Public wants Chancellor to make NHS top spending priority
(while cutting £75bn from welfare and pensions)

SunLife survey of 10,000 people reveals how public would spend UK Budget

- Nation wants NHS to become top spending priority, getting £138bn
- Voters want welfare budget to be cut by a quarter
- Call for spending on older people to fall by almost a third
- Public wants tax cuts to be more than doubled

With the election complete and speculation that the Chancellor will reveal his emergency budget in the next few weeks, new research from SunLife reveals how the public would like to see the UK Budget spent; more money for the NHS, education and environment and greater tax cuts – all funded by cuts to pensions and welfare.

SunLife’s Big British Budget survey gave voters the chance to become Chancellor for the day and decide how they would distribute £600bn of the nation’s Budget across 10 key Government spending areas.

**Dean Lamble, managing director at SunLife said:** “The Big British Budget was an engaging way to tackle a serious subject and discover how the public would prioritise the country’s spending. And with news that an emergency budget may be announced soon, this is a great opportunity for the Chancellor to listen to what UK voters really want.”

More than 10,000 people completed the survey, and SunLife can now reveal that the voting public wants to:

- increase spending on healthcare (the NHS, social care and mental health) to £138.3bn to become top spending expenditure
- slash spending on older people (pensions, concessionary travel, the Winter Fuel Allowance and social care) by 32% from £150bn to £101.7bn
- cut spending on welfare (unemployment benefit, job seeker’s allowance, child benefit and the minimum wage) by 25% to £82.7bn
- increase spending on tax cuts from £7bn to £17.9bn
- more than double the UK’s environment budget (renewable energy technologies and green subsidies) from £11bn to more than £26bn.
- boost education spending by 12% to £100bn, so it surpasses welfare as the nation’s third biggest spending priority

**Dean Lamble, SunLife’s managing director added:** “With an ageing UK population, pressure on areas such as welfare and state pensions will only increase. But voters - even the over 50s - told us they want to reduce spending in these areas in favour of lower taxes and bigger health, education and environment budgets.

“This suggests that more of us are happy to make our own provisions for the future, especially if we’re given more financial freedom through lower taxes. The financial services industry should take note and make its services more accessible to a wider cross-section of the Great British public, empowering them to take a greater role in their own financial planning.”
How the top five expenditures would change:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forecast Spending (2015)*</th>
<th>The Nation’s budget**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Older people (£150bn)</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Healthcare (£138.3bn, up one place)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Healthcare (£133bn)</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Older people (£101.72bn down one place)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Welfare (£110bn)</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Education (£100.66bn, up one place)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Education (£90bn)</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Welfare (£82.73bn, down one place)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Defence (£36bn)</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Law and order (£45.90bn, up one place)</td>
</tr>
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Biggest proportional changes in environment, transport and tax cuts

SunLife’s research shows that the largest proportional increase the public wants to see is in the amount dedicated to tax cuts, calling for a 155% increase from £7bn to £17.9bn. Next biggest is the amount spent on the environment; respondents said they would more than double forecast spending on renewable energy technologies and green subsidies from £11bn to £26bn.

The third biggest proportional increase would be to transport, with the nation calling for 72% more to be spent on the UK’s roads and railways. The public would also like to see the UK’s law and order budget increase by more than half to almost £46bn, overtaking defence as the nation’s fifth biggest spending priority.

The biggest proportional decreases would be in the amount spent on older people and the welfare state. UK voters have called for spending on pensions, OAP bus passes, the winter fuel allowance and social care to be slashed by 32%, knocking spending on older people down to second place after the NHS as the UK’s biggest Government expenditure. Meanwhile the public called for the welfare state to be cut by 25%; making welfare their fourth largest spending priority, pushing spending on education up one place to third.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biggest changes</th>
<th>Forecast Spending (2015)*</th>
<th>The Nation’s preferences**</th>
<th>Percentage change</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax cuts</td>
<td>£7bn</td>
<td>£17.9bn</td>
<td>+ 155%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>£11bn</td>
<td>£26.3bn</td>
<td>+ 139%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>£20bn</td>
<td>£34.4bn</td>
<td>+72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law and Order</td>
<td>£30bn</td>
<td>£45.9bn</td>
<td>+53%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Older People</td>
<td>£150bn</td>
<td>£101.7bn</td>
<td>- 32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>£110bn</td>
<td>£82.7bn</td>
<td>- 25%</td>
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The Great Age Divide

Unsurprisingly, when it comes to priorities by age, the research indicates that the older we get the more we prioritise spending on older people. Meanwhile the younger we are, the more money we want to allocate to education; 18-25 year olds would spend nine per cent more on education but 16 per cent less on older people than the over 50s.

However a number of other age differences also emerge from SunLife’s research: for example, those aged 18-25 would spend 30% more on the environment than the over 50s, while the over 50s would spend 8% (£3bn) more on defence than 18-25 year olds.
Dean Lamble, SunLife’s managing director concludes: “The recent election result suggests voters feel long term economic planning is very important, while the results of our survey show the British public also has a clear view on how the UK’s finances should be spent.

“Of course, just the like the new Government, we all have limited funds and have to make difficult decisions on where to prioritise our spending.

“But, whether saving for the future or ensuring you and your loved ones are covered should the worst happen, at SunLife we believe there are straightforward, affordable measures we can all take for a brighter financial future.’

-ENDS-

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About the research
The Great British Budget tool indicates what is forecast to be spent in 2015 on 10 of the UK’s top Government spending priorities and gives voters a straightforward way of deciding how they would distribute £600bn of the nation's Budget. www.sunlifedirect.co.uk/bbb

*Forecast Government spending allocations for 2015, as detailed by HM Treasury Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA). Tax cuts forecast taken from Conservatives’ announced plans in January 2015:

- Older People - including pensions, concessionary travel, the Winter Fuel Allowance and social care (£150bn)
- Healthcare – NHS, social care and mental health (£133bn)
- Welfare Spending -including unemployment benefit, child benefit and the minimum wage (£110bn)
- Education - Early Years, schools and academies, tuition fees and apprenticeships (£90bn)
- Defence- budget committed to the armed forces and the UK’s nuclear deterrent, Trident (£36bn)
- Law & Order - front line policing, emergency services and justice spending, including the UK court system (£30bn)
- Transport - including HS2, roads infrastructure and plans for renationalisation of the railway (£20bn)
- Environment - renewable energy technologies and green subsidies (£11bn)
- Foreign Aid - supporting developing countries through grants and bilateral co-operation (£10bn)
- Tax Cuts - spending dedicated to giving cuts in income tax, corporation tax and tax on small businesses. (£7bn)

**Data taken from 10,132 participants in SunLife’s Big British Budget tool between 19 March 2015 and 17 April 2015.
Summary of SunLife’s data:

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<td>22.00</td>
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About SunLife
SunLife rebranded in 2014 but has been around since 1810, making it one of the oldest financial services companies in the UK. The company is a direct-to-consumer financial services provider, offering a range of straightforward and affordable products across insurance, savings and protection.

SunLife’s customer satisfaction score is 97%*. It was the first company in the UK to offer life assurance without a medical and is the market leader in over 50s plans**.

SunLife also conducts regular, rigorous research across financial services and the later life market, and owns the annual ‘Cost of Dying’ report which has been one of the most significant pieces of ongoing research in its field for the last five years.

The company’s ambition is to ‘democratise financial services’ – giving everyday customers access to products that can give them a brighter financial future.


**Most popular whole of life guaranteed acceptance plan bought directly. ABI statistics up to 31st December 2014.