

Additional £5.4 billion for NHS COVID-19 response over next six months

- Additional £5.4 billion cash injection to NHS to support COVID-19 response over next six months
- Includes £1 billion to help tackle COVID-19 backlogs, delivering routine surgery and treatments for patients
- Total government support for health services in response to COVID-19 at over £34 billion this year alone

The NHS will receive an extra £5.4 billion over the next six months to support its response to COVID-19 and help tackle waiting lists, the Prime Minister and Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid have announced today.

The funding will immediately go towards supporting the NHS to manage the immediate pressures of the pandemic. This includes an extra £1 billion to help tackle the COVID-19 backlog, £2.8 billion to cover related costs such as enhanced infection control measures to keep staff and patients safe from the virus and £478 million to continue the hospital discharge programme, freeing up beds.

The additional £5.4 billion brings the government's total investment to health services for COVID-19 so far this year to over £34 billion, with £2 billion in total for the NHS to tackle the elective backlog.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The NHS was there for us during the pandemic – but treating Covid patients has created huge backlogs.

This funding will go straight to the frontline, to provide more patients with the treatments they need but aren't getting quickly enough.

We will continue to make sure our NHS has what it needs to bust the Covid backlogs and help the health service build back better from the worst pandemic in a century.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The NHS has been phenomenal as it has faced one of the biggest

challenges in its history.

Today's additional £5.4 billion funding over the next 6 months is critical to ensuring the health service has what it needs to manage the ongoing pandemic and helping to tackle waiting lists.

We know waiting lists will get worse before they get better as people come forward for help, and I want to reassure you the NHS is open, and we are doing what we can to support the NHS to deliver routine operations and treatment to patients across the country.

Amanda Pritchard, NHS chief executive, said:

This funding provides welcome certainty for the NHS, which has pulled out all the stops to restore services, while caring for thousands of seriously ill Covid patients requiring hospital treatment during the toughest summer on record.

This additional investment will enable the NHS to deliver more checks, scans and procedures as well as helping to deal with the ongoing costs and pressures of the pandemic as the NHS heads in to winter.

The government has been clear that the NHS will get what it needs to recover its usual services and deliver quality care to patients.

The waiting list for routine operations and treatments such as hip replacements and eye cataract surgery could potentially increase to as high as 13 million. While today's extra £1 billion funding will go some way to help reduce this number, waiting lists will rise before they improve as more people who didn't seek care over the pandemic come forward.

£478 million of this new funding has been dedicated to continue the hospital discharge programme so staff can ensure patients leave hospital as quickly and as safely as possible, with the right community or at-home support. This will free up thousands of extra beds and staff time to help the NHS recover services. The government has also invested £500 million in capital funding for extra theatre capacity and productivity-boosting technology, to increase the number of surgeries able to take place.

This funding is for England only. The devolved administrations will receive up to £1 billion in Barnett consequential in 2021-22. The final amount will be confirmed and allocated at Supplementary Estimates 2021-22.

On top of this funding, the NHS recently launched a £160 million initiative to tackle waiting lists. This is looking to accelerate the recovery of routine treatments and operations by trialling new ways of working, including a high-volume cataract service, one stop testing facilities where people can get tests done quickly and efficiently, to speed up the time to treatment, greater access to specialist advice for GPs and pop-up clinics so patients

can be seen and discharged closer to home.

This government is committed to delivering the greatest hospital building programme in a generation with 40 new hospitals by 2030, backed by an initial £3.7 billion.

Today's announcement is in addition to the £3 billion announced at Spending Review 2020 to support the NHS. It is also additional to the historic long-term settlement for the NHS, which is enshrined in law and will see NHS funding increase by £33.9 billion by 2023 to 2024 as part of the NHS Long Term Plan. The government will continue to support the NHS respond to COVID-19. The government made available £63 billion in 2020 to 2021 and over £34 billion so far this year to support health services, and increased the NHS core non-COVID budget from £130 billion to £136 billion.

Notes to editors

The £5.4 billion funding is broken down into:

- £2.8 billion for COVID-19 costs including infection control measures;
- £600 million for day-to-day costs;
- £478 million for enhanced hospital discharge; and
- £1.5 billion for elective recovery, including £500 million capital funding.