

April 2018

## PSNC Briefing 028/18: 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. These briefings contain useful background information to help you understand what is happening in the wider health and care environment which may impact on community pharmacy. They build on the Health & Care Review articles which are published on the PSNC website every week.

### NHS mandate 2018 to 2019

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has published its [mandate](#) for NHS England. The Mandate sets out the Government's overall objectives and budget for NHS England until 2020. The mandate also provides information on how NHS England's performance will be assessed.

NHS England's seven objectives are:

1. through better commissioning, improve local and national health outcomes, and reduce health inequalities;
2. to help create the safest, highest quality health and care service;
3. to balance the NHS budget and improve efficiency and productivity;
4. to lead a step change in the NHS in preventing ill health and supporting people to live healthier lives;
5. to maintain and improve performance against core standards;
6. to improve out-of-hospital care; and
7. to support research, innovation and growth and to support the Government's implementation of EU Exit in regards to health and care.

NHS England's total revenue budget for 2018/19 is £114,269 million.

### PHE remit letter: 2018 to 2019

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health and Primary Care, Steve Brine, has written a [letter](#) to Public Health England (PHE) to set out the Government's expectation of PHE and PHE's priorities for 2018/19.

PHE's role will continue to evolve as the Government takes forward changes to future local government public health funding arrangements, as greater integration between the NHS, social care and public health is achieved, and as devolution deals develop.

### Public health commissioning in the NHS 2018 to 2019

DHSC has published a briefing to set out the [NHS public health functions agreement](#), under which the NHS is delegated responsibility for certain public health services. Examples of services currently commissioned in this way are national immunisation programmes and national cancer and non-cancer screening programmes.

## New GP contract agreed for 2018 to 2019

DHSC has [published](#) the details of the new GP contract for 2018/19. The contract was agreed by DHSC, NHS Employers on behalf of NHS England and the British Medical Association (BMA)'s General Practitioners Committee (GPC) and came into effect on 1st April 2018.

The new contract will see a £256 million investment in general practice. It also includes:

- an agreement that will pave the way to GPs using the NHS electronic prescription service instead of issuing paper prescriptions;
- a renewed focus on the analysis of appointment data to improve GP workflows;
- supporting the further roll out of the NHS e-referral service into general practice; and
- a commitment to end advertising of private services by GP practices which should be provided free of charge by the NHS.

## National bodies agree on shared view of quality for general practice

The Regulation of General Practice Programme Board has published a [joint view](#) of the principles that define quality in general practice. The key themes of the shared view of quality for general practice are: positive experience; effective; well-led; safe; and sustainable use of resources.

By bringing together multiple definitions of quality, the Board can begin to reduce the workload and duplication for health care providers in providing evidence of outcomes for quality assurance. This was a key aim set out in the [General Practice Forward View](#), NHS England's strategy for GP services.

## We need to do better on social care

The Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt, has outlined in his speech the [seven key principles](#) that will guide the Government's thinking ahead of the social care green paper. The paper is due to be published later in 2018.

The seven principles are:

1. Quality and safety embedded in service provision;
2. Whole-person integrated care within the NHS and social care systems operating as one;
3. The highest possible control given to those receiving support;
4. A valued workforce;
5. Better practical support for families and carers;
6. A sustainable funding model for social care supported by a diverse, vibrant and stable market; and
7. Greater security for all – for those born or developing a care need early in life and for those entering old age who do not know what their future care needs may be.

## NHS stuck in survival mode as focus remains on short-term fixes

The House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts has published a [report](#) on sustainability and transformation in the NHS. The report finds that DHSC, NHS England and NHS Improvement are too focused on propping up the system and balancing the books in the short term and have not paid enough attention on transforming and improving patient services in the long term.

Key findings include:

- DHSC's system for funding and financially supporting the NHS focusses too much on short-term survival and limits the NHS's ability to transform services to achieve long-term sustainability;
- staff shortages across the NHS are having a serious and negative impact on both the sustainability and transformation of services; and
- the financial pressures facing NHS providers has led to the Department using money to prop up services but not to transform them to provide better care.

## Signs of improvement but some concerns remain regarding providers of online GP services

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has published a [report](#) on its overall findings of online primary care services based on 55 inspections since November 2016.

The findings indicate that online primary care services have improved over the last 12 months but further action from providers and the wider system is needed to ensure they are as safe as general practice in physical premises.

Key facts include:

- in February 2018, it was found that 43% of providers were not providing 'safe' care according to the relevant regulations – an improvement from the first inspections when this was 86%;
- specific concerns included:
  - inappropriate prescribing of antibiotics and prescribing high volumes of opioid-based medicines without talking to the patient's registered GP;
  - unsatisfactory approaches to safeguarding children and those who may not have the mental capacity to understand or consent to a consultation;
  - not collecting patient information or sharing information with a patient's NHS GP; and
  - inappropriate prescribing of medicines for long-term conditions.

## Dramatic annual surge in online GP services as patients sign up for convenience

NHS England has [reported](#) that nearly 14 million patients across England are now securely using online services to book appointments, order repeat prescriptions and view their records.

Key facts reported include:

- an average of one million appointments are being made or cancelled online every month;
- nearly 2.3 million prescriptions are ordered online;
- GPs whose practices have embraced online services are already seeing some of the benefits, with fewer patient calls and fewer people failing to attend – saving time that could be used on other activities within the GP practice.

The article highlights one GP practice as an example which has managed to sign up 1,200 patients as part of a campaign and offers test results online. As a result, daily phone calls reduced from around 50 a day to 25 which has given staff an extra 75 minutes of time a day to spend on other areas of their work.

