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The BMJ Commission on the Future of the NHS



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Future funding of the NHS

John Appleby and Gillian Leng

NHS funding for a secure future. BMJ 2024;384:e079341

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Questions

- **How do we pay for the NHS?**
- **How much money is needed?**
- **How do we decide how much?**

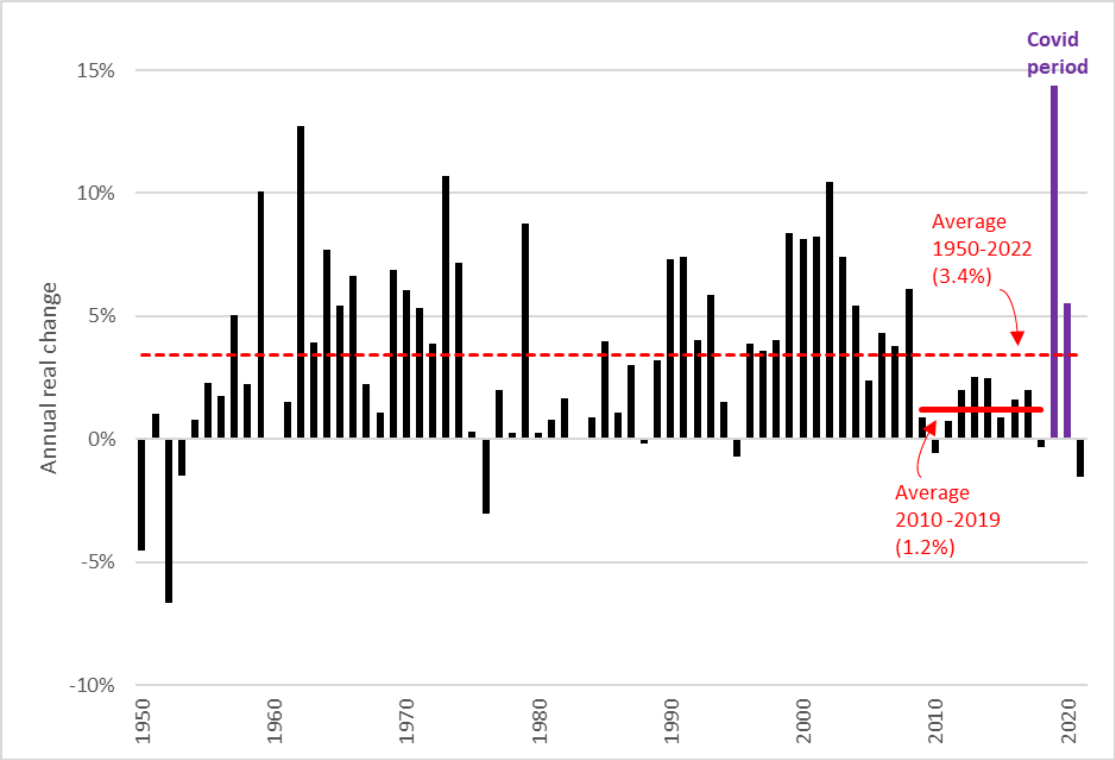
Recommendation

Continue with general taxation funding of the NHS

This mandatory payment system avoids many of the problems associated with voluntary insurance markets.

It benefits from economies of scale in terms of system administration, risk management and purchasing power.

