

Public services before the 2025 spending review

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2 JUNE 2025



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Performance has worsened in most services

Service	Performance on the eve of pandemic vs 2009/10	Performance now vs on the eve of pandemic
General practice	↓ Much worse	↓ Worse
Hospitals	↓ Much worse	↓ Much worse
Adult social care	↓ Much worse	↓ Worse
Children's social care	↓ Worse	→ About the same
Neighbourhood services	↓ Worse	↓ Worse
Schools	↗ Better	↓ Worse
Police	↓ Worse	↓ Worse
Criminal courts	↓ Worse	↓ Much worse
Prisons	↓ Much worse	↓ Worse

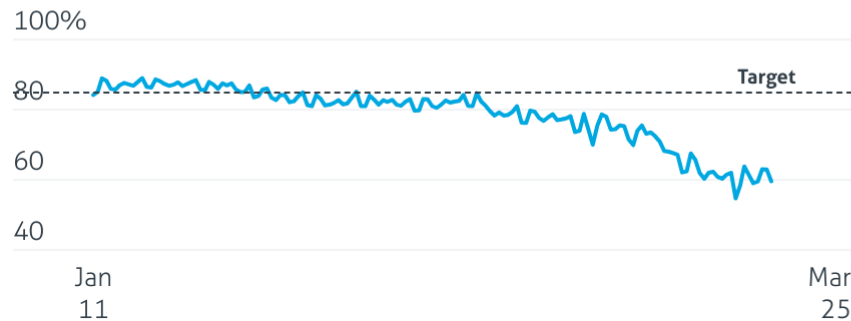
- All services apart from schools were performing worse on the eve of the pandemic than they were in 2010
- Since 2019, performance has deteriorated further in most services, but particularly **hospitals, criminal courts and prisons**

Hospital performance is well below targets

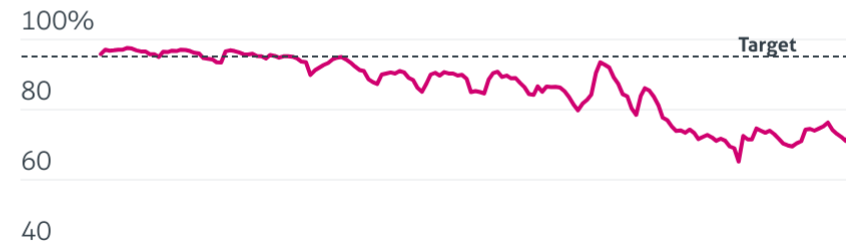
Hospital performance vs targets, January 2011 to March 2025

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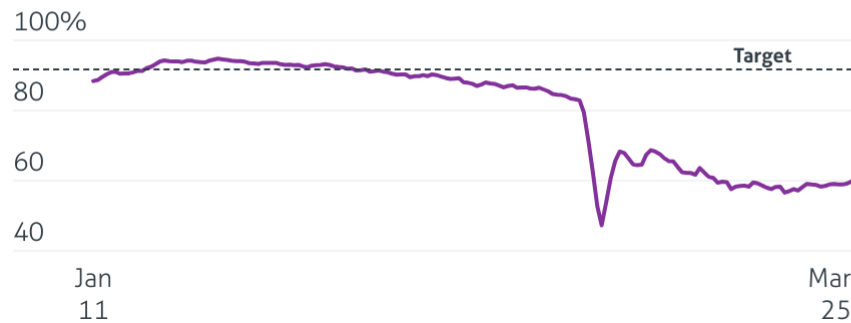
Cancer 2-month wait to treatment