## New medical schools to open to train doctors of the future

Health Education England has [announced](#) that five new universities will be home to new medical schools offering undergraduate places to boost the number of doctors in specific regions. There are 1,500 new training places allocated across the country.

The new medical schools are at:

- The University of Sunderland;
- Edge Hill University;
- Anglia Ruskin University;
- University of Lincoln; and
- Canterbury Christ Church University.

## NHS Digital funding awarded to projects that help ease delayed transfers of care

NHS Digital has [announced](#) the local authority (LA) and NHS partnerships that have been successful in bidding for funding to help digitise their assessment, discharge and withdrawal notices. The successful partnerships are Dorset, Hackney, Lancashire, Wirral, Worcestershire, Hertfordshire and Rotherham.

The £1.4 million funding will help smooth the process of moving key information from a healthcare setting to LA social care.

### **NHS gets funding green light for new buildings, wards and beds**

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has [announced](#) new funding available to 40 NHS hospitals and community centres to modernise and transform their buildings and services.

The £760 million investment will be spent on programmes to meet local demand, such as new urgent care centres and refurbishing mental health facilities.

### **Women to have dedicated midwives throughout pregnancy and birth**

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has [announced](#) that the NHS plans to train more than 3,000 extra midwives over four years. The intention is that the majority of women will receive care from the same midwives throughout their pregnancy, labour and birth by 2021.

The first step towards achieving this will see 20% of women benefiting from a 'continuity of carer' model by March 2019. Research suggests that women who use this model are:

- 19% less likely to miscarry;
- 16% less likely to lose their baby; and
- 24% less likely to have a premature baby.

### **Help people make informed decisions when they want to quit smoking, says NICE and PHE**

PHE and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have published updated guidelines for health practitioners and stop smoking services on the best ways to help people quit smoking.

The new [guideline](#) recommends prioritising specific groups who are at the highest risk of harm from smoking, such as women who are pregnant and people with mental health problems.

It also recommends that:

- people should be asked about their smoking and encouraged to stop every time they see a health or social care worker;
- stop smoking services set existing targets, such as treating at least 5% of the estimated local population who smoke each year; and
- evidence-based interventions should be available to adults who smoke.

### **New calculations confirm lifestyle changes could prevent 4 in 10 cancer cases**

Cancer Research UK has [published](#) a new landmark study led by its researchers which looks at the causes of cancer and how many cases in the UK are linked to each risk factor.

The findings, published in the [British Journal of Cancer](#), show that more than 135,000 cases of cancer could be prevented in the UK each year largely through lifestyle changes (around 4 in 10 cases).

In total, more than 135,000 cases of cancer could be prevented through changes such as:

- stopping smoking;
- keeping a healthy weight;
- eating a healthy diet;
- enjoying the sun safely;
- avoiding certain substances at work;
- protecting against certain infections; and

- cutting back on alcohol.

## What makes us healthy?

The Health Foundation has published a [briefing](#) on the social determinants of health and explores how a person's opportunity for health is influenced by factors outside the health and social care system. It contains suggestions for further reading and, with the help of short case studies, highlights how action can create improvements in the health of the whole population, for the lasting benefit of individuals, society and the economy.

## Hepatitis C in the North West report released

PHE has published a new [report](#) presenting annual data for hepatitis C in North West England.

The most recent estimates suggest at least 40,000 people across the North West acquired hepatitis C infection, and of those 27,000 have developed chronic infection. The number of infected people who have not been diagnosed is estimated to be 16,000 (a total of 40%). The highest burden of disease was found to be in the Greater Manchester area, while Lancashire and Liverpool also have high numbers of people living with hepatitis C.

## Every 10 minutes a child in England has a rotten tooth removed

As PHE's Soft Drinks Industry Levy came into effect on 6th April 2018, PHE is [reminding](#) parents of the dangers of sugar on children's teeth.

New data published by PHE shows that a child in England has a tooth removed in hospital every ten minutes due to preventable tooth decay.

PHE's Change4Life campaign is encouraging parents to make healthy food and drink swaps to prevent tooth decay.

## Productivity of the English National Health Service: 2015/16 update

The University of York's Centre for Health Economics has published a new [research paper](#) outlining NHS productivity growth for the period 2014/15 to 2015/16.

It finds that over the last 11 years, NHS productivity has increased by 13.49% or an average of 1.17% per annum. However, since 2012/13, productivity has been continuously decreasing.

The report concludes a target of increasing NHS productivity by 2-3% per year may soon be unattainable, and that there needs to be a reassessment of what the realistic funding needs of the NHS are, going forward.

## National HIV self-sampling service

PHE has published a [report](#) which summarises progress of the national human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) self-sampling service which was co-commissioned with LAs in 2015. The service was intended to provide a cost-effective and remote self-sampling service for sexually active individuals aged 16 years and over.

Key findings include:

- between November 2015 and October 2017, 81,761 kits were ordered of which 45,350 (55.5%) were returned;
- of those returned, 1.04% (467) of specimens were reactive which translates to a cost per reactive of £933;
- demand for the HIV self-sampling service is highest among men who had sex with men who made up 71% of kits tested. Of these, 1.07% were reactive; and
- a total of 3,238 kits were tested from black African service users which represented 7.25% of all kits tested.

## A tough ask ahead for the NHS in 2018/19

NHS Providers has published a new [report](#) which presents an assessment of the challenges facing NHS trusts in this financial year (2018/19) and their ability to meet performance and financial targets. It focusses on the must-dos set out in the recent [NHS Operational Planning and Contracting Guidance](#).

