

NHS Spending Hot Topic Of General Election

In the midst of the general election is a heated row over NHS spending, but contrary to popular belief, the fight is not over how to cut spending in order to save us from the massive national deficit but in fact how to safeguard spending and preserve the health budget.

There are a variety of suggestions of how to make the service more efficient and cost effective but the decision to protect spending is unanimous amongst all parties. The Liberal Democrats have taken a more prudent tone, claiming that the NHS must shrink its costly and unnecessary managerial ranks.

Many economic experts claim that the government cannot simply bypass the liberally funded NHS if it wishes to deal with the budget deficit. Spending has increased in real terms by over 7 percent each year over the lengthy 13 year labour rule. This is equivalent to going from 3% of national spending to almost 10%.

In a widely viewed television debate, conservative leader David Cameron pledged to protect funding for the NHS claiming "I'll cut the deficit, not the NHS". Although there is conflict between different politicians and economists over the means of dealing with the spending, they all agree that steep cuts are needed in order to battle the budget deficit which is likely to reach 11.8% this year.

Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg claimed "We have to find savings in the NHS," proposing that a layer of managers be cut and the money redirected into "frontline services." But in a recent interview, Mr. Clegg cautioned that he doesn't have plans for "net cuts in the NHS."

Even if there is no cut in NHS spending, an aging population and rising obesity rates mean the health service will need to make their use of the spending more efficient. NHS Chief Executive David Nicholson last year told health-service managers to find 15 billion to 20 of "efficiency savings" by 2014, money he said would be reallocated toward necessary services.

The British Medical Association, the main professional body for doctors approves the proposal to make spending more efficient but they warn against any cuts to frontline services. They suggest that the NHS should cut its use of management consultants, something with which the Royal College of Nursing agrees. It is estimated that the NHS in England spent 350 million on management consultants in the latest fiscal year.

About the Author

Major cutbacks in NHS spending could result in a lack of [nursing jobs](#) and experts suggest it will be difficult for graduates to find [nursing jobs Exeter](#)

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