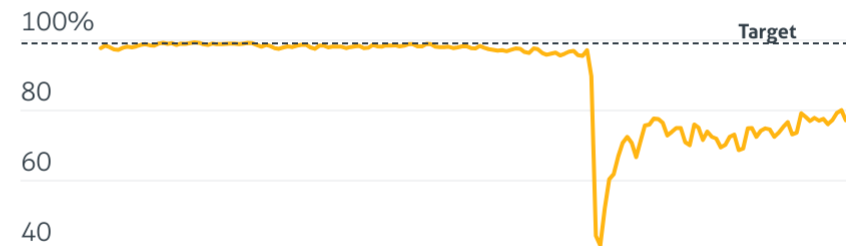
A&E 4-hour wait



Elective 18-week wait



Diagnostic 6-week wait

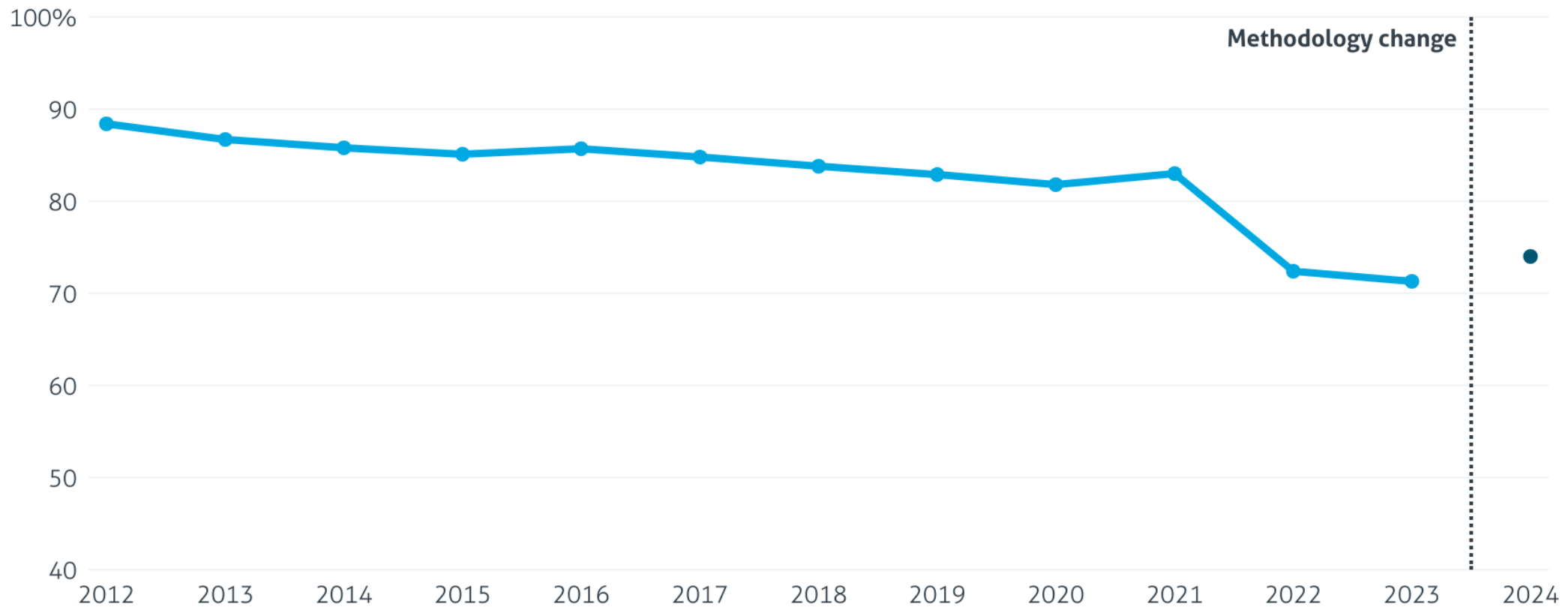


GP satisfaction has fallen since 2012

Patients satisfied with general practice, 2012–2024



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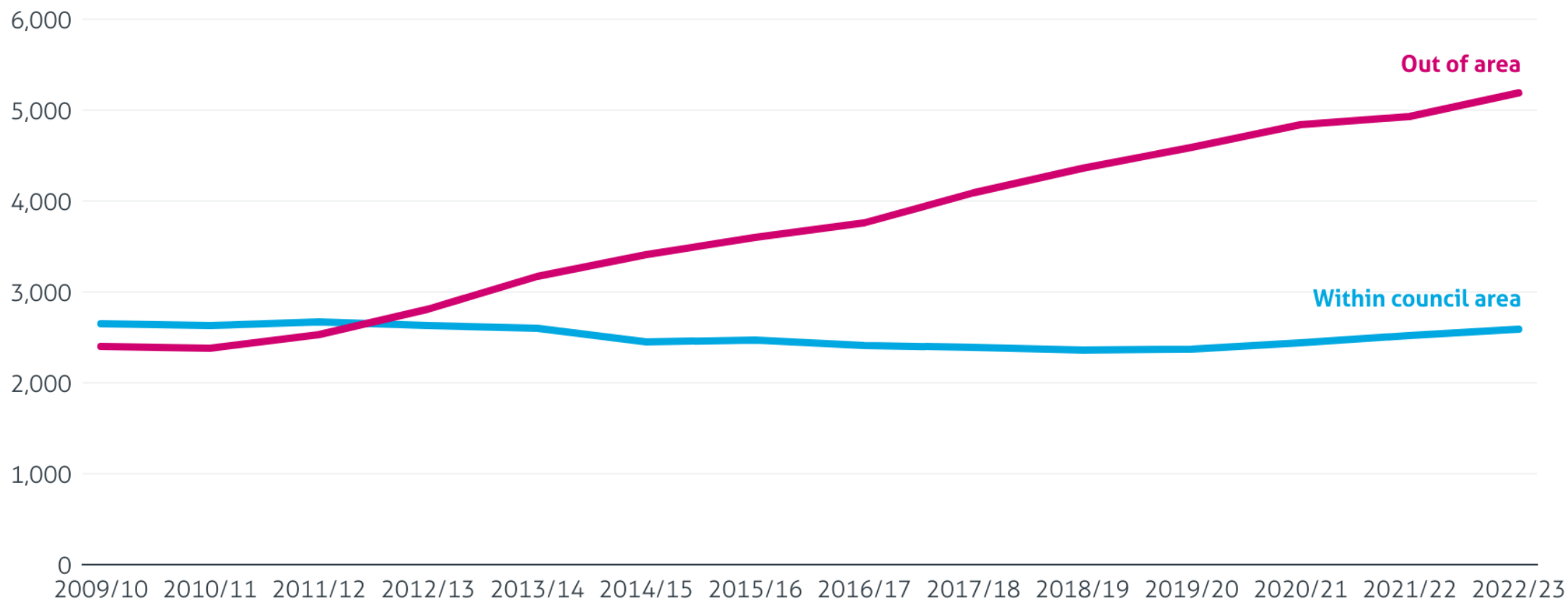
More children are in care and are placed far away

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Placements in children's homes by location, 2009/10–2022/23

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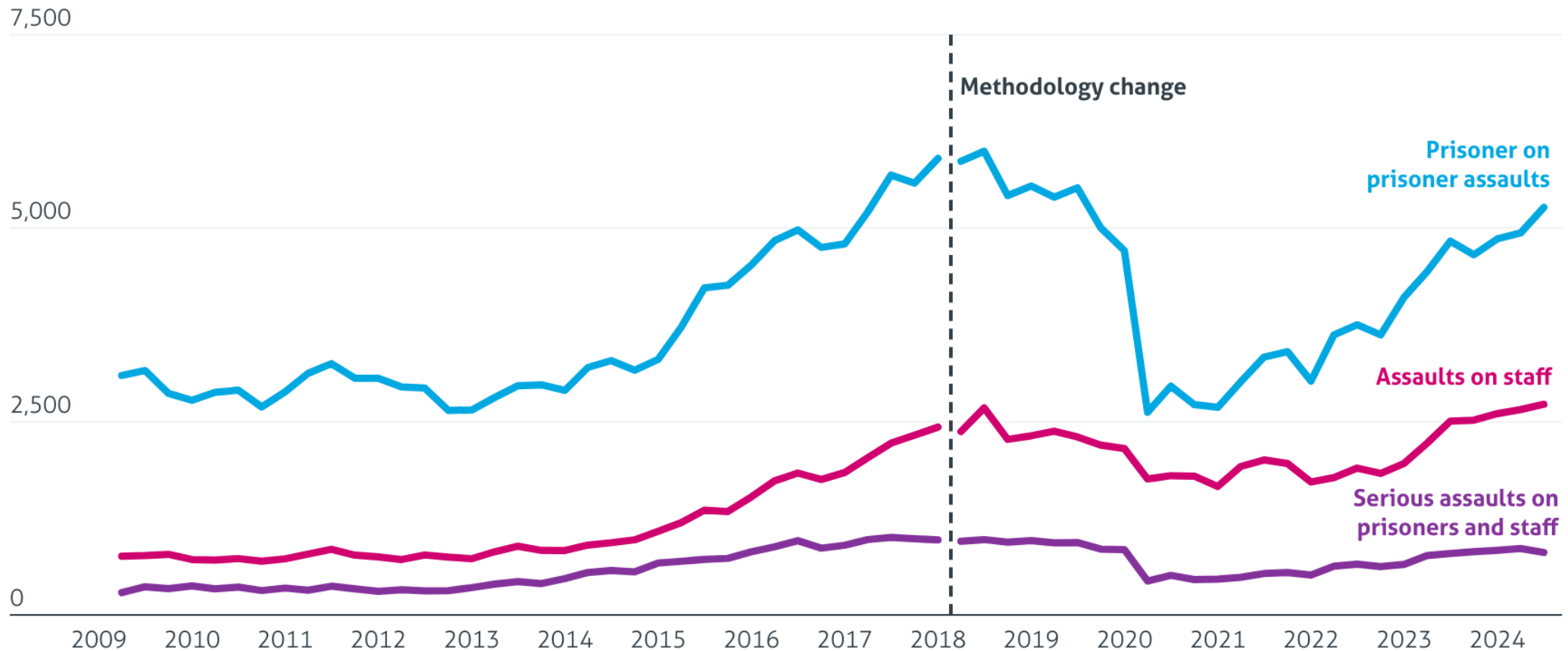
Violence in prisons is rising again

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Prison assaults, Q2 2009 to Q3 2024



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Cross-cutting drivers of poor performance