The report highlights concerns in three particular areas: A&E, planned hospital treatment and finances. It predicts that patients' experiences of care will continue to fall below acceptable standards and warns that failing to set achievable tasks risks creating a toxic, damaging culture.

## NHS England funding and resource 2018/19: Supporting 'Next Steps for the NHS Five Year Forward View'

NHS England has published a [business plan](#) to set out how it will deliver the objectives set out in the Government's mandate. It also sets out how NHS England will, through the distribution of funding, people and resources, support [Next Steps on the NHS Five Year Forward View](#) to transform local health and care systems.

## NHS England Gender Pay Report

NHS England has published a [report](#) to provide details on gender pay and the work that is being undertaken to address the issues raised.

The report states that as of March 2017, there was a mean gender pay gap of 21.2% and a median gender pay gap of 21.5%.

In order to address this gap, the report highlights various measures, including:

1. recruitment and remuneration – use data to develop pay strategy to ensure equality and diversity standards are met;
2. flexible working – flexible working policy to be refreshed, and flexible working opportunities will be actively promoted to existing and prospective employees; and
3. coaching and mentoring – number of interventions on offer to support talent development of women in the workplace will be expanded.

## How commissioners use research evidence

The National Institute for Health Research has published a [guide](#) to provide insight on how commissioners and other NHS service managers make use of evidence from research studies. The guide can assist researchers to make their work more accessible and relevant to commissioners and managers.

## Think Autism strategy: governance refresh 2018

DHSC has issued [revised governance](#) to oversee the implementation of the Think Autism strategy to help drive progress in 2018 before a formal review of the strategy in 2019. The 19 objectives of the strategy have been grouped under:

- measuring, understanding and reporting needs of autistic people;
- workforce development;
- health, care and wellbeing,
- specific support; and
- participation in local community.

The strategy is in place to transform the support for, and experience of people with autism.

## Accountable care models contract: proposed changes to regulations

DHSC has published the [full outcome](#) of a consultation which took place between September and November 2017 on the proposed changes to regulations to support the development of NHS England's Accountable Care Organisation (ACO) contract model. The consultation specifically asked consultees to consider whether the draft regulations delivered the policy objective of the introduction of a model ACO contract.

The full outcome report sets out specific issues raised, an analysis of the responses received, a response to concerns raised, and changes made to draft amendments as a result of comments received.

DHSC has also published an accompanying brief [guide](#) to ACOs which covers what they are, what they mean for patients and staff, how they will be implemented and whether or not they will lead to more private sector involvement in the NHS.

## One in six people with diabetes discriminated against at work

Diabetes UK has published [research findings](#) which highlight that a third of people living with diabetes experience a lack of support and understanding from colleagues in the workplace. Additionally, people with diabetes feel that they have been discriminated against by their employer as a result of their condition.

The survey also found that:

- 37% of respondents said that living with diabetes had caused them difficulty at work;
- 7% had not told their employer that they have diabetes; and
- 25% of people said they would like time off work for diabetes-related appointments and flexibility to take regular breaks for testing their blood sugar or to take medication.

Helen Dickens, Assistant Director of Campaigns and Mobilisation at Diabetes UK, said: "Discrimination and difficulties come about because employers lack knowledge about diabetes and do not understand its impact. We need to talk more about the condition and the many ways it affects people's lives in order to persuade places of work to offer greater understanding and flexibility. Everyone deserves to work in an environment where they can ask for the support they need."

## Dedicated GP support for nursing homes sees significant drop in emergency admissions

The Nuffield Trust has published a [study](#) which evaluates a new GP service offering seven-day support to four nursing homes. The service was piloted in the Barking & Dagenham and Havering & Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) and involves providing GP support as well as training and advice for care home workers and help from a geriatrician.

Key facts from the evaluation include:

- after registering with the service, emergency inpatient admissions fell by 36% compared to 4% reductions in the comparator group;
- the authors estimate that the monetary value of reductions in emergency admissions could be as much as £1,000 per person per year, but that this is not necessarily directly equivalent to actual cash savings for either commissioners or providers;
- emergency bed days in the intervention group reduced by 53% compared to no change in the comparator group; and
- the biggest reductions in emergency admissions and bed days happened towards the end of people's lives.

The success of the new primary care service in care homes in general, the report authors suggest, depends on the quality and continuity of relationships developed between the GPs and the care homes.

## RCGP advises patients on online consultation safety

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) has issued a list of questions for patients, GPs and commissioners to consider before using online GP services, as part of a new guidance document, [Online consultations in general practice: the questions to ask](#).

The guidance has been issued as it emerged that a growing number of services are offering consultations online, most commonly via smartphone apps.

The questions are:

1. Will they see me whatever my health problem, or exclude me if I have complex health needs?
2. Will they have access to my full medical record, so that they know my medical history?
3. What happens if I need to see a GP in person – how far will I need to travel?

The guidance also outlines considerations for GPs or CCGs considering using or implementing online consultation services for their patients or local populations.

## New funding for sports prosthetics for children with disabilities

The Government has [announced](#) that children with limb loss will benefit from a new £1.5 million investment into sports and activity prosthetics such as running blades. The fund will also support research and innovation to improve prosthetic technology.

## PM announced new research and funding in drive to fight prostate cancer

The Prime Minister has [unveiled new plans](#) to get thousands of men with prostate cancer access to earlier and faster treatment. Over the next five years, over 40,000 men will be recruited into prostate cancer studies backed by £75 million funding.

## 22 million people encouraged to embrace self care for life

The Self Care Forum has published a [review](#) of Self Care Week 2017 as well as findings from a survey of participants of the campaign. The 2017 theme of Embracing Self Care for Life allowed promotion of a range of self-care messages, supported by a range of resources for people-facing organisations.

