



May 2015

PSNC Briefing 029/15: 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.

Over 55 million patients in England can now book GP appointments, order repeat prescriptions and access summary information in their medical record online

Almost every GP surgery in England is now offering appointments, repeat prescriptions and access to summary information in medical records online. The number has tripled in the first three months of the year meaning that 55 million people now have access.

The Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) has published [data](#) which shows that over 97% of patients in England can now access online services, a huge increase from the 3% in April 2014.

The ambition is that by 2018 every citizen will be able to access their full health records at the click of a button, detailing every visit to the GP and hospital, every prescription, test results, and adverse reactions and allergies.

Bold action needed to make NHS fit for the future says Simon Stevens

NHS England Chief Executive Simon Stevens has called for bold action on prevention, the redesign of care and efficiency to help the NHS through the most challenging period in its history.

In his [first speech since the general election](#) – and sharing a platform with the Prime Minister – Mr Stevens said: “We’ve just come out of a general election debate that has once again confirmed a fundamental consensus between citizens of this country – on the unique importance of the NHS to the life of our nation, and as the embodiment of the promises we make to each other, across the generations.”

Referring to the [NHS Five Year Forward View](#), he said: “Last Autumn the Health Service came together to chart a shared direction for our country’s NHS.

“Patients groups, caring professionals, national leaders – uniting behind the NHS’ own ‘manifesto’ for the next five years. It’s a plan for better health, more personalised care, and a financially sustainable Health Service, which we’re now getting going on.”

Pointing to the realities of current service pressures, he argued that the Health Service is entering probably the most challenging period in its 67 year history. Alongside action this year to stabilise NHS finances, Stevens argued for a new partnership between the public, the government and the health service, involving concrete and sometimes controversial action on three broad fronts – prevention, care redesign, and efficiency linked to new investment.

On prevention, while life expectancy is at its highest ever, smoking still explains half of the inequality in life expectancy between rich and poor, binge drinking costs at least £5 billion a year, and junk food, sugary fizzy drinks

and couch potato lifestyles are normalising obesity. So we need wide ranging action – as families, as the health service, as government, as industry, using the full range of tools at our disposal.

On care, Stevens argued the mission-critical task over the next five years is fundamental redesign of how services are provided, blurring the old boundaries between GP and hospital care, physical and mental health services, health and social care. One of the best ways of getting this personalisation and integration will be to give patients and their families more clout over the support they receive. He points to the first wave of 29 'Vanguard' areas across England, covering five million patients, launched six weeks ago.

On efficiency, Stevens notes that the Economist Intelligence Unit has shown that we already have a lean and efficient health service compared with just about every other industrialised country. But we still have big quality and efficiency differences – between different parts of the country, between different hospitals, and between different local clinical commissioning groups.

On funding, Stevens says: "Just like every health service around the world with a growing population and an aging population, we're going to need more funding, year by year, not just in 2020.

"We've said at least £8 billion a year in real terms by the end of the decade. But precisely how much, and with what phasing, will partly depend on how radical and how successful we are on prevention, on care redesign, and on our broader efficiency programme. And we'll need careful and disciplined phasing of our ambition to expand services – be it improved cancer care, mental health, primary care, seven day services – all of which we want to do."

Bedfordshire reveals largest ever CCG deficit

Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG's) deficit reached £43.2m by the end of 2014-15, the largest recorded by any CCG.

The CCG had predicted a £4.9m surplus at the start of 2014-15, but by November its forecast deteriorated to a £24m deficit. In the following months the CCG realised the deficit would be "far larger and more complex than originally believed".

In a statement, the CCG said it "did not properly recognise or take account of all costs incurred" in 2013-14, had been running an underlying deficit, and had been "consistently spending in excess of planned budgets".

It has restated its accounts to record a £12.7m deficit for 2013-14 and a £30.5m deficit for 2014-15, resulting in a £43.2m cumulative deficit.

The CCG must produce an improvement plan, subject to NHS England approval, which includes a financial recovery plan for how it will operate within its annual budget for the next three years, including a scheme for repayment of its outstanding debt, and a governance plan.

If you have any queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information, please contact [Rosie Taylor, Pharmacy and NHS Policy Officer](#).