

January 2016

PSNC Briefing 004/16: Update on the Health and Care Landscape

This briefing is part of a series issued regularly by PSNC to inform pharmacy contractors and LPCs of developments in the wider health and care landscape beyond community pharmacy. It builds on the Health & Care Review articles which are published on the PSNC website every week.

New Change4Life campaign launched

A new [Change4Life campaign](#) has been launched to encourage parents to take control of their children's sugar intake following research revealing that four to ten year old children consume, on average, the same amount of sugar as the weight of a five year old child.

The campaign is accompanied by Sugar Smart, a new app which parents can use free of charge to see how much sugar is contained in everyday food and beverages by scanning the barcodes of the items.

Additionally, five million Sugar Smart packs will be given away to primary school aged children and their families via schools, local authorities and retailers.

Reducing missed hospital appointments using text messages

A [randomised controlled trial](#) conducted by Imperial College, Department of Health (DH) and Barts NHS Trust, has showed that text messages which informed the patient about the specific waste to the NHS of not attending, reduced missed appointments by 23% compared to the standard message.

Around one in 10 hospital outpatient appointments are missed every year in England. Text message reminders serve as an effective and cost-free way to reduce missed appointments; however, there is no evidence about the specific wording they should contain in order to be most effective.

The study's main limitations are that it took place in a single location in England, and that it required accurate phone records, which were only obtained for 20% of eligible patients.

CQC appoints 'guardian' for whistleblowers

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has appointed Dame Eileen Smith, the country's first national guardian to support healthcare staff in speaking out about concerns over patient safety. This comes as a response to the [Francis review](#) into creating an open and honest reporting culture in the NHS.

The CQC [briefing](#) sets out four key roles of the guardian:

1. to provide support and advice for the local guardians;
2. to provide support for the system, such as sharing good practice and reporting on common themes;

3. to advise providers (NHS Trusts); and
4. to advise staff raising concerns.

A CQC spokeswoman [confirmed](#) that the national guardian's role in providing leadership and good practice guidance could also apply to primary care.

Prime Minister pledges a revolution in mental health treatment

The Prime Minister has [announced](#) almost a billion pounds of investment to enhance mental health services across the country.

His plans include:

- £290 million of new investment over the next five years to provide mental healthcare to new mothers;
- £247 million to invest in liaison mental health services in emergency departments;
- over £400 million to enable 24/7 treatment in communities as a safe and effective alternative to hospital; and
- expanded services to help teenagers with eating disorders – as anorexia kills more than any other mental health condition.

The plans have also been recommended by NHS England's independent mental health taskforce and set up as part of the NHS plan for the next five years. The report, to be published in the coming weeks, will also suggest a five year mental health strategy for the NHS.

Tipping the scales: why preventing obesity makes economic sense

A new [report](#), from the UK Health Forum and Cancer Research UK, has found that rising rates of obesity could lead to 670,000 new cancer cases in the UK over the next 20 years, as well as millions of new cases of type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease and stroke. It also predicts that almost 75% of adults will be overweight or obese by 2035.

This level of obesity would cost the NHS an additional £2.5 billion a year by 2035 over and above what is already spent on obesity-related disease.

However, the study shows that small changes can have dramatic impacts – for example, a 1% reduction in the number of overweight or obese people every year could prevent more than 64,000 cancer cases as well as saving £300 million for the NHS in the year 2035 alone.

The report calls on the Government to act now and introduce specific measures such as:

- introducing a 6am to 9pm watershed ban on TV advertising of foods high in fat, sugar and salt;
- a review of online marketing of unhealthy foods and drinks to children;
- a Government framework for businesses to reduce the fat, calorie and sugar content in their foods;
- increase funding for cycling and walking;
- examining the case for further taxes on food high in fat, sugar and salt and increasing the affordability of healthy alternatives;
- extending front-of-pack nutritional traffic light labelling to as many food and drink products as possible; and
- introducing a 20p per litre duty on sugary drinks.

DH alcohol guidelines

The Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COC) has issued a [statement](#), which outlines the new recommendations on limits for alcohol consumption in relation to increased risk of cancer. The COC statement is based on findings which reveal that all types of alcoholic beverages can cause cancer, with little difference in risk between different drinks.