The review found that more than 300 organisations participated in the campaign, with a combined reach of more than 22 million people – more than a third of the English population.

The survey found that self-care for self-treatable conditions was the most popular message being communicated, and signposting to the community pharmacist was the second most favoured.

## Review into NHS overseas visitor charges: call for submissions

DHSC is [evaluating](#) the impact of its regulations on NHS charges to overseas visitors that came into effect in 2017 and is asking organisations to share information or experiences to help shape the review.

The review will look at the impact on: upfront charging; amending patient records; community services; and non-NHS providers. It will focus on the impact on vulnerable groups (such as those with protected characteristics) and how any identified negative effects can be addressed.

## Does the public see tax rises as the answer to NHS funding pressures?

The King's Fund has [analysed](#) the latest data from the British Social Attitudes survey on public attitudes to NHS funding and the quality of care provided by the NHS. In general, the analysis shows that the public is increasingly anxious about the state of the NHS and there is widespread support for tax increases to fund it.

Key findings include:

- there is growing consensus that the NHS is facing major crisis; respondents saying that the NHS is facing a funding problem have increased by 14% since 2014;
- 61% of respondents support tax rises; an increase of 21% from 2014 and 12% from 2016;
- in relation to tax increases, 35% supported a separate tax that would go direct to the NHS and 26% would pay more through their existing taxes; and
- pessimism about the future has increased significantly; just 20% expected standards of care to improve.

## Patient Activation Measure – implementation quick guide

NHS England has published a [quick guide](#) on Patient Activation Measures (PAM) to support sites considering using the PAM license.

The guide covers preparatory work, how to ensure good quality data and how the PAM can ensure that plans for services and support are tailored to an individual's needs. It also focusses on why patient activation is important in managing people's health and wellbeing.

## People growing older with learning disabilities should get regular health checks, says NICE

NICE has published new [guidance](#) advising that health and social care workers help organise regular health assessments for older people with learning difficulties because they may find it difficult to express their needs and be heard. The guideline describes how to help people with learning disabilities as they grow older to ensure they receive appropriate support at the right times, preventing delays in care.

Older people with learning disabilities are more likely to develop serious health problems and die of them because of late diagnosis. They may also find it more difficult to access health services because of hearing or sight problems.

NICE is advising that annual health checks are recorded in a 'health action plan' that can be updated annually. This personalised plan details what help and support the individual needs to stay healthy and provides other information about support needs and lifestyle issues. The guideline also advises LAs to ensure there are opportunities for people growing older with learning disabilities to socialise and be active in their communities.

## The state of care in independent acute hospitals

CQC has published the [findings](#) of an inspection programme for 206 independent acute hospitals in England in 2015.

CQC found that the majority of acute hospitals are providing high quality care for patients; as of January 2018, 62% were rated as good and 8% were rated as outstanding.

However, while the report highlights many examples of good care, it also shows variation in quality and clear scope for improvement. CQC had the greatest concerns about safety and found that 41% of hospitals were rated as 'Requires improvement' and 1% as 'Inadequate' in this area. In some cases, CQC found that a lack of formalised governance procedures meant that hospitals were not effectively monitoring the work of consultants and inspectors also saw that safety procedures were not always fully embedded.

The findings from these inspections have helped to inform CQC's plans to further develop its approach to regulation for all independent healthcare services.

## Women and HIV: Invisible No Longer report

The Terrence Higgins Trust has launched a new [report](#) in collaboration with Sophia Forum to highlight the needs of women affected by HIV.

Key facts highlighted include:

- women make up one third of people living with HIV in the UK, yet are left out of research, decision-making, service design and delivery;
- almost half of women living with HIV in the UK live below the poverty line;
- nearly one third have avoided or delayed attending healthcare in the past year due to fear of discrimination; and
- on HIV prevention, little effort has been made to define who women at risk of HIV are. Nearly half the respondents (42%) felt that barriers prevent them from testing for HIV, and no woman surveyed had yet chosen to access PrEP.

The two organisations are calling for gender parity in the UK HIV response, specifically addressing women's need in research, HIV prevention, data collection and support services.

## Prostate cancer: Britain's growing problem

A male cancer charity, Orchid, has published a new [report](#) which highlights a trend in late prostate cancer diagnoses and calls for urgent action to be taken.

The report reveals that:

- 37% of prostate cancer cases are diagnosed in the late stages (stages 3 and 4);
- 42% of prostate cancer patients saw their GP with symptoms twice or more before they were referred;
- 23% of all cancer cases are diagnosed through A&E, with the majority of these cases at late stage; and
- prostate cancer cases are set to rise dramatically over the next decade.

Recommendations for urgent action by policy makers to address Britain's growing prostate cancer problem include:

- public awareness of symptoms by PHE and LAs;
- healthcare professionals' adherence to treatment standards;
- improved diagnostic tests introduced by NHS England; and
- continuation of investment and development for research into diagnostic testing and patient risk profiling.

## Changes to QOF 2018/19

NHS Employers and the BMA GPC have agreed changes to the [Quality and Outcomes Framework](#) (QOF) effective from 1st April 2018.

The key changes are:

- the average practice list size had risen from 7,732 as at 1 January 2017 to 8,096 at 1 January 2018; and
- the value of a QOF point will increase by £8.06 from £171.20 in 2017/18 to £179.26 in 2018/19.

QOF indicators and thresholds for 2018/19 continue unchanged.

