

European health costs

I have been asking questions about how much it costs the UK to pay for health treatment for our citizens seeking treatment on the continent, and how much we charge people from other EEA countries for their treatment here.

In 2016/17 the UK received just £66m from charges imposed on the other member states for treatment of their nationals in the UK, whilst they charged us £630 m for the treatment UK citizens received. It is difficult to believe it should be that one sided. It is true a considerable number of UK citizens live in Spain, which charges us £200m for the health treatment they supply, but we also act as host to many people from the continent who also need to visit surgeries or receive treatment. The UK only received £5m from France for the whole year, compared to the £154 m they charged us.

The NHS in 2016/17 identified just £81 m of treatment carried out for people from the rest of the world, and recovered £30.4m in cash.

It does appear that despite the policy that EEA nationals health costs should be recharged to their governments, and non EEA people should be expected to pay for non emergency treatment, there is still some way to go for the system to identify the full amounts and to collect the cash from those who should pay.