The COC is a UK committee of independent experts that advise DH, the Food Standards Agency and other government departments and agencies on the likelihood of cancer of chemicals found in food, consumer products and the environment.

The COC review supports the Chief Medical Officers' (CMOs) new proposed recommendations to limit the consumption of alcohol to minimise the health-related risks associated with it. DH has launched a [public consultation](#) to seek views on the CMOs guidelines on weekly regular drinking; advice on single episodes of drinking; and drinking during pregnancy. The DH public consultation will run until 1st April 2016.

Chronic smoking-related lung disease blights over 1 million lives in England

Public Health England (PHE) has obtained the latest GP figures on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which [highlight](#) the risk and prevalence of the disease. The latest figures show that more than one million people are living with COPD in England with smoking being the largest preventable risk factor. Additionally, around 25,000 deaths each year in England are attributable to COPD, twice the European average.

PHE has also issued a short film which illustrates the debilitating nature of advanced COPD and urges smokers to quit.

PHE reports drop in uptake of shingles vaccination

PHE has published an [evaluation](#) of the second year of the shingles vaccination programme in England for 2014/15, which indicates that uptake of the vaccine by the routine, 70 year old cohort was down by almost 3% on the previous year.

Early provisional figures for the first three months of the 2015/16 programme also show further decline in vaccine uptake compared to the previous winter.

PHE has urged practices to continue to offer the shingles vaccine to eligible patients to protect them against severe shingles and ensuring eligible patients do not miss out.

Patients who are eligible for the shingles vaccine include those aged 70 years and 78 years as of 1st September 2015.

The Better Care Fund (BCF) will provide financial support for councils and NHS organisations to jointly plan and deliver local services

DH has issued [guidance](#), prepared jointly with the Department for Communities and Local Government, which sets out how the [Better Care Fund \(BCF\)](#) will be implemented in 2016/17.

This guidance is intended for use by Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), Local Authorities (LAs), Health and Wellbeing Boards and NHS England at a local level.

The document contains:

- information on the statutory and financial basis of the BCF;

- conditions of access to the BCF funding;
- the assurance and approval of the local BCF plans;
- national performance metrics; and
- implementation for 2016/17.

Areas will be able to graduate from the existing BCF programme management once they can demonstrate that they have moved beyond its requirements.

Updated tuberculosis guidelines will help target most vulnerable

People from socially deprived backgrounds who are most vulnerable to contracting tuberculosis (TB) are the main focus of updated TB [guidelines](#) recently issued by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

The guidelines call for greater education and preventative measures and also raise the upper age limit for the treatment and diagnosis of latent TB from 35 to 65 years and under.

First national evaluation of NHS Health Check programme published

The British Medical Journal Open has published the first major [evaluation](#) of the [NHS Health Check](#) service in England.

The study is based on data from 655 GP practices with 1.7 million eligible people. During the study period, the checks identified:

- 7,844 new cases of high blood pressure (1 new case in every 27 checks);
- 1,934 new cases of type 2 diabetes (1 new case in every 110 checks);
- 807 new cases of chronic kidney disease (1 new case in every 265 checks); and
- 27,624 people (12.9% of all attendees) as being at high risk of heart disease.

Overall, the study gives a useful insight into the progress of the NHS Health Check programme. Further research is likely to be needed to help give an indication of what impact it is having on people's risk factors and outcomes, especially as this is the first programme of its kind in the world.

The study was unable to distinguish NHS Health Checks conducted in general practice from those conducted by other providers such as community pharmacies.

UK National Screening Committee recommendations include new bowel cancer screening test

Following a meeting of the UK national screening committee (NSC), 11 recommendations from the committee have been [published](#), including improvements to existing screening programmes for Down's syndrome, cervical and bowel cancer and eye screening for people with diabetes.

Recommendations from the meeting included introducing:

- faecal immunochemical testing – this test has been recommended to replace the current test used in the NHS bowel cancer screening programme, the faecal occult blood test, as it can detect and prevent more cancers;

- human papillomavirus (HPV) primary screening – screening for HPV first is more effective at predicting the risk of developing cervical cancer; and
- a change in the frequency of diabetic eye screening appointments – people at low risk of sight loss should have an eye screening once every two years, as opposed to the current advice of once yearly. People with a high risk of sight loss should still be getting them yearly.