## Developing new models of care in the PACS vanguards: a new national approach to large-scale change?

NHS England has commissioned the King's Fund to publish a [report](#) as part of a package of support provided to [primary and acute care system \(PACS\) vanguard](#) sites. The report features the accounts of those who have led the development of the PACS model, nationally and locally, to reflect on the process. It is not an evaluation of the PACS

model but rather offers insights and experiences of those leading a major programme at the national level and those living it at the local level.

Key messages include:

- national bodies can support large-scale change in the health and care system by acting as catalysts of locally led innovation;
- in the PACS vanguard sites, relatively modest transformation funding has helped to catalyse significant amounts of innovation in terms of both frontline services and wider structures supporting system-wide collaboration;
- relationships were strengthened in vanguard sites and this needs to happen before more formal changes to contractual arrangements or organisational structures are considered;
- spreading and scaling-up innovations from the vanguards sites is the challenge to which system leaders are now turning; and
- further work is needed at the national level to remove legal, regulatory and financial barriers that inhibit integrated working across organisational boundaries.

### AHPs supporting patient flow

NHS Improvement and NHS England have published a [quick guide](#) to demonstrate how NHS emergency care, in particular, patient flow through the health and care system, benefits from allied health professionals (AHPs). Each section gives a brief overview of the contribution AHPs can make to safe, effective patient care and flow, followed by case studies.

### Less waste, more health: A health professional's guide to reducing waste

The Royal College of Physicians has published a [report](#) which explains how health professionals can positively influence societal health and wellbeing by making simple changes to procurement and disposal of medical supplies.

The report features a range of case studies and offers 12 practical recommendations on waste management, principles of purchasing and cultural influence to positively influence the health of patients, aid financial savings and shape the impact of the NHS on the environment.

### Integrated Commissioning for Better Outcomes: a commissioning framework 2018

The Local Government Association and NHS Clinical Commissioners in partnership with the DHSC, Association of Directors Adult Social Services, Think local Act Personal and Care Providers Alliance has published the [Integrated Commissioning for Better Outcomes Framework 2018](#). This is a practical tool for council and NHS commissioners to support improving outcomes through integrated commissioning. The framework covers four areas:

- building the foundations;
- taking a person-centred, place-based and outcomes-focused approach;
- shaping provision to support people, places and populations; and
- continuously raising the ambition.

The tool was developed from the Commissioning for Better Outcomes Framework 2015 and has been updated to better reflect the changing commissioning landscape.

The standards are designed to support a dynamic process of continuous improvement and can be used:

- to support cross-organisational reflection and dialogue on how well integration in local commissioning arrangements are working;
- as a benchmarking diagnostic tool in critical self-assessment by system partners; and
- in a peer to peer review or peer challenge to promote sector led improvement.

## Faster action needed on lessons of WannaCry attack

The Public Accounts Committee has published a [report](#) on the WannaCry cyber-attack on the NHS in May 2017. The attack caused widespread disruption to health services with almost 20,000 hospital appointments and operations cancelled and five A&E departments diverting patients as they were unable to treat them.

The report indicates how the DHSC and its arm's-length bodies were unprepared for the cyber-attack. Whilst DHSC and NHS bodies have learned lessons, the report indicates that there is still work to do to improve cyber-security.

The Committee has set six recommendations to be met with a progress update by a June 2018 deadline that include DHSC and its national bodies to:

- consider and agree implementation plans setting out a clear timetable that has clear roles, responsibilities and oversight arrangements at both local and national level;
- set out clear coordinated communications during a cyber-attack;
- support local organisations to improve cyber security and be ready for a cyber-attack;
- provide a national estimate of the cost to the NHS of WannaCry and an update on costed plans for vital security investment;
- provide guidance and support for local systems to be updated; ensure IT suppliers to the NHS are accredited and that local and national workforce plans include a focus on IT and cyber skills; and
- make cyber security a priority and work with wider government to share lessons and promote best practice.

## Patients get the green light for smarter choices after latest GP pilot

NHS England has published new trial [results](#) from the Behavioural Insights Team on a pilot system which makes it easier for GPs to understand hospital waiting times for their patients.

The e-traffic light system could help reduce hospital waiting times while offering patients a clearer choice of treatment and is set to be rolled out across the country after a successful NHS trial.

A tweak to the GP referral system sees a red light appear against a hospital with longer waiting times while a green light shows those with spare capacity, meaning doctors can offer patients potentially quicker routes to treatment and help them make more informed choices.

Results from two London trials have been promising – red lights reduced referrals to overbooked hospitals by nearly 40%, while green lights increased referrals to hospitals with available capacity by 14% this winter.

## GMC gears up to support extra international doctors wanting to work in the UK

The General Medical Council (GMC) is [adapting](#) to meet increased demand in the number of non-European Union (EU) doctors applying to take the practical exam in order to work in the UK.

The GMC is adding additional test dates at weekends to support a healthy supply of doctors into UK practice. The GMC is expecting more than 5,000 doctors to take the exam this year.

## The rising cost of medicines to the NHS: what's the story?

The King's Fund has published a [briefing](#) which examines total spends on medicines by the health service. The briefing also explores policies used to try to control growth in costs and the future choices likely to be faced by policymakers.

Key facts include:

- estimated total NHS spending on medicines in England has grown from £13 billion in 2010/11 to £17.4 billion in 2016/17 – an average growth of around 5% per year;

- much of the recent growth in medicines spending has been in the hospital sector, where estimated costs have grown at 12% a year on average since 2010/11;
- in primary care, spending growth is lower. Although the volume of prescription items increased by almost half in the decade to 2016, this was offset by a reduction of nearly a quarter in the average cost per prescription item; and
- without a new funding settlement for the NHS, policymakers are likely to face increasingly difficult choices.

