

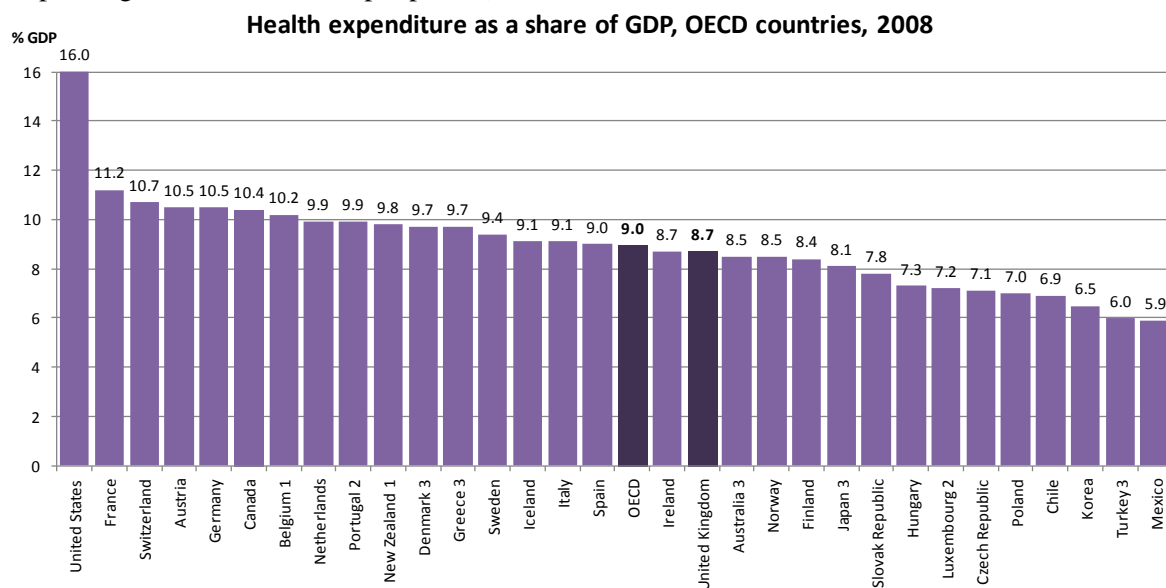


OECD Health Data 2010

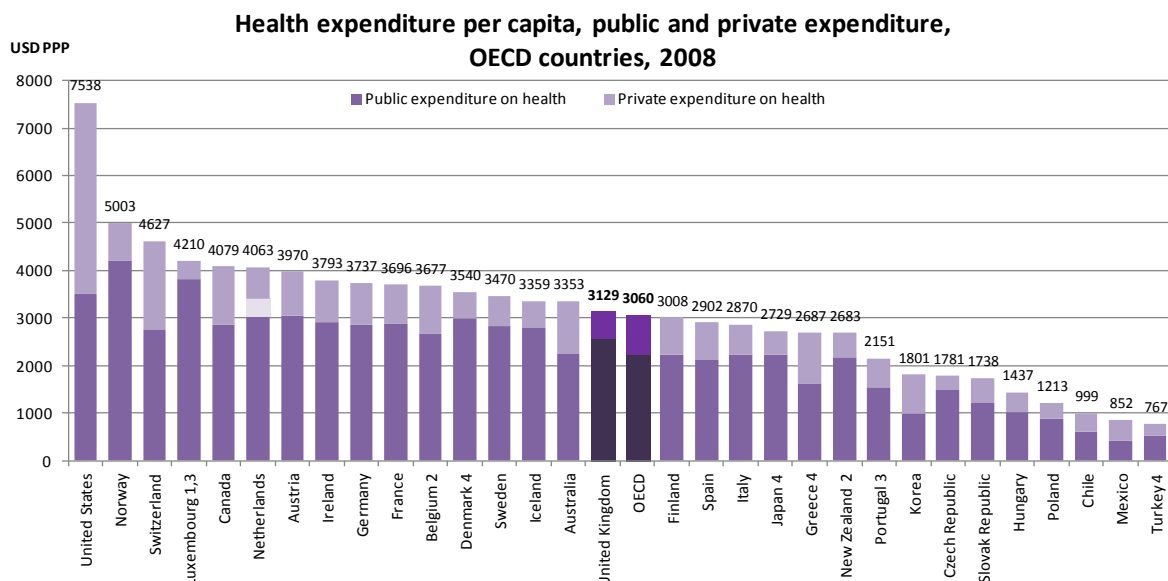
How Does the United Kingdom Compare

Total health spending accounted for 8.7% of GDP in the **United Kingdom** in 2008, compared with an average of 9.0% across OECD countries. The United States is, by far, the country that spends the most on health as a share of its economy, with 16.0% of its GDP allocated to health in 2008. France and Switzerland followed with 11.2% and 10.7% respectively. Several EU countries – Germany, Austria and Belgium – and Canada also devote more than 10.0% of their GDP to health.

