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Coverage
United Kingdom
Theme
Health and Care

UK Health Accounts

Experimental statistics from ONS

Public spending on health in the UK in 2001 was almost £6 billion higher than the previous year, pushing the public share of total health expenditure up from 81 per cent to 82 per cent. This increase also helped to push health expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product up to 7.6 per cent in 2001 from 7.3 per cent in 2000.

Today ONS is releasing experimental total, public and private health expenditure figures for 2001, as well as revisions to previously published figures for 1997-2000, as part of the development of Health Accounts for the UK.

Also being released today is a first set of UK Health Accounts for 1999/2000. ONS is releasing these data as experimental at an early stage of development in order to gauge user demand for this type of information.

The experimental UK Health Accounts tables indicate that around two thirds of spending on health in the UK in 1999/2000 was on cure and rehabilitative care, and just less than a fifth on goods dispensed to outpatients.

The methodology behind the figures is detailed in today's *Health Statistics Quarterly* and the data are published on the National Statistics website. The 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.

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 2003*, which is planned to be published in June of this year.

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BACKGROUND NOTES

1. Further information on the experimental UK Health Accounts project can be found at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/healthaccounts>. A summary article appears in this month's *Health Statistics Quarterly 17* (released today) and there will also be an article in next month's *Economic Trends* (to be released on 17 March 2003).
2. Improvements have been made to the international comparability of health expenditure figures. For the first time, experimental total UK health expenditure includes estimates of health expenditure in prisons and by the armed forces.
3. Previous experimental estimates of total UK health expenditure 1997-2000 were released on 12 February 2002.
4. The methods for estimating some of the components of total health spending are new and relatively untested, so the improved estimates are being released as experimental data. ONS therefore advises users to take care in drawing conclusions from the data. The methods used 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. Further information relating to experimental statistics can be found at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/press_release/experimental_policy.asp
5. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
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