## Prevalence of beliefs about actual and mythical causes of cancer

Cancer Research UK has published the [findings](#) of a research piece it commissioned, published in *European Journal of Cancer*.

Researchers at University College London and the University of Leeds surveyed 1,330 people in England and found that more than 40% wrongly thought that stress (43%) and food additives (42%) caused cancer.

A third incorrectly believed that electromagnetic frequencies (35%) and eating genetically modified food (34%) were risk factors, while 19% thought microwave ovens and 15% said drinking from plastic bottles caused cancer despite a lack of good scientific evidence.

Among the proven causes of cancer, 88% of people correctly selected smoking, 80% picked passive smoking and 60% said sunburn.

The research paper concludes that awareness of actual and mythical cancer causes is poor in the general population. Only knowledge of established risk factors is associated with adherence to behavioural recommendations for reducing cancer risk.

## Patient-centred care for older people with complex needs: Evaluation of a new care model in outer east London

The Nuffield Trust has published an [evaluation](#) of a 'one-stop' primary care service within three London boroughs: Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge, for older people with complex health care needs.

The care model, known as 'Health 1000' was dedicated to addressing the health and social care of patients with complex needs utilising a multidisciplinary team, focussing on prevention and early intervention. It was also supported by contributions from the third sector. The original plans were for a service that catered for 1000 patients, but fewer than half that number were registered over two-and-a-half years.

The evaluation suggest that primary care hubs dedicated to the care of older people with complex needs could have a positive impact on quality of care, and on the experiences of both patients and staff. However, there was no evidence that these benefits translated into reduced use of hospitals although this could have been due to the timescale and numbers of patients which could have been too soon to see any effect.

## NHS action on sugar pays dividends as hospitals slash unhealthy food and drink sales

NHS England has provided an [update](#) ahead of the upcoming sugar tax and has reported a sharp decline in the sales of sugar snacks and drinks from hospitals and their outlets.

So far, 152 of the 232 NHS trusts have signed up to the scheme. Headline results show a decline in chocolate bar sales, increase in fruit sales and running healthy meal deals which include sandwiches under 400 calories.

## Innovation and technology in the NHS

Launched at the NHS Confederation conference by Simon Stevens on 15 June 2017 and as part of NHS England's commitment to the [NHS Five Year Forward View](#) (5YFV), NHS England has developed the [Innovation and Technology Payment \(ITP\) 2018/19](#).

The aim of the ITP is to help deliver on the commitment detailed within the NHS 5YFV – creating the conditions and cultural change necessary for proven innovations to be adopted faster and more systematically through the NHS, and to deliver examples into practice for demonstrable patient and population benefit.

NHS England has identified successful innovation or technology themes through a competitive process and the four innovations on this year's Innovation and Technology Payment are:

- HeartFlow – advanced imaging software which created a 3D model of the coronary arteries to rapidly diagnose patients with suspect coronary artery disease avoiding the need for invasive investigations;
- Plus Sutures – a new type of surgical antimicrobial suture pack that reduces the rate of infections such as MRSA;
- Endocuff Vision – a new type of 'bowel scope' that improves colorectal examination for patients undergoing bowel cancer tests; and
- SecurAcath – a device to secure catheters that reduces infection risk for patients with a peripherally inserted catheter reducing the time taken to care and treat dressing changes.

Additionally, in an effort to tackle the problem of missed hospital appointments, NHS England will support DrDoctor, a digital tool to help patients view, change and re-schedule appointments, to demonstrate its potential in a real world setting.

## National pledge to stop overmedication for people with a learning disability, autism or both

NHS England is asking more doctors and healthcare professionals to sign up to a [pledge](#) to stop the overmedication of people with a learning disability, autism or both.

The drive is to support the Government-backed campaign, Stopping OverMedication of People with a Learning Disability (STOMP) which targets NHS trusts, CCGs and those in the independent sector. It is asking healthcare professionals to review and seek alternatives to prescribing psychotropic drug prescriptions.

The STOMP pledge was launched in June 2016 supported by a number of professional bodies including the Royal Colleges of Nursing, Psychiatrists and GPs, as well as the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, the British Psychological Society and the Challenging Behaviour Foundation (CBF).

So far, more than 60 providers supporting nearly 60,000 people have signed up to the pledge. NHS England now wants all healthcare professionals to commit to the STOMP pledge.

## Healthier You: NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme fact sheet

NHS England has published a [factsheet](#) to provide more details on the [NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme](#).

The factsheet provides key statistics, which include:

- there will be 100% coverage across England in 2018/19;
- 50% conversion rate from referral to initial assessment;
- 3.7kg average weight loss;
- 25% of patients enrolled on to the programme were from a Black or Minor Ethnic group, and 45% were under the age of 65; and

- 44% of patients enrolled on the programme are men – a much higher proportion than typically attend commercial weight loss programmes.

## The Lord Darzi Review of Health and Care: Interim report

The Progressive Policy Think Tank has published an [interim report](#) on a review by Lord Darzi which examines the state of quality in health and care services on the NHS's 70th birthday. The review was launched in December 2017 and includes recommendations for future funding and reform.

The final report will be published in the lead up to the 70th anniversary and will set out a long-term funding and reform plan for health and care.

The five conclusions of the interim review are:

- the health and care system has done exceedingly well to maintain or increase quality in the context of austerity;
- the main sources of increased productivity are running out of road the system's ability to find other sources of revenue funding is increasingly limited;
- Governments must stop approaching the NHS and social care as a liability to be managed and instead look at it as an investment that delivers a return – good health is an asset; and
- Money alone is not enough – a bold reform plan is needed if the health and care system is to be fit for the 21st century.
- Recognise that there is no “magic money tree” and be clear where money is coming from but most importantly building on the process made of the quality of care in health and care.