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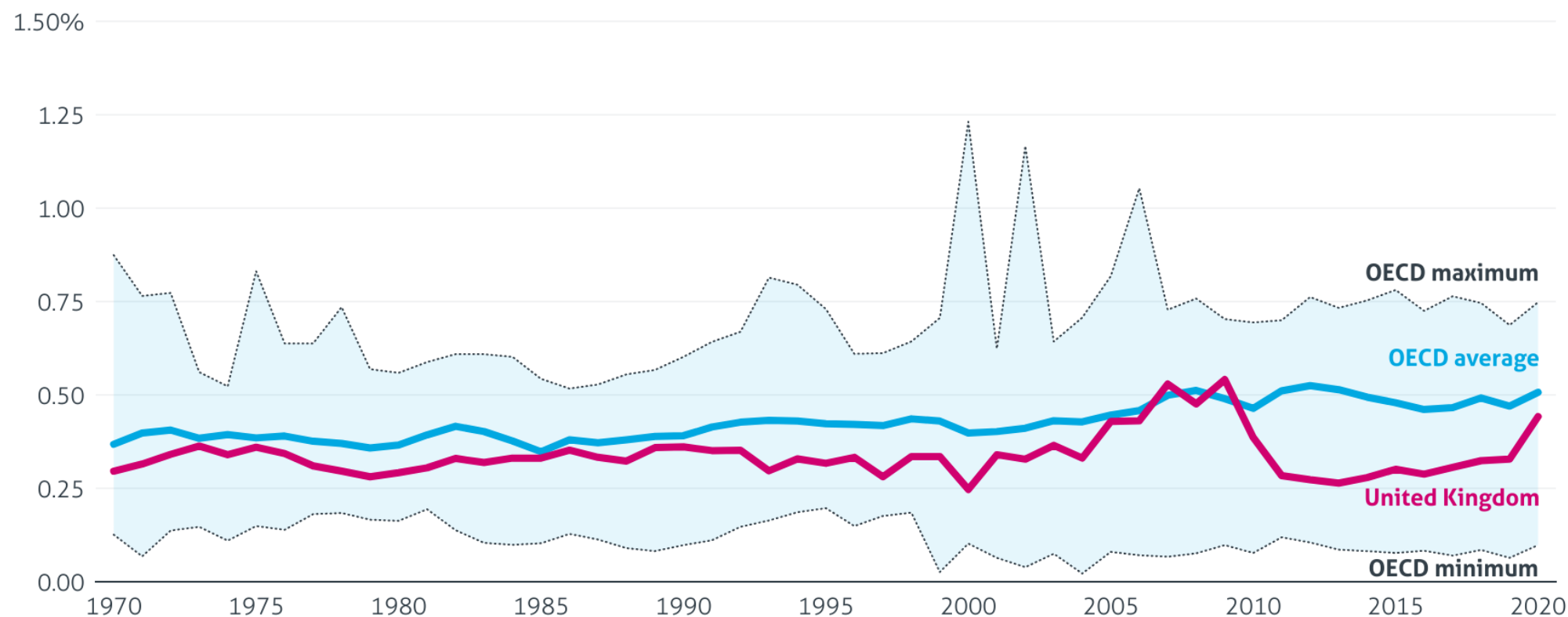


The government has long underinvested in capital..

Gross capital formation in health care as a percentage of GDP, by OECD country, 1970–2020



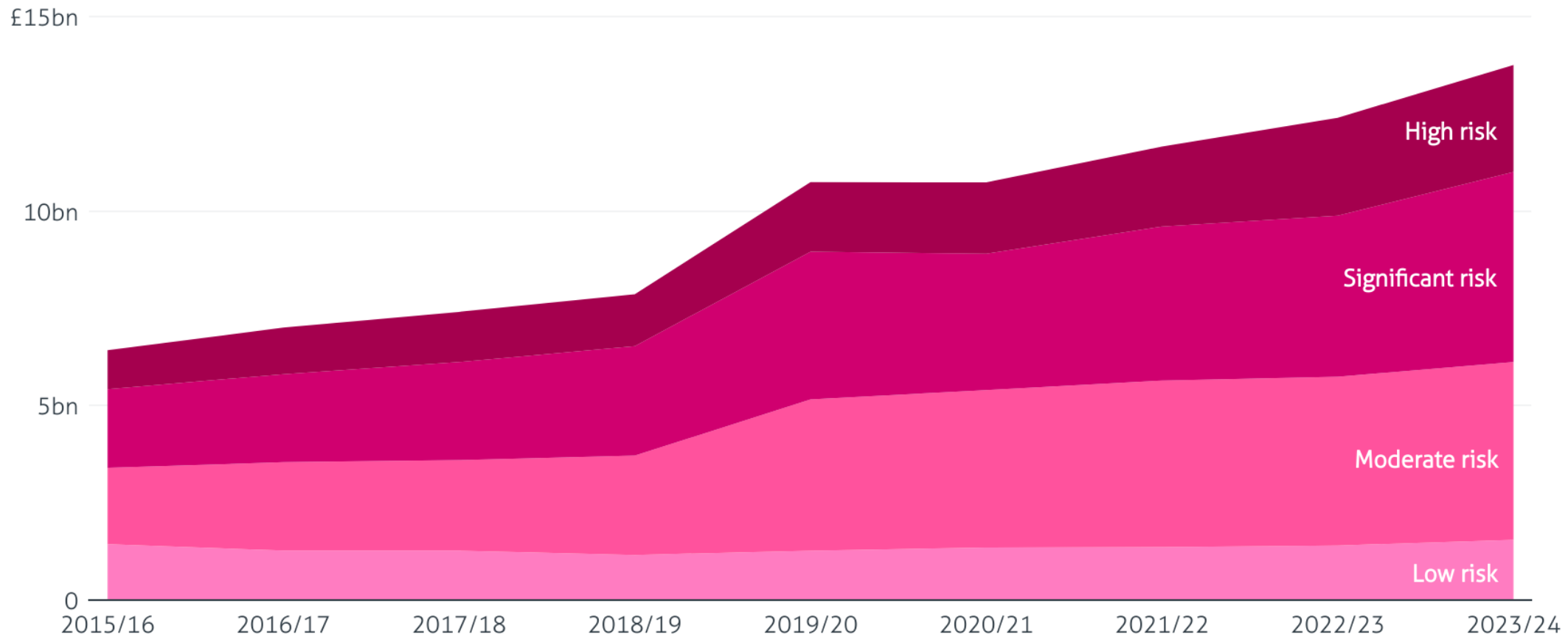
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...leading to a deterioration in the estate...

Cost to eradicate the hospital estate maintenance backlog, 2015/16–2024/24
(2023/24 prices)

