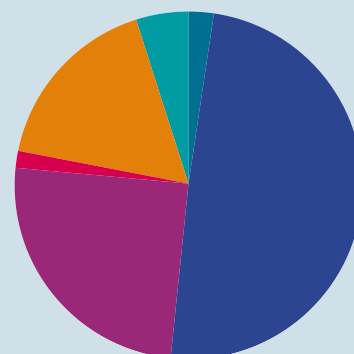
Child Benefit – available to all families once their children are recorded at the local registry office.

Income support and housing benefit – payable to people on low incomes.

Pensions – a state pension is payable to those that contribute through national insurance deductions from their salaries or wages.

One pound in every three the Government spends goes on social security benefits – the equivalent of £3,300 per head of population. This is just below the average for Europe – 9th of 15 in European Union expenditure league table.

Social security benefit expenditure in England, Scotland and Wales 1999–2000: by broad groups of beneficiaries (Total £101.4 billion)



- Key
- £2.4 bn 2% widows and others
 - £50 bn 49% older people
 - £25.2 bn 25% long-term sick and disabled people
 - £1.6 bn 2% short-term sick people
 - £17.3 bn 17% families
 - £5 bn 5% unemployed people

Source: (former) Department of Social Security



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STRUCTURE

The Department for Work and Pensions was created in June 2001 and includes the Employment Service, the Benefits Agency and the Child Support Agency. It is also responsible for creating Jobcentre Plus and the new Pensions Service.

FAMILIES and CHILDREN

Child benefit received by seven million families.

One-parent benefit – those receiving it have doubled since 1981; now 1.4 million payments.

36,000 on Child Protection Registers in 1998 for those at risk of physical harm or neglect.

59,000 children are cared for by local authorities.

ELDERLY PEOPLE

Priority is given to services that enable older people to remain in their own homes – only 5% of people over 65 live in special residential accommodation.

DISABLED PEOPLE

Six million people in Britain have one or more disabilities.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 – establishes right of access to goods and services and makes discrimination against disabled people in the workplace illegal.

April 2000 Disability Rights Commission established – duties include promoting equal opportunities for disabled people.

INITIATIVES

November 1998 – Modernising Social Services. Launch of £3 billion reform programme.

- a commission to investigate standards
- children's rights officers to inspect children's homes
- General Social Care Council to ensure regulation and training of social care providers

Welfare Reforms – priority to be given to reducing social exclusion and fraud, and increasing opportunities for training through such schemes as the New Deal.

Sources

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