## Media monitoring

### On Tuesday 3rd April 2018, the following stories were published:

- Paramedics are to be given the power to issue prescriptions as part of plans to help reduce pressure on the NHS. Up to seven out of ten people currently seen by advanced care paramedics may need help, but not a hospital visit. Covered by the [Independent](#), [Times](#), [Guardian](#), [Sun](#), the [BBC](#).
- NHS data has shown that thousands of ambulances are being prevented from responding to 999 calls every day due to delays handing over patients at busy A&E units. Covered by the [Guardian](#), [Sun](#).
- The NHS has capped the amount it pays for branded drugs, setting maximum prices for medicines to treat conditions such as cancer and HIV. Covered by the [Sun](#), [Times](#).
- [The Sun](#) reports that the NHS has paid almost half a billion pounds more to treat British citizens in the EU than it has recouped for treating EU citizens in the UK.

### On Wednesday 4th April 2018, the following stories were published:

- NHS delays put thousands of bowel cancer patients at risk, reports the [Telegraph](#). Following reports of Andrew Lansley's cancer diagnosis, patient groups have criticised the 'unacceptable' waits suffered by more than 5,000 people due to staff shortages.
- Sugary drinks ban looming for NHS hospitals as one third fail to sign up to reduction scheme, reports the [Telegraph](#). The NHS could bring in a complete ban of sugary drinks in hospitals after more than a third of trusts failed to sign up to a scheme to cut sales. Also reported by [ITV](#).

### On Thursday 5th April 2018, the following stories were published:

- NHS sees hospital admissions for obesity double in four years, reports the [BBC](#). [The Guardian](#) reported there had been an 18% increase in the last year alone. Also featured in the [Independent](#), [Mail](#) and [iNews](#).

- Sugar taxes improve health of the poor, major study finds. Research published in a series of Lancet articles found that taxes such as the Soft Drinks Industry Levy are more likely to alter the behaviour of less well-off consumers. Featured in the [Telegraph](#), [Independent](#), [iNews](#), [Times](#), [Sun](#) and [Express](#).
- Patients to see consultants within 24 hours under 'digital healthcare revolution', reports the [Evening Standard](#). Paper referral forms used by GPs to book appointments with consultants will be scrapped from October and replaced with online communications. The new e-referral scheme will enable GPs to obtain 'advice and guidance' from a consultant within 24 hours to help decide on the next stage of treatment.

**On Friday 6th April 2018, the following stories were published:**

- [iNews](#) reports that the number of people applying to midwifery courses in England has dropped by 35% since 2013.
- Tooth decay now costs 60,000 school days a year, reports the [Telegraph](#). Health chiefs have revealed 'endemic' tooth decay is now costing children approximately 60,000 days off school a year. Also featured in the [Express](#) and the [Huffington Post](#).
- Green neighbourhoods linked to improved mental health, reports the [Independent](#). Researchers found that exposure to nature can cut the odds of serious depressive disorders by more than 5%.

**On Monday 9th April 2018 the following stories were published:**

- Tens of thousands of allergy patients face 'life or death situations' because of a UK shortage of EpiPen jabs, reports the [Mail](#). US manufacturer Mylan has warned pharmacists and patients in Britain that the country is the latest to be hit by global supply problems. Also featured in the [Telegraph](#) and [Sun](#).
- British tourists will be putting their health at danger when the NHS axes travel vaccinations for rabies and yellow fever, reports the [Mail](#). Experts believe the change could lead to an increase in people obtaining the vaccines via a private prescription and attempting to self-administer to save costs.

**On Tuesday 10th April 2018 the following stories were published:**

- Deceased organ donor numbers have reached a record high, reports [iNews](#). Latest figures show there were 1,575 deceased donors during 2017/18, an 11% increase on the previous year. A new Bill which would introduce the opt-out system in England passed its first stage in Parliament in February. Also featured in the [Times](#), [Mirror](#), [Sun](#), [Huffington Post](#) and the [BBC](#).
- Patients aged over 60 who lose weight should be investigated, reports the [Telegraph](#). One in seven cases among men likely to mean cancer, a major study has found. Also featured in the [Sun](#), [Mail](#), [Times](#) and [Express](#).

**On Wednesday 11th April 2018 the following stories were published:**

- [The Times](#) reports elderly patients effectively age 10 years for every 10 days they are stuck in a hospital bed due to inactivity. This has also been covered by [The Telegraph](#) and [The Mail](#).
- Pfizer UK have a piece in [The Telegraph](#) about access to medicines in the NHS. It's largely focused on treatments for cancer and vaccines.
- [The Sun](#) warns that a new killer flu strain is on its way, but the World Health Organization has said it will be included in this year's four-strain flu vaccine.

**On Thursday 12th April 2018 the following stories were published:**

- [The Telegraph](#) reports that the NHS has launched a sexual abuse probe amid fears of dangers on mixed sex wards. Inspectors have warned hospital trusts to do more to protect patients, amid fears patients are being put at risk on mixed sex wards.
- [iNews](#) reports that a 50% rise in cigarette prices 'will save millions of poorer people'.
- A new study suggests that a substantial increase in cigarette prices would help millions of people around the world avoid poor health and extreme poverty. Also featured in the [Sun](#), [Mail](#) and [Telegraph](#).

- Late risers at increased risk of early death, reports the [BBC](#). People who go to bed late and struggle to wake in the morning are more likely to die prematurely than early risers, according to new research. Also featured in the [Telegraph](#).