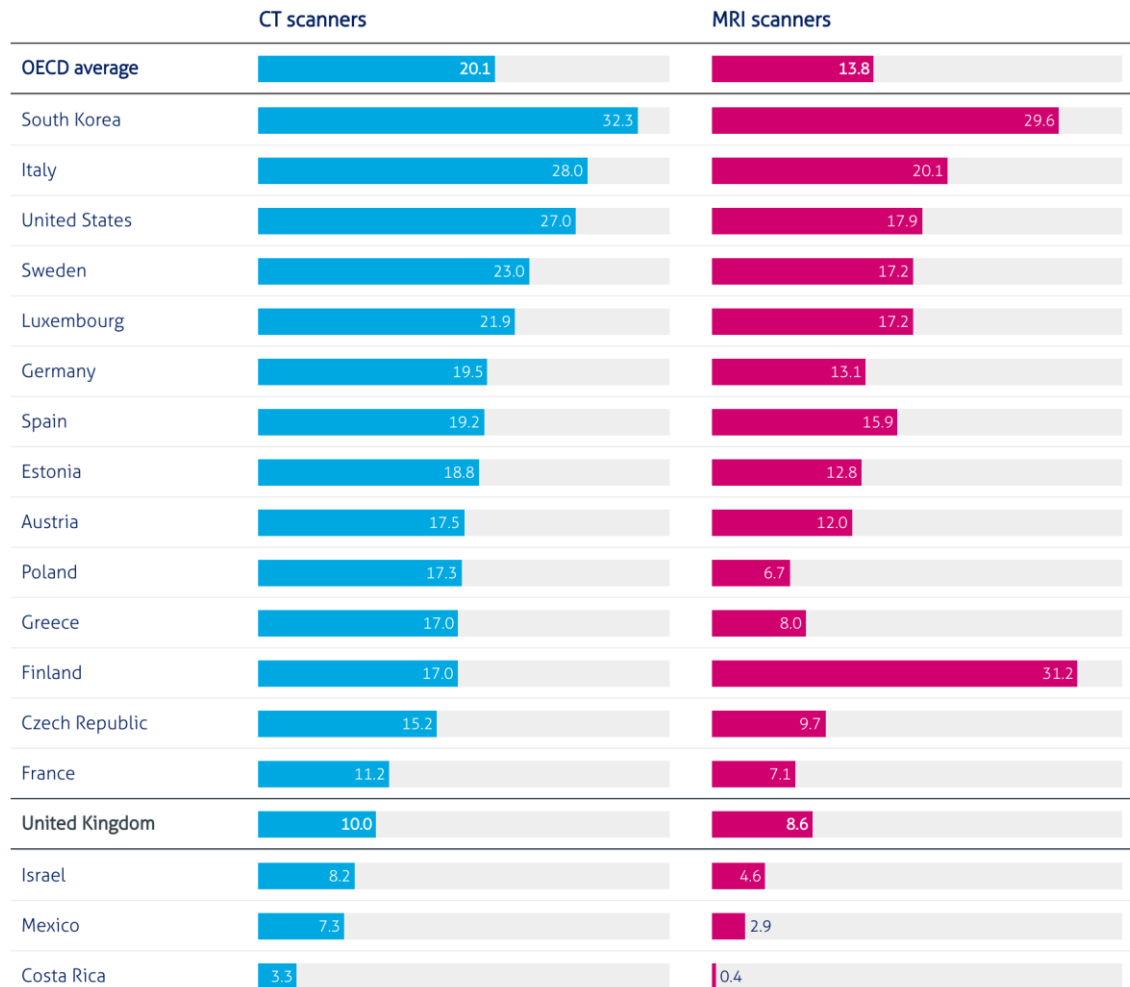
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...and insufficient equipment for staff

Hospital diagnostic equipment per million population, by OECD country, 2021

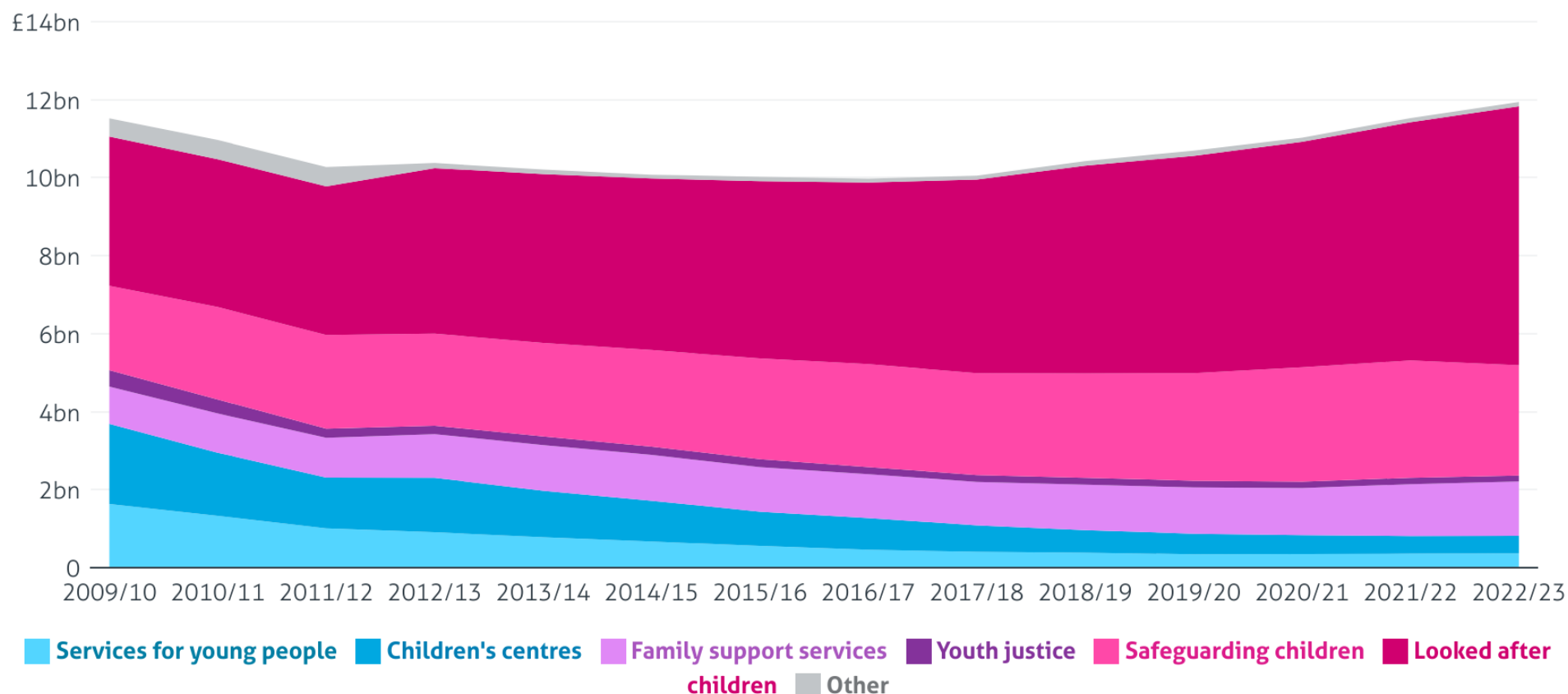
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Spending on preventative services has fallen

Local authority spending on children's services, by type, 2009/10–2022/23 (2022/23 prices)

