

# It's by choice that the NHS is in crisis. And it's by ...

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The Resolution Foundation has published a chart that reveals just how big the Tory assault on the NHS has been. As they said in an email circular yesterday:

*The chart below from [our Healthy Finances report](#) shows why we're having [a] row [about NHS funding]. If the government doesn't announce quite a bit more cash for the NHS, average annual spending growth is on course to be lower this decade than at any other time in the NHS's history. Real terms per capita spending is set to grow by an average of just 0.4 per cent a year between 2010-11 and 2019-20, down from an average of 5.9 per cent a year in the preceding decade.*

As the chart makes clear, that's the lowest spending increase since the 50s. No wonder the NHS is in crisis. And no wonder some of us say that's entirely by choice.

No wonder too that some of us say that this can be solved by choice. I quote [an editorial from the Guardian yesterday](#):

*Before spending more money on the NHS, British politicians should take the advice of the US economist Stephanie Kelton: [in a UK lecture this week](#), she explained that it was wrong for politicians and the media to argue that the government must balance its books, just like a household. If a household were to continually spend more than its income, it would eventually face insolvency; it is thus claimed that the government is in a similar situation. This is false.*

Yet politicians are obsessed with avoiding an increase in the deficit, an impulse so ingrained that Professor Kelton described as it "almost Pavlovian". An analysis of the UK's economic position tells us how to fund the NHS: growth is flatlining, real wages are stagnant and there's little inflation. The UK's indebted households are sinking deeper into debt. Hardly the time to raise taxes. The [public sector deficit](#) ought to be seen as an instrument to support the economy, not a way to break it. To pay for the NHS, which is critical for long-term prosperity, the government should engage in [Keynesian deficit spending](#): this would help to keep not only the public healthy but the economy too.

Stephanie asked me to join her at that lecture to take part in discussion. I was unable to do so. It sounds like I missed something special. Not least because Stephanie's prescription is entirely correct: I [wrote much the same a year or so ago.](#)

It's by choice that the NHS is in crisis.

It's by choice that it can be got out of it.

And the right choice is glaringly obvious.