**On Friday 13th April 2018 the following stories were published:**

- The [Sun](#) discloses the NHS's ten worst-performing A&E wards. Following the announcement that A&E waiting times are at their worst level since records began, the ten worst offenders have been revealed. Similar stories are featured in the [Mail](#), [ITV](#), [Express](#) and [Times](#).
- Just one alcoholic drink a day could shorten your life, reports the [BBC](#). An analysis of 600,000 drinkers found that drinking 5 to 10 alcoholic drinks a week was likely to shorten a person's life by up to six months. Also featured in the [Express](#), [Evening Standard](#), [Independent](#) and [Telegraph](#).

**On Monday 16th April 2018, the following stories were published:**

- NHS hospitals are owed around £139 million from health tourists who have failed to pay for their treatment in England, reports [The Mail](#).
- [The Telegraph](#) reports on research that suggests women taking common painkillers during pregnancy could make their grandchildren infertile. Also reported by [The Mail](#) and the [BBC](#).
- 'GP at Hand' app cuts off patients from regular NHS doctor, reports the [Times](#). Tens of thousands of people have downloaded the 'GP at Hand' app which offers remote consultations with doctors, however when they sign up they are removed from their GP's books and registered to a practice in west London.
- [The Mail](#) reports that obesity is set to take over alcohol as the leading cause of liver disease in the next few years.

**On Tuesday 17th April 2018, the following stories were published:**

- [The Independent](#) reports that there has been a significant increase in violence against NHS staff, especially in the hospitals with the longest waiting lists. Also covered by [The Mail](#).
- The Taxpayers' Alliance claims that the NHS could save £800 million a year by reducing the number of bodies which perform very similar functions, reports [The Mail](#) and [The Sun](#).
- [The Times](#) reports that experts think school children should be taught about nutrition and healthy eating to help them grow up to be better parents. This is similar to several stories saying that having an unhealthy lifestyle prior to becoming a parent can still impact on the children you have later. Covered by the [Independent](#), [Telegraph](#), [iNews](#) and [ITV News](#).

**On Thursday 19th April 2018, the following story was published:**

- [The Guardian](#) reports that almost two-thirds of healthcare assistants are performing roles usually undertaken by nurses due to the NHS staffing crisis.

**On Friday 20th April, the following stories were published:**

- The [BBC](#) and [The Mail](#) pick up the story about more patients having multiple conditions. The BBC reports that researchers say that being a patient is now 'a full time job', whilst The Mail says that these patients typically receive worse care.
- [GP Online](#) report that the majority of GP practices reported cuts to public health funding. 77% of the 250 GP partners who responded to the survey reported that funding had been withdrawn or reduced for at least one public health service their practice provides. Smoking cessation, sexual health and weight management services were among those most affected, GPs said.
- [ITV News](#) reports that Chief Medical Officer Dame Sally Davies is warning that ignoring antibiotics misuse could lead to the end of modern medicine.
- Dementia patients are nearly 20% more likely to be given unnecessary prescriptions due to difficulties with communication, reports [The Mail](#). Taking these unnecessary drugs can then increase dementia patients' risk of suffering falls due to sedation and drowsiness.

**On Monday 23rd April 2018 the following stories were published:**

- The Government has announced £6 million of funding to support children with alcoholic parents, reports the [BBC](#). Plans include programmes to treat parents' addiction and local councils will be able to bid for a share of the funding.
- PHE is warning people to protect themselves from measles as more than 250 cases have been reported since the start of the year, reports [The Telegraph](#). It is thought to be linked to a series of outbreaks in Europe. Also covered by [The Express](#).
- The [BBC](#) reports that man in the UK who caught the worlds 'worst-ever' case of super-gonorrhoea has been cured. It was the first case of the infection being incurable with first choice antibiotics, but now two similar cases have been reported in Australia. Also covered by [The Mail](#).

**On Tuesday 24th April 2018 the following stories were published:**

- NHS England faces a legal challenge over the introduction of ACOs, reports [The Guardian](#). Campaigners say the plans could force doctors to decide what care a patient needs based on how much money is available rather than how sick someone is. Also covered by [Sky News](#).
- [The Mail](#) reports on the prevalence of so-called 'never events' at NHS hospitals. There were more than 430 of these serious patient safety incidents between April 2017 and March 2018.

**On Wednesday 25th April 2018 the following stories were published:**

- Brexit blamed as record number of EU nurses give up on Britain, reports [The Guardian](#). The number of departures was 28% more than in 2016/17.
- Pioneering prostate treatment for tens of thousands of men gets NHS green light, reports [The Telegraph](#). Tens of thousands of men could be spared major surgery after NHS watchdogs have approved the new technique to treat one of the most common medical complaints facing older men. Also featured in the [BBC](#).
- E-cigarettes are in danger of becoming 'lifestyle choice' before safety is proven, warns health professor. [The Telegraph](#) features an article discussing the use of e-cigarettes. Professor Leng, of NICE, questioned whether e-cigarettes are being marketed as a lifestyle choice rather than a quitting aid.

**On Friday 27th April 2018 the following stories were published:**

- Migrant rules 'leaving NHS short of doctors' reports the [BBC](#). Immigration rules are hampering the ability of the NHS to recruit doctors, health leaders are warning. The number of skilled non-EU workers granted UK visas is capped, with the Home Office arguing the restriction is in 'the national interest'. But NHS bosses say increasing numbers of doctors are being refused permission, worsening rota gaps and the waits patients face for treatment. Also reported in the [Telegraph](#), [Mail](#) and [Times](#).
- NHS patients to monitor heart disease and diabetes at home within ten years thanks to artificial intelligence, reports [The Sun](#).

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