

we have balanced the books in 2017/18 – with a £1 billion boost on top of this protection. We made a start towards this £1 billion increase in the Budget by securing a £250m a year investment in mental health.

- ❖ Increasing NHS spending in line with economic growth from then on.
- ♦ These commitments mean NHS funding in England will be at least £8 billion higher a year in real terms by 2020. This will lead to higher funding for the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish governments, too, which Liberal Democrats believe should be spent on their health services.
- ♦ Invest half the initial £1 billion in providing care in people's own homes and communities, preventing emergency admissions and making it easier to discharge people after a hospital stay – and so relieving pressures on all hospital services.
- ♦ Make sure the NHS is funded and organised to carry out diagnostic tests and necessary treatments in a timely and effective manner, so that waiting times meet public expectations without distorting clinical priorities.
- ♦ Join up health and care at national level, shifting full responsibility for care policy and funding to the Department of Health.

To ensure the NHS is safeguarded for the long term we will commission a non-partisan Fundamental Review of NHS and social care funding this year. We will involve as many people as possible in this nationwide consultation.

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## 5.2 Equal care for mental health

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One in four of us will experience mental health problems, but for decades mental health has been the last in the queue for funding and attention. Mental health problems cost the country as much as £100 billion each year yet less than a quarter of people with depression get the treatment they need.

In 2012, we called a halt to this and wrote equality for mental health into law. We are now making real progress, introducing the first ever waiting time standards in mental health. We have invested £400m in increasing access to talking therapies and £150m in help for people with eating disorders, but there is still a long way to go. That is why we will increase mental health spending in England's NHS by £500m a year by 2016/17 – half of which we delivered in this year's Budget – and provide the cash for similar investments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.