

We do need to spend a bit more

Starting today I want to run a series of articles looking at how we could best spend the additional money coming from growth and from the savings in our EU contributions.

The NHS does need more money. There is the need to provide for the rising numbers of patients, partly the result of rapid growth in population. Even after a new migration policy has been put in place there will be some growth of population we need to provide for.

Under new arrangements with the EU after departure we need to make sure that if we continue with state payments for care in each other's territory there is a fairer recharging by the UK to the EU for the care we deliver to EU citizens in the UK. If there is no agreement then we need to require payments or insurance on EU citizens here, and to offer a way of reimbursing UK citizens needing care on the continent.

The government has accepted the case for more money, and even accepted a general level of increased payments. Over the summer it is vital this is turned into a positive programme. The government should not sign off on any extra money unless and until there is a costed proposal that cannot be covered by existing budgets, and which will raise the quality and quantity of care delivered.

Ministers are talking about setting the Chief Executive of NHS England proper targets and requiring performance against them to justify extra cash. These targets need careful choosing and enforcement. It also needs to be clear that failure to hit agreed targets will result in financial penalties for the highly paid top team. If they wish to be paid far more than the PM, more like the private sector, there needs to be genuine performance related risk for them

I do think we need more money to expand operating theatre capacity, provide extra medical teams for hospital treatments, and expand the numbers of GPs.