



# Finance Bulletin

## March 2026

The aim of this current awareness bulletin is to provide a digest of recent guidelines, reports, research and best practice on healthcare business finance in the NHS.

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### News

#### **NHS warns of “stretched budget” following Spring statement**

The NHS has warned of a “stretched budget” and the risk of missed elective and cancer care targets following the chancellor’s Spring Budget.

Healthcare Management, Lee Peart, 3 March 2026

Available from: [BREAKING NEWS: NHS warns of 'stretched budget' following Spring Statement](#)

#### **Funding boost to support patients to stay in and return to work**

Patients will receive better support to help them stay in and get back to work in areas of high economic inactivity.

DHSC, Ashley Dalton MP, Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP, 25 February 2026

Available from: [Funding boost to support patients to stay in and return to work - GOV.UK](#)

#### **Nearly £50 million awarded for vital NHS research equipment**

NIHR has awarded £47.8 million to pay for equipment that will increase the ability to deliver high-quality commercial research.

National Institute for Health and Care Research, 4 March 2026

Available from: [Nearly £50 million awarded for vital NHS research equipment | NIHR](#)



### **Health care funding**

The latest funding figures for England

The Health Foundation, Zeyad Issa et al, 5 March 2026

Available from: [Health care funding - The Health Foundation](#)

### **Nuffield Trust response to the Spring Forecast**

Nuffield Trust, Sally Gainsbury, 3 March 2026

Available from: [Nuffield Trust response to the Spring Forecast | Nuffield Trust](#)

### **Underfunding mental health is not just bad for patients but for wider communities and economy, health leaders say**

Response to the government's announcement on mental health spending.

NHS Providers, Rebecca Gray, 12 March 2026

Available from: [Underfunding mental health is not just bad for patients but for wider communities and economy, health leaders say](#)

### **DHSC and NHSE internal plan pledges £7.4bn digital investment**

According to internal planning guidance this £7.4bn investment will be between now and 2030.

Digital Health, 18 March 2026

Available from: [DHSC and NHSE internal plan pledges £7.4bn digital investment](#)

## **Articles**

### **Direct commissioning update**

Plans for transferring NHS England's direct commissioning functions to ICBs from April 2027.

NHS England, 2 March 2026

Available from: [NHS England » Direct commissioning update](#)

### **NHS Funding Deficits**

Latest analysis and data.

The Kings Fund, 12 March 2026

Available from: [NHS Funding Deficits | The King's Fund](#)

## **Reports**

### **An honest account of the benefits and costs of international health worker recruitment**

This report examines the UK's reliance on internationally trained health workers and the case for fairer more sustainable co-investment in source countries.

APPG, 16 March 2026

Available from: [APPG publishes new inquiry report on international health worker recruitment | Global Health & Security](#)



### **How to save the NHS in 1000 Days**

Adopting a Duch-style social insurance model for healthcare, 10 March 2026

Policy Exchange, 10 March 2026

Available from: [Policy Exchange - How to Save the NHS in 1000 Days](#)

### **Review of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board's 2025/26 savings plan**

The Nuffield Trust was commissioned to examine the above ICB's financial plans to understand what implications it has for local services.

Available from: [Review of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board's 2025/26 savings plans | Nuffield Trust](#)

## **Funding & Financial Frameworks**

### **Better Care Fund Framework 2026 to 2027**

This guidance constitutes the formal planning requirements, national conditions for expenditure and legal framework for the Better Care Fund for 2026 to 2027.

DHSC, 17 February 2027

Available from: [Better Care Fund framework 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)

### **2026 to 2027 financial directions to NHS England**

The government's financial directions to NHS England set out its budgets for 2026 to 2027.

DHSC, 25 March 2026

Available from: [2026 to 2027 financial directions to NHS England - GOV.UK](#)

## **Blogs**

### **How do NHS staff earnings compare to 15 years ago?**

How pay for different NHS staff groups has changed in real terms since 2010

Nuffield Trust, Luciana Rolewicz and Stelios Vassiliou, 5 March 2026

Available from: [How do NHS staff earnings compare to 15 years ago? | Nuffield Trust](#)

### **Closing the adolescent health financing gap: the Global Financing Facility**

Among today's most pressing development challenges is the matching of financing to health needs.

The Lancet, Vol 407, Issue 10534, P1139-1140, 11 March 2026,  
[doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(26\)00450-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(26)00450-2)

### **Funding pressures putting NHS progress at risk**

NHS Providers, Dr Layla McCay, 3 March 2026

Available from: [Funding pressures putting NHS progress at risk](#)



## Courses

### **Social Investment for Finance Staff**

Free HFMA online course for NHS finance staff.

This online course looks at how social investment can support a change in the delivery of healthcare services.

The Professional Association for Healthcare Finance

Available from: [Social investment for finance staff | HFMA](#)