The UK NSC will review these recommendations again in three years time or earlier if significant new evidence emerges.

New Permanent Secretary for the DH

Chris Wormald will leave the Department of Education to replace Dame Una O'Brien as the new permanent secretary at DH.

Dame Una O'Brien will step down at the end of April 2016 from her current position of DH permanent secretary.

Introduction of 'activity equivalent' calorie labelling on food and drink

The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) is [calling](#) for the introduction of '[activity equivalent](#)' calorie labelling on food and drink, in the form of pictorial icons. The new labelling would show how much physical activity, for example, waking or running, is required to burn the number of calories contained in that food or drink.

The move is hoped to help consumers make healthier food choices by simplifying the information and making it more relatable to people as well as normalising physical activity.

According to research from the RSPH, 53% of people said it would cause them to make positive behaviour changes and leading healthier lifestyles.

Local hypertension profiles launched

A series of [hypertension profiles](#) have been launched by PHE's national cardiovascular intelligence network. The profiles cover each CCG and lower tier LA and shows how well each LA area is performing in diagnosing and treating hypertension in comparison with the rest of England.

The hypertension profiles complement PHE's [Tackling high blood pressure: from evidence to action](#) report.

Commissioners and health professionals are able to use these profiles when assessing the impact of hypertension on their local population, opportunities for improvement and making decisions about services and emerging issues.

Sexual and reproductive health in England: local and national data

PHE has published a [guidance document](#) which explains the sexual health data available across England and how to access it.

It contains information collected by PHE and other organisations, on various topic areas such as female genital mutilation, conceptions and abortions coupled with local information and national resources on the topic. It also contains information on what datasets are collected, who they are collected from and where they can be found.

The document is aimed at healthcare professionals including local government, service providers and commissioners.

Newham diabetes Skype pilot success increases young people's clinic attendance

NHS England has produced a new [diabetes transition service specification](#) to help improve services for young people transferring from different services geographically, or transferring from child to adult services.

There is evidence to show that the longer time between appointments, the higher the chance of a young person developing problems such as anxiety, depression and increased HbA1c levels.

The diabetes transition service specification was published to inform commissioners' development of a clear specification based on local context. The guidelines were developed in conjunction with users of a young people's diabetes forum who gave their views on the best ways to engage with different age groups through experience.

Implementing the diabetes transition specification guidelines, Newham rolled out a [four year pilot scheme](#) in 2011. The diabetes appointments via webcam in Newham scheme helped young people with diabetes maximise their care through Skype appointments.

The scheme is thought to save approximately £27 in clinician time per consultant appointment.

It also showed that much fewer patients missed appointments, and they were able to integrate diabetes care into normal every-day life, work and university; their questions were answered more rapidly than more conventional ways of waiting to see a consultant. It also meant that patients did not need time off work to attend the appointment.

Overall, it showed better health outcomes and a reduction in A&E admissions.

Health matters third edition published

[Health matters: harmful drinking and alcohol dependence](#) has been published by PHE as the third edition of Health matters.

The document provides guidance and information on the harmful effects of alcohol dependency and the importance of preventing and reducing the harm caused by alcohol.

It will support the commissioning and delivery of evidence based treatment interventions to tackle harmful drinking and alcohol dependence in adults.

Alzheimer's drugs prescriptions six times higher than a decade ago

A new report, [Focus on Dementia](#), issued by the Health & Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) revealed that the number of prescriptions dispensed in England to treat Alzheimer's has increased from 502,000 in 2004 to 3 million in 2014, increasing the cost from £42.8 million to £45.7 million.

This publication takes information from a variety of sources to provide a compendium of statistics about dementia in England by looking at five aspects of dementia care broadly aligned to national strategic aims:

- Preventing well;
- Diagnosing well;
- Supporting well;
- Living well; and
- Dementia and mortality.

The publication aims to be of interest to a range of audiences, including policy makers, commissioners, researchers, patients and carers.

First wave of NHS Innovation Test Beds launched

Simon Stevens has launched the first wave of NHS Innovation [Test Beds](#) in a major technology drive to modernise and improve how the NHS delivers care.

