

News story: NHS better equipped for winter with £420 million funding

Hospitals across England are delivering 81 projects to provide improvements this winter using money from a £420 million winter fund.

Social care services also received funding and are using it to increase their winter capacity.

The £420 million is the total of several funding announcements for the NHS this winter, including:

The majority of NHS schemes that received a share of £145 million in September delivered their improvements in time for Christmas.

This includes upgrades to emergency departments and wards, creating new treatment areas and adding bed capacity.

In some trusts, the funding is making it easier to transfer patients from A&E to different wards and speed up test results.

The NHS expects the benefit from the schemes will be the equivalent of an additional 900 beds this winter.

Councils receiving a share of the £240 million social care funding are planning to provide more than 30,000 additional packages of care to support people in their homes. They will also use the funds for another 9,000 care home beds.

Ambulance trusts have paid for more than 250 new ambulances, with 100 delivered by Christmas Eve. This is in combination with new 'make ready hubs' to see paramedics back on the road more quickly.

Health Minister Stephen Hammond said:

We know winter is always challenging, and that's why we have given the NHS £420 million to prepare and improve resilience for this year.

The health and care sector has spent this money wisely, delivering upgrades and improved services in 80 hospitals, and plans to support 30,000 more people to be cared for at home this winter have helped free up vital hospital beds.

I'm also urging the public to help us ease pressure on the NHS this winter season. Whether that's making use of pharmacies, calling NHS 111 to avoid unnecessary trips to hospital, or being vigilant against the spread of colds and flu – we can all help the NHS weather the challenges to come.