

Government in numbers

The UK state is a complex mosaic of organisations, democratically accountable to 44.7 million electors and supporting a population of 65.1 million people.^{1 2}

The Government's accounts identify more than 6,000 organisations across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales as the UK public sector. Together, they employ 5.3 million people which is 16.8 per cent of everyone in employment. That is the lowest percentage since current records began in 1999.³

As well as national Government in Whitehall, three distinctive administrations based in Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh run the UK state, each held to account by a unique elected assembly. Six political parties are currently parties of national and devolved government, plus an independent minister in the Northern Ireland Executive. Some 145 ministers serve as the UK's national political decision makers.

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A total of 947 elected representatives currently legislate and scrutinise government in our elected assemblies, along with 799 members of the House of Lords acting as a second chamber of the UK Parliament.

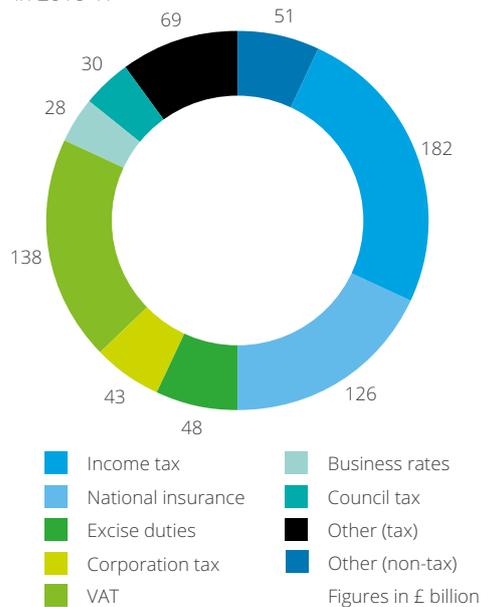
In June, 33.6 million UK citizens voted in a referendum on membership of the EU, representing 72.2 per cent of the electorate. A majority of 51.9 per cent, equalling 17.4 million people, voted to leave.

The 73 UK members of the European Parliament will continue to scrutinise EU legislation that affects the UK until Brexit is complete. As the Government is expected to trigger Article 50 and begin negotiations in 2017, it is unlikely that any UK representatives will take part in the 2019 elections to the European Parliament.

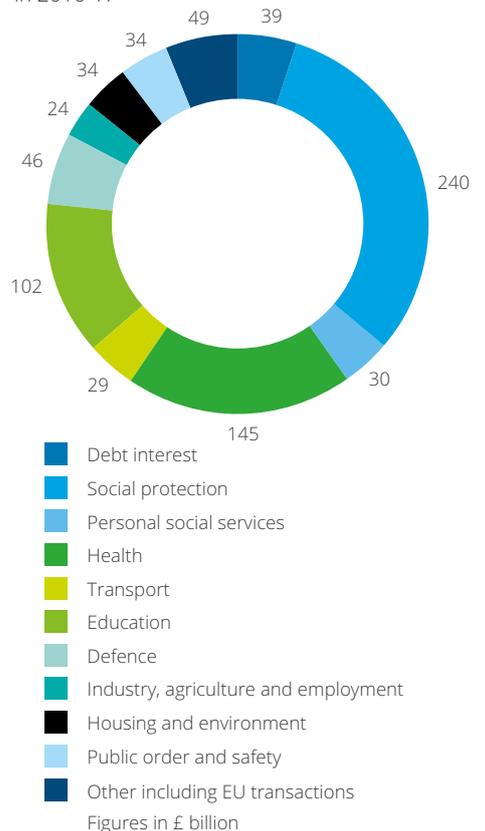
This financial year, the UK Government will raise £716 billion and spend £772 billion, as shown in figure 1. The difference between what the state earns and what it spends – the deficit – is funded by borrowing, and this financial year the Government is expected to borrow £56 billion. The cumulative effect of that borrowing over time means the Government's debts have risen threefold since the financial crisis to £1.6 trillion in 2016.⁴

The UK Government's latest balance sheet shows £1.46 trillion of assets including land, the road network and military equipment, and liabilities of £3.56 trillion including public sector pension schemes and borrowing. The state's net liability – the difference between what the Government owns and what it owes at an accounting year end – rose by £263 billion to reach £2.1 trillion at last count for the 2014-15 financial year.

Figure 1. Government income will be £716 billion in 2016-17



Government will spend £772 billion in 2016-17



Source: Budget 2016, HM Treasury