The NHS will be collaborating with innovators such as Verily, Philips and IBM to utilise technology to address complex issue facing patients and the health service.

The first wave of Test Beds include five health and care Test Beds and two 'Internet of Things' Test Beds, spread across different locations in England.

Successful innovations will be available for other parts of the country to adopt and adapt to the particular needs of their local populations.

NICE launches obesity in adults quality standard

NICE has this month (January 2016) published a quality standard, [Obesity in adults: prevention and lifestyle weight management programmes](#).

This quality standard covers ways of preventing adults (aged 18 and over) from becoming overweight or obese and the provision of lifestyle weight management programmes for adults who are overweight or obese.

The quality standard supports the delivery of the [Public Health Outcomes Framework](#) and contributes to various Public Health Outcomes Framework indicators such as health improvement, preventing people from dying prematurely and enhancing the quality of life for people with long-term conditions. It considers service user experience, safety issues and calls for a person-centred, integrated approach to providing services.

NHS England asks military veterans how to improve mental health services

NHS England has launched a national [survey](#) and is encouraging armed forces veterans to share their experience of mental health services with the aim of improving care for veterans as they move from military to civilian life.

The survey is a chance for veterans to share their experiences and views of existing mental health services and to understand the reasons why some people have not sought or received support and treatment.

In addition to seeking views from veterans, family members and carers, as well as staff and organisations that are providing treatment and support in this area are all able to take part in the survey.

The NHS currently provides 12 mental health services across England specifically for veterans. With new contracts due in the next year, this is an opportunity to develop future services that take account of current experiences.

Rubella susceptibility screening in pregnancy to end in England

PHE has announced that [rubella \(German measles\) screening](#) in pregnant women is to end in England from 1st April 2016.

Following a review of evidence by the UK NSC in 2003 and 2012, screening for rubella susceptibility during pregnancy was found to no longer meet the criteria for a screening programme.

The high levels of vaccination rates achieved through the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) immunisation programme has influenced the decision to end screening.

National Diabetes Audit published

An audit published by HSCIC shows an increase in the number of people with diabetes meeting target blood pressure levels.

The [National Diabetes Audit \(NDA\) 2014-2015](#) presents findings for the care of 1.9 million people in England and Wales with diabetes. It showed that 76.4% and 74.2% of people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes respectively achieved the target blood pressure level of less than or equal to 140/80 in 2014/15. This is an increase of 7.9% in type 1 diabetes and 13.4% in type 2 diabetes from 2009.

The NDA also highlighted that younger people, aged under 40, were less likely to receive all eight care processes recommended by NICE, which is similar to patterns seen in previous years. Regional variation showed that the number of patients receiving eight care processes ranged from 24.8% to 80.6% across CCGs and Local Health Boards.

The NDA is managed by HSCIC in partnership with Diabetes UK and is commissioned by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership as part of the National Clinical Audit Programme.

The Chief Executive of Diabetes UK, Chris Askew, has [responded](#) to the NDA report by saying that urgent action must be taken to ensure younger people are given optimal care, and that it is vital that commissioners look at ways to enable more young people to have better access to healthcare services.

PHE launches dementia profiles

PHE's national Dementia Intelligence Network has developed a new [dementia profile](#), which will enable comparisons between LAs and CCGs in England.

The profile includes the number of people with dementia by area, age, those who have had an NHS health check and various other parameters.

It will help commissioners fulfil the objectives of the [NHS planning guidance](#) by making information readily available to identify variation, investigate the reasons for any differences and improve outcomes.

100,000 patients set to receive personal health budgets by 2020

NHS England is aiming to increase the number of people receiving personal health budgets over the next five years.

The Government is aiming to widen the scheme to more patients with complex needs and multiple long-term conditions by increasing the number of people receiving a personal health budget by 2,000% by 2020.

Dr Sam Bennet, Head of Integrated Personal Commissioning and Personal Health Budgets at NHS England, said the latest figures, submitted by CCGs, showed around 4,700 people are currently receiving personal health budgets. Of those, 3,700 were given direct payments. Dr Bennet added that the aim was for more people to be given direct payments as they generate better outcomes.

If you have queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information please [contact Zainab Al-Kharsan, Service Development Pharmacist](#).