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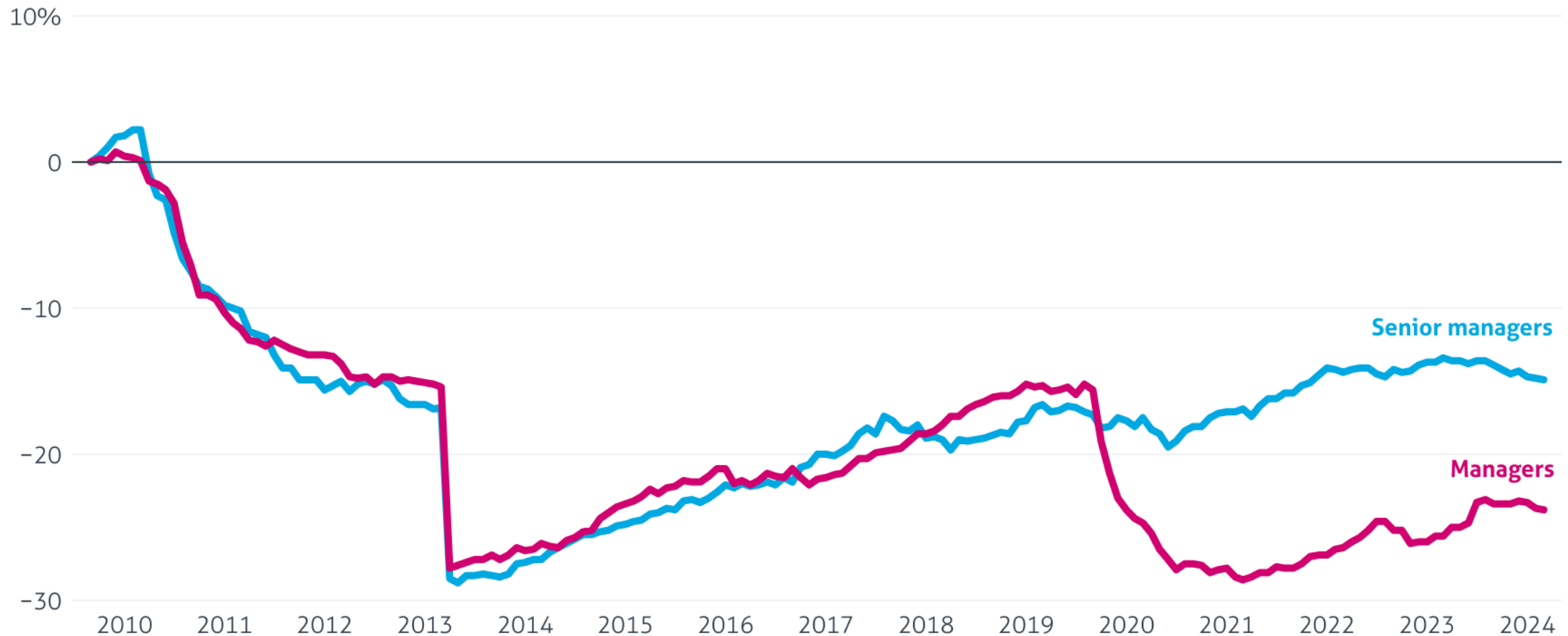
Services are generally undermanaged

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Change in NHS managers per staff member since September 2009

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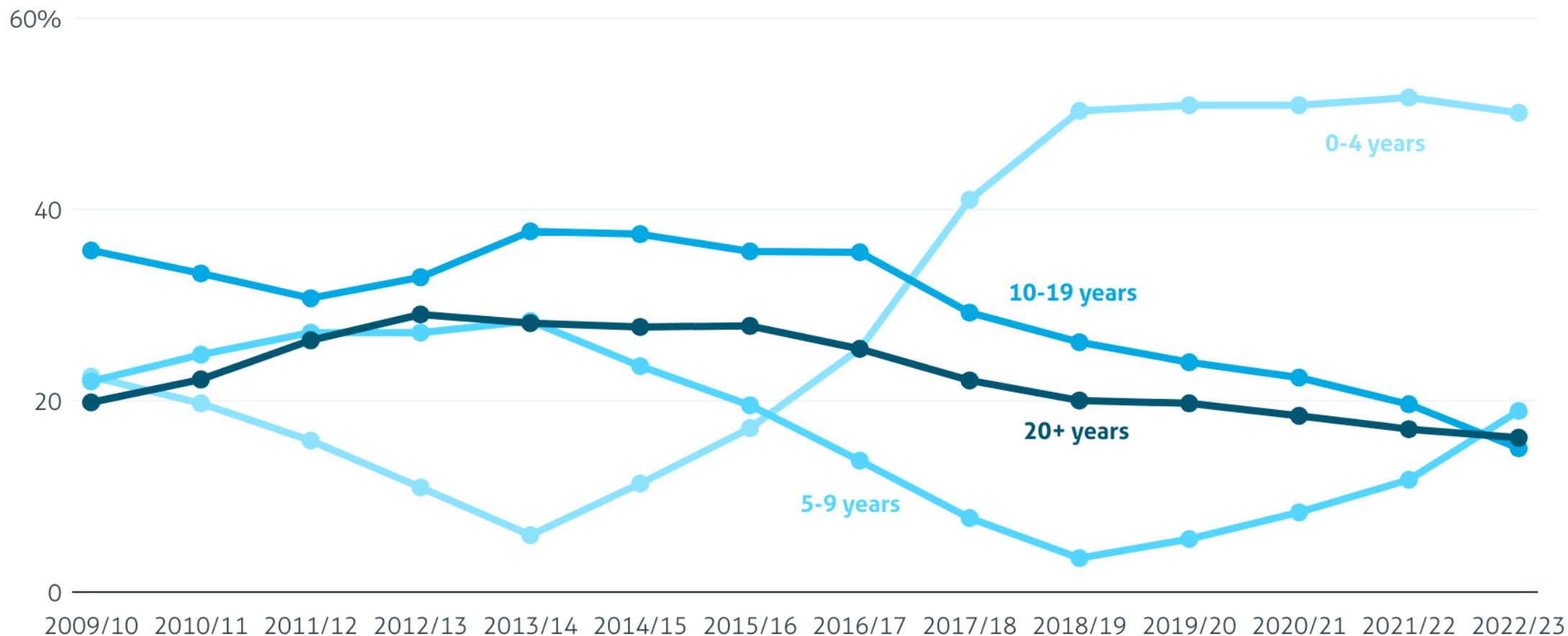
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Staff are less experienced