In terms of per capita spending on health, the **United Kingdom** is close to the OECD average, with spending of 3129 USD in 2008 (adjusted for purchasing power parity). Health spending per capita in the **United Kingdom** remains much lower however than in the United States (which spent 7538 USD per capita in 2008), and significantly lower than some other big spenders, such as Norway and Switzerland (with spending of over 4600 USD per person).



1. Current expenditure. 2. 2006. 3. 2007. Source: *OECD Health Data 2010*, June 2010.



1. Refers to insured population rather than resident population. 2. Current expenditure. 3. 2006. 4. 2007. Source: *OECD Health Data 2010*, June 2010.

Data are expressed in US dollars adjusted for purchasing power parities (PPPs), which provide a means of comparing spending between countries on a common base. PPPs are the rates of currency conversion that equalise the cost of a given 'basket' of goods and services in different countries.

Between 2000 and 2008, health spending per capita in the **United Kingdom** increased in real terms by 4.6% per year on average, a faster growth rate than the OECD average (4.2% per year).

The public sector continues to be the main source of health funding in all OECD countries, except Mexico and the United States. In the **United Kingdom**, 82.6% of health spending was funded by public sources in 2008, well above the average of 72.8% for OECD countries.

Resources in the health sector (human, physical, technological)

Following a perceived shortage of health professionals in the **United Kingdom**, there has, over recent years, been a determined and active campaign to increase numbers. Latest figures show that in 2008, the **United Kingdom** had 2.6 practising physicians per 1 000 population, up from 2.0 doctors per 1 000 population in 2000, but still below the OECD average of 3.2, and well behind some other European countries such as Greece, Austria, Italy and Norway, which all record 4.0 or more physicians per 1 000 population.

In 2008, there were 9.5 nurses per 1 000 population in the **United Kingdom**, up from 8.7 in 2000. The OECD average was 9.0 nurses per 1 000 population in 2008.

The number of acute care hospital beds in the **United Kingdom** was 2.7 per 1 000 population in 2008, below the OECD average of 3.6 beds per 1 000 population. In line with many OECD countries, the number of hospital beds per capita in the **United Kingdom** has fallen gradually over the past decade or so. This decline has coincided with a reduction of average length of stays in hospitals and an increase in the number of surgical procedures performed on a same-day (or ambulatory) basis.

During the past decade, there has been rapid growth in the availability of diagnostic technologies such as computed tomography (CT) scanners and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) units in most OECD countries. Although the **United Kingdom** has also seen some increase in such technologies, the number of MRIs in 2008 was 5.6 per million population, less than half the OECD average of 12.6. Furthermore, the number of CT scanners in the **United Kingdom** stood at 7.4 per million population, less than three times the OECD average of 23.8.

Health status and risk factors

Most OECD countries have enjoyed large gains in life expectancy over the past decades, linked to improvements in living conditions, public health interventions and progress in medical care. In 2007, life expectancy at birth in the **United Kingdom** was 79.7 years, just above the OECD average of 79.4 years. However, several major European countries – Italy, Spain, France and Germany – registered a higher life expectancy than the **United Kingdom**.

The infant mortality rate in the **United Kingdom**, as in other OECD countries, has fallen significantly over the past decades. It stood at 4.7 deaths per 1 000 live births in 2008 which was equal to the OECD average, but still higher than most European countries. The lowest infant mortality rates are reported in most Nordic countries (Iceland, Sweden, Finland and Norway), Luxembourg and Japan.

The proportion of daily smokers among adults has shown a marked decline over the past two decades in most OECD countries. The **United Kingdom** has achieved some progress in reducing tobacco consumption, with current rates of daily smokers among adults standing at 22.0% in 2008, below the OECD average of 23.3%. Currently, the lowest rates among all OECD countries are in Sweden, Australia, and the United States, all with fewer than 17.0% of adults reporting to be daily smokers.

At the same time, obesity rates have increased in recent decades in all OECD countries, although there are notable differences. In the **United Kingdom**, the obesity rate among adults - based on actual measures of

height and weight - was 24.5% in 2008. This is lower than for the United States at 33.8% and about equal to Australia (24.8% in 2007). The average for the 13 OECD countries with measured data was 21.0% in 2008. Obesity's growing prevalence foreshadows increases in the occurrence of health problems (such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and asthma), and higher health care costs in the future.

More information on *OECD Health Data 2010* is available at www.oecd.org/health/healthdata.

For more information on OECD's work on the **United Kingdom**, please visit www.oecd.org/uk.