

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.

Press release: James Brokenshire announces locations of UK's first Manufacturing Zones in the East Midlands

Four projects, involved in the space industry, food sector, and the development of HS2, will form the new and innovative East Midlands Manufacturing Zones.

News story: Home Secretary visits channel operations

During a trip to Dover today (2 January 2019), Home Secretary Sajid Javid has thanked all those involved in the effort to tackle the increase in attempts by migrants to cross the Channel in small boats.

The Home Secretary, who announced on Monday (31 December 2018) that he would be redeploying 2 Border Force cutters from abroad to help patrol the Channel, met representatives from organisations including Border Force, Immigration Enforcement, the Kent Intake Unit and the National Crime Agency.

He said:

Border Force and others have been doing an incredibly good job in recent weeks to do everything they can to keep us safe, to protect our borders and to protect life. I want to thank them for what they are doing and to learn myself about the work they are undertaking.

The additional cutters, which will bring the number we have along the South East to 3 as well as 2 coastal patrol vessels, will make a big difference in fulfilling those 2 key functions – protecting the border and preserving life. The Channel – one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world – is an extremely treacherous stretch of water and we need to send a very clear message to people that if they embark on this journey, they are taking their life into their own hands.

As part of the trip, the Home Secretary was taken out into the Channel on board one of the Border Force cutters. Officers provided an overview of the cutter's operational capabilities and first hand accounts of the dangers faced by people attempting to cross the Channel in vessels that are unfit for purpose.

Border Force has 5 cutters and 6 coastal patrol vessels and their deployment is kept under constant review. 2 coastal patrol vessels and 1 cutter, HMC Vigilant, are currently deployed in the Channel. 3 cutters, HMC Valiant, Seeker and Protector, are deployed overseas while HMC Searcher remains in UK waters. The UK will continue its commitment to the FRONTEX humanitarian mission by retaining a cutter in the Mediterranean.

News story: Check and update your charity details

All registered charities in England and Wales will need to check and update their details before they can submit an annual return.

Press release: Self Assessment deadline: less than one month to go

More than 5.5 million taxpayers need to complete their return for the tax year 2017 to 2018 before the deadline of 31 January 2019.