Real annual changes in UK NHS spending



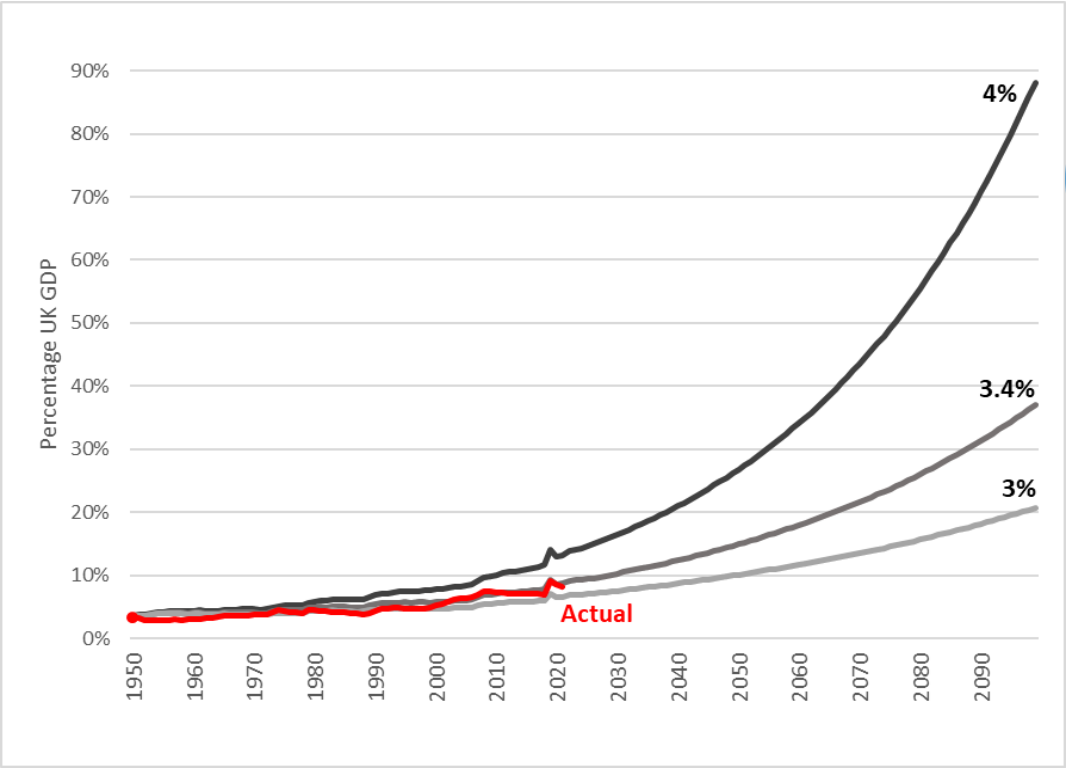
Recommendation

An immediate injection of funding to address the emergency in current NHS provision.

This funding should be targeted towards those areas of greatest need, in particular the backlog of surgical procedures and access to primary care services.

The settlement should include funding for capital projects that have been delayed or deferred.

UK NHS spending, percentage GDP



Stein's Law

If something can't go on forever, it will stop

Recommendation

Establish a new independent body, the Office for NHS Policy and Budgetary Responsibility (OPBR)

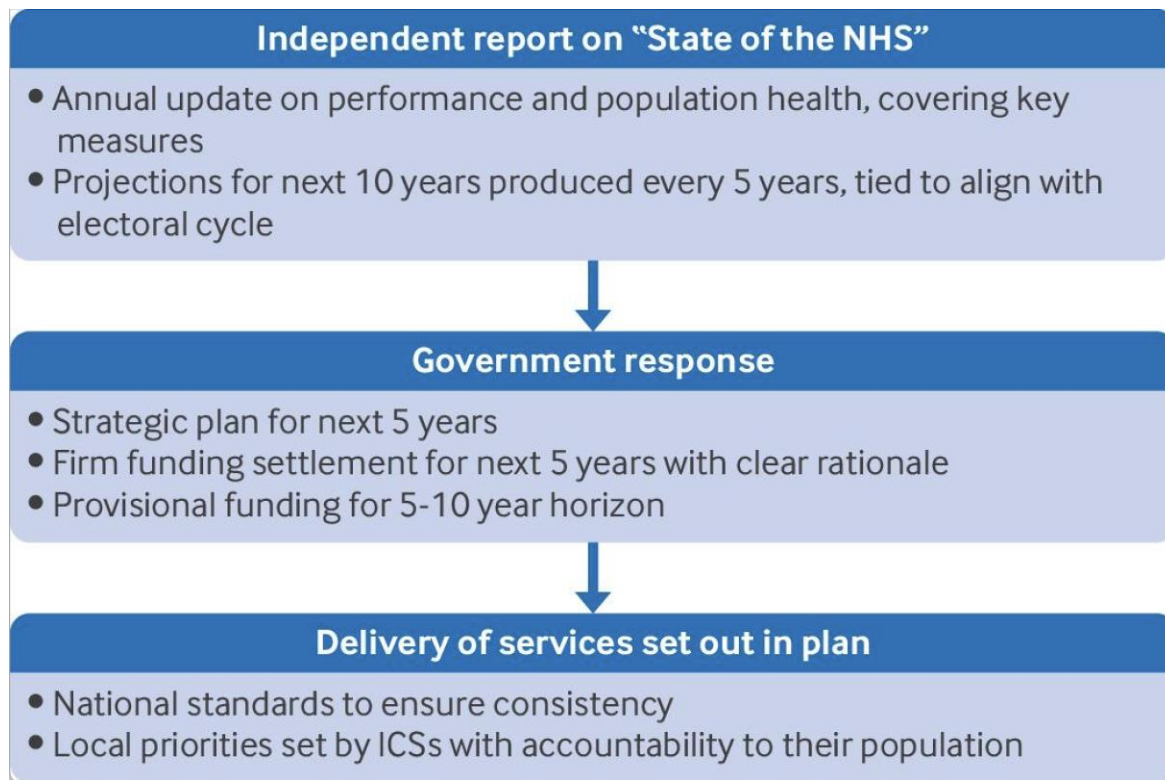
OPBR would provide unbiased, reports on health and healthcare. It would draw on existing work from other organisations to be collate two main outputs: *An annual report on performance of the NHS*, including population health outcomes, access and waiting lists, plus patient and public satisfaction and an analysis of expenditure; and every 5 years, prior to a General election, a report addressing the *Future of Healthcare in the next 10 years*. It would also provide a very long term indicative view (over the next 50 years) of spending pressures based on known drivers of such pressures.

Recommendation

To require an open, inclusive response from Government within 6 months of taking office

This would be developed in consultation with professionals and the public, setting out what new areas will be taken forward and what cannot be prioritised. The output would be a 5 year strategic plan for the NHS with a detailed 5 year financial settlement, and a provisional settlement over the 5-10 year horizon. The response would be scrutinised by the OPBR.

A transparent, accountable approach to NHS funding



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