Prison officer experience (bands 3-5), 2009/10–2022/23

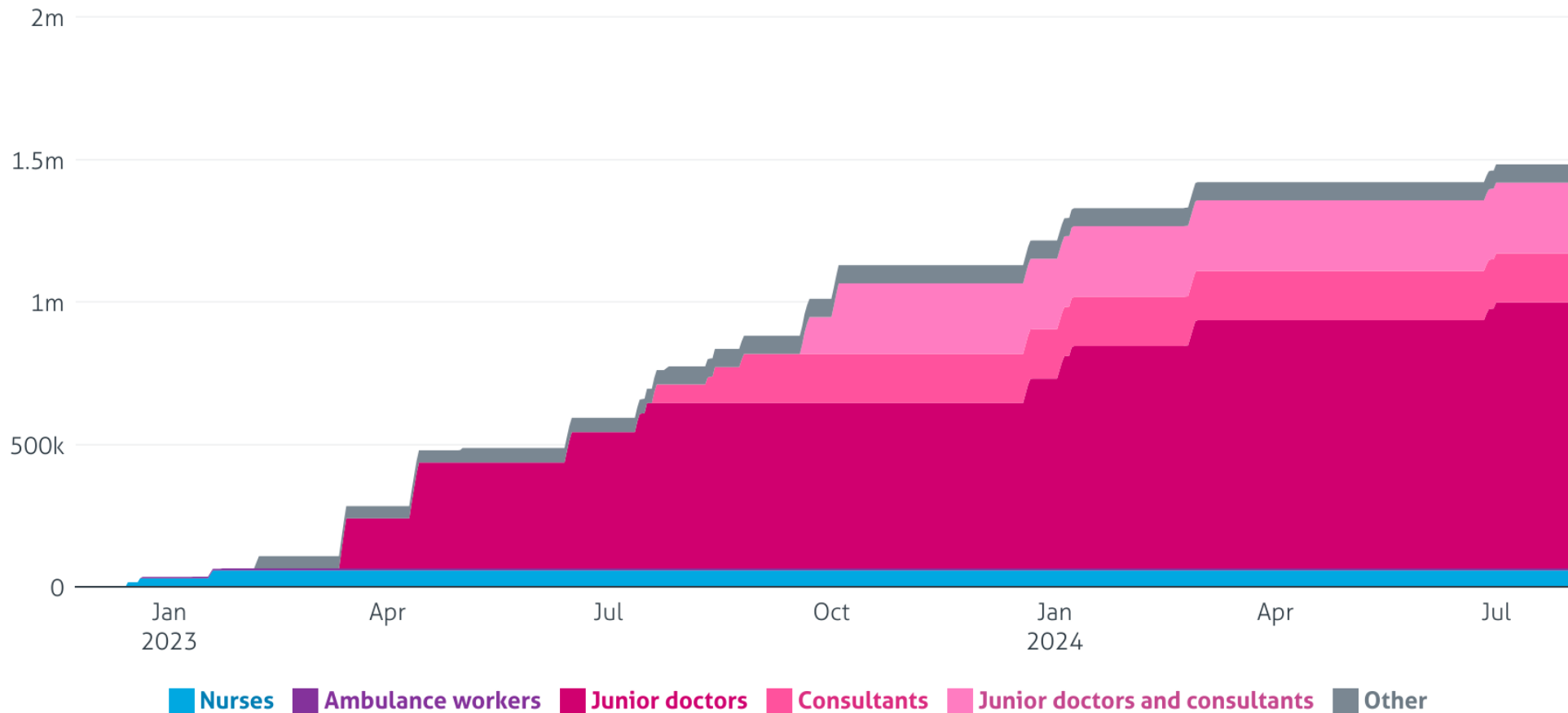
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Strikes hampered performance

Cumulative elective procedures rescheduled due to strike action, Dec 2022 to Jul 2024

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Ways to improve performance

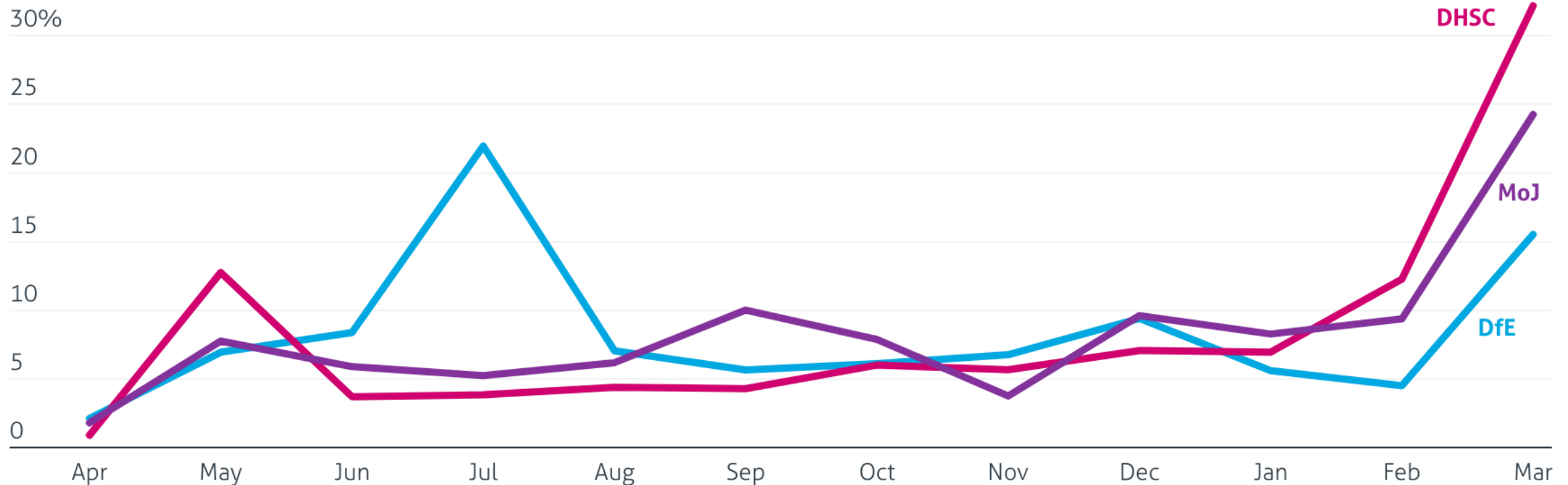
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More effective capital spending

Proportion of department capital spent by month, 2022/23

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Longer-term funding settlements

Timeline of spending reviews since 1998

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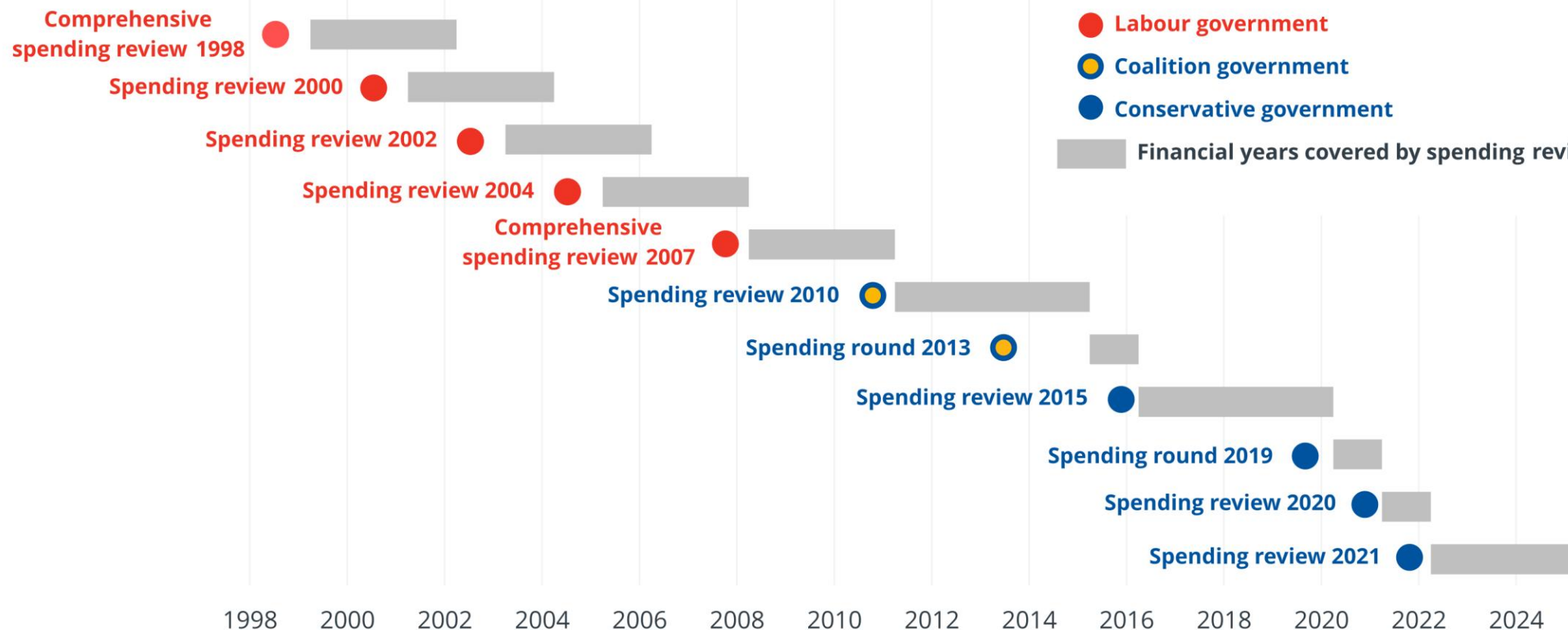
Spending review by:

● Labour government

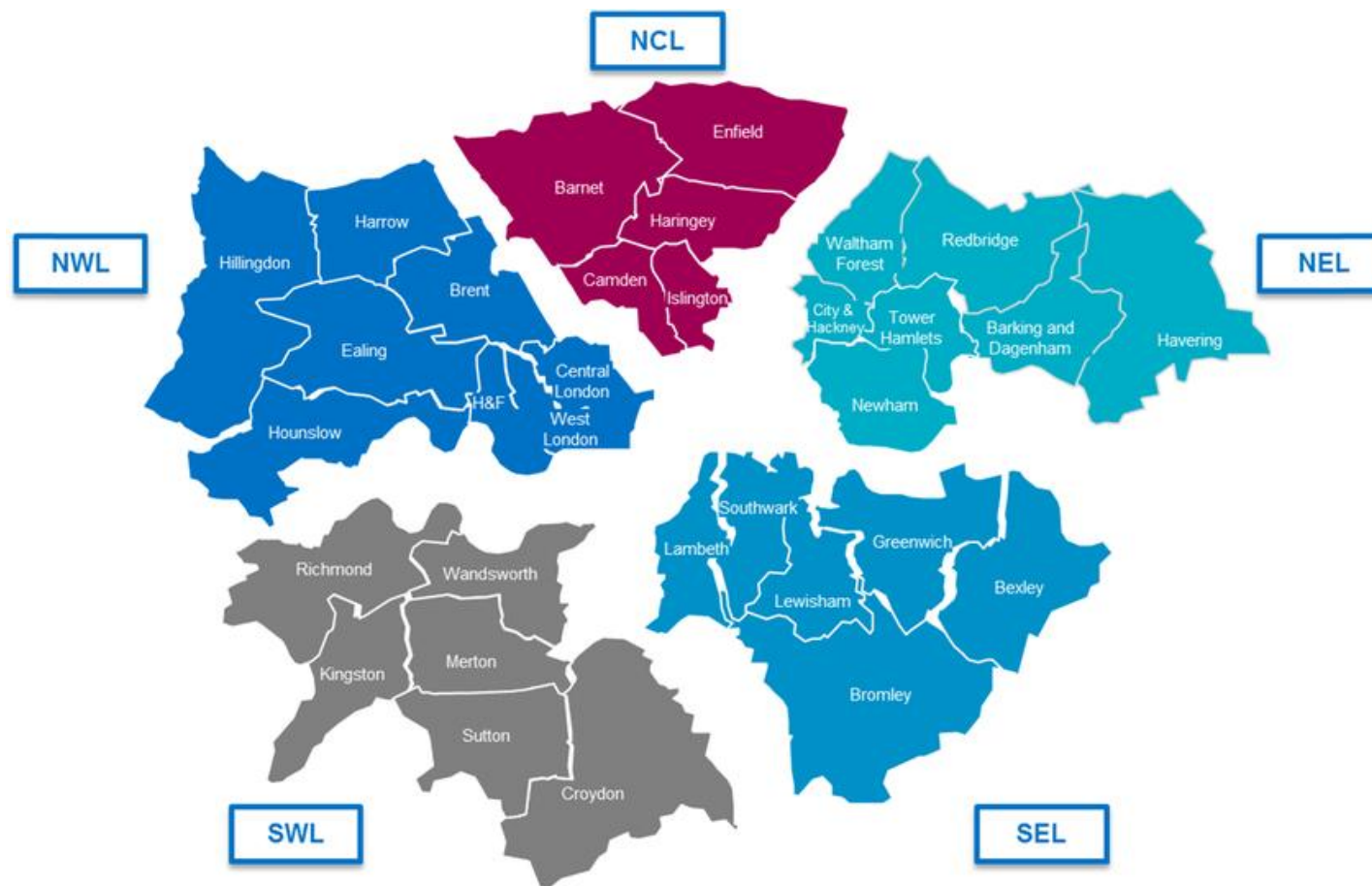
● Coalition government

● Conservative government

■ Financial years covered by spending review



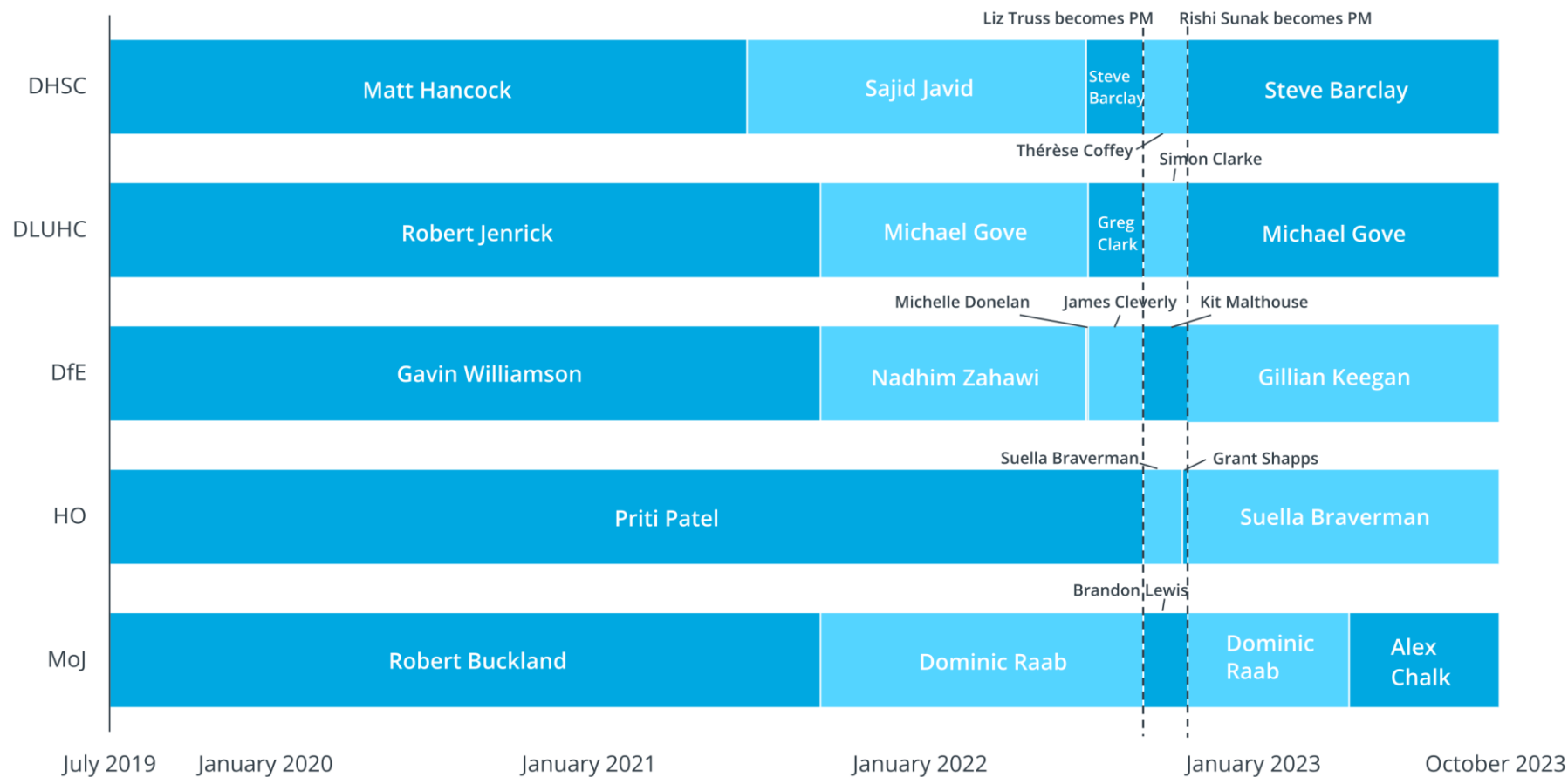
Better integration of services at a local level



