# UK Government Spending on Health Falls Short by £5.5 Billion, Says IFS



The UK government is currently spending £5.5 billion less on health in England than initially planned according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). Originally, in the 2019 election campaign, it was projected that health spending would increase by 3.3% annually above inflation throughout this Parliament. However, the actual increase has been about 2.7% per year.

Despite adjustments for high inflation rates, total health spending has not met expectations. As of this year, the health budget amounts to £179.6 billion, covering the NHS, public health, social care, and training. The IFS highlights the broad inflationary pressures globally, but notes that England has increased health spending more significantly than many European regions, except Wales.

The large allocation to health, representing over 40% of public-service spending, poses fiscal challenges and might necessitate cuts in other areas, according to IFS economist Max Warner. With national elections approaching, the budget decisions for the Department of Health and Social Care are set to heavily influence government spending priorities.

Both the Conservative and Labour parties have avoided explicit commitments on future health spending. NHS Providers has indicated a dire need for increased funding due to severe financial strains and growing service demands. Labour's shadow health secretary, Wes Streeting, has criticized Prime Minister Rishi Sunak for failing to meet past NHS commitments.