Policy stability

Secretaries of state in public service departments, 24 July 2019 to 30 October 2023

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Setting clearer priorities for services

2024/25

2025/26

Area	Objective
Quality and patient safety	• Implement the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF)
Urgent and emergency care	• Improve A&E waiting times, compared to 2023/24, with a minimum of 78% of patients seen within 4 hours in March 2025 • Improve Category 2 ambulance response times to an average of 30 minutes across 2024/25 • Improve community services waiting times, with a focus on reducing long waits
Primary and community services	• Continue to improve the experience of access to primary care, including by supporting general practice to ensure that everyone who needs an appointment with their GP practice gets one within 2 weeks and those who contact their practice urgently are assessed the same or next day according to clinical need • Increase dental activity by implementing the plan to recover and reform NHS dentistry, improving units of dental activity (UDAs) towards pre-pandemic levels
Elective care	• Eliminate waits of over 65 weeks for elective care as soon as possible and by September 2024 at the latest (except where patients choose to wait longer or in specific specialities) • Deliver (or exceed) the system specific activity targets, consistent with the national value weighted activity target of 107% • Increase the proportion of all outpatient attendances that are for first appointments or follow-up appointments attracting a procedure tariff to 46% across 2024/25 • Improve patients' experience of choice at point of referral
Cancer	• Improve performance against the headline 62-day standard to 70% by March 2025 • Improve performance against the 28 day Faster Diagnosis Standard to 77% by March 2025 towards the 80% ambition by March 2026 • Increase the percentage of cancers diagnosed at stages 1 and 2 in line with the 75% early diagnosis ambition by 2028
Diagnostics	• Increase the percentage of patients that receive a diagnostic test within six weeks in line with the March 2025 ambition of 95%
Maternity, neonatal and women's health	• Continue to implement the Three-year delivery plan for maternity and neonatal services, including making progress towards the national safety ambition and increasing fill rates against funded establishment • Establish and develop at least one women's health hub in every ICB by December 2024, working in partnership with local authorities • Improve patient flow and work towards eliminating inappropriate out of area placements
Mental health	• Increase the number of people accessing transformed models of adult community mental health (to 400,000), perinatal mental health (to 66,000) and children and young people services (345,000 additional CYP aged 0–25 compared to 2019) • Increase the number of adults and older adults completing a course of treatment for anxiety and depression via NHS Talking Therapies to 700,000, with at least 67% achieving reliable improvement and 48% reliable recovery • Reduce inequalities by working towards 75% of people with severe mental illness receiving a full annual physical health check, with at least 60% receiving one by March 2025 • Improve quality of life, effectiveness of treatment, and care for people with dementia by increasing the dementia diagnosis rate to 66.7% by March 2025
People with a learning disability and autistic people	• Ensure 75% of people aged 14 and over on GP learning disability registers receive an annual health check in the year to 31 March 2025 • Reduce reliance on mental health inpatient care for people with a learning disability and autistic people, to the target of no more than 30 adults or 12–15 under 18s for every 1 million population
Prevention and health inequalities	• Increase the % of patients with hypertension treated according to NICE guidance to 80% by March 2025 • Increase the percentage of patients aged 25–84 years with a CVD risk score greater than 20% on lipid lowering therapies to 65% by March 2025 • Increase vaccination uptake for children and young people year on year towards WHO recommended levels • Continue to address health inequalities and deliver on the Core20PLUS5 approach, for adults and children and young people
Workforce	• Improve the working lives of all staff and increase staff retention and attendance through systematic implementation of all elements of the People Promise retention interventions • Improve the working lives of doctors in training by increasing choice and flexibility in rotas, and reducing duplicative inductions and payroll errors • Provide sufficient clinical placements and apprenticeship pathways to meet the requirements of the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan
Use of resources	• Deliver a balanced net system financial position for 2024/25 • Reduce agency spending across the NHS, to a maximum of 3.2% of the total pay bill across 2024/25



Priority	Success measure
Reduce the time people wait for elective care	Improve the percentage of patients waiting no longer than 18 weeks for treatment to 65% nationally by March 2026, with every trust expected to deliver a minimum 5% point improvement ²
	Improve the percentage of patients waiting no longer than 18 weeks for a first appointment to 72% nationally by March 2026, with every trust expected to deliver a minimum 5% point improvement ²
	Reduce the proportion of people waiting over 52 weeks for treatment to less than 1% of the total waiting list by March 2026
	Improve performance against the headline 62-day cancer standard to 75% by March 2026 Improve performance against the 28-day cancer Faster Diagnosis Standard to 80% by March 2026
Improve A&E waiting times and ambulance response times	Improve A&E waiting times, with a minimum of 78% of patients admitted, discharged and transferred from ED within 4 hours in March 2026 and a higher proportion of patients admitted, discharged and transferred from ED within 12 hours across 2025/26 compared to 2024/25 Improve Category 2 ambulance response times to an average of 30 minutes across 2025/26
Improve access to general practice and urgent dental care	Improve patient experience of access to general practice as measured by the ONS Health Insights Survey Increase the number of urgent dental appointments in line with the national ambition to provide 700,000 more
Improve mental health and learning disability care	Reduce average length of stay in adult acute mental health beds Increase the number of CYP accessing services to achieve the national ambition for 345,000 additional CYP aged 0–25 compared to 2019 Reduce reliance on mental health inpatient care for people with a learning disability and autistic people, delivering a minimum 10% reduction
Live within the budget allocated, reducing waste and improving productivity	Deliver a balanced net system financial position for 2025/26 Reduce agency expenditure as far as possible, with a minimum 30% reduction on current spending across all systems Close the activity/ WTE gap against pre-Covid levels (adjusted for case mix)
Maintain our collective focus on the overall quality and safety of our services	Improve safety in maternity and neonatal services, delivering the key actions of the of the 'Three year delivery plan'
Address inequalities and shift towards prevention	Reduce inequalities in line with the Core20PLUS5 approach for adults and children and young people Increase the % of patients with hypertension treated according to NICE guidance, and the % of patients with GP recorded CVD, who have their cholesterol levels managed to NICE guidance