

September 2016

PSNC Briefing 049/16: 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 report highlights health impact of rush hour commuting

The Royal Society for Public Health has published a report, [Health in a Hurry](#), which highlights the impact that travelling to and from work has on people's health and wellbeing.

Key determinations from the poll of more than 1,500 commuters include:

- more than half (55%) reported an increase in stress levels;
- more than two in five (41%) reported reduced physical activity;
- almost two in five (38%) reported reduced time preparing healthy meals; and
- around a third reported increased snacking (33%) or fast food consumption (29%).

According to the report, the average commuting journey in the UK results in the additional consumption of 800 calories a week.

The report also features a series of recommendations for operating companies, which include:

- greater restrictions on unhealthy food and drink outlets in stations;
- declassification of first class carriages on all commuter trains; and
- routinely publishing information on passenger capacity on trains and buses.

PHE publishes alcohol and drug prevention, treatment and recovery for adults: planning interventions

Public Health England (PHE) has published a set of [good practice principles](#) for local areas to take into consideration when developing joint strategic needs assessments for integrated health systems on alcohol harm and drug prevention.

There are five principles in both documents followed by a series of key points to help local areas apply these to practice.

PHE publishes acute Hepatitis B (England) annual report

PHE has published their annual [report](#) on acute hepatitis B which contains an analysis of laboratory confirmed cases reported in 2015. Key facts include:

- a total of 457 acute or probable acute cases of hepatitis B were reported for England in 2015; this gives an annual incidence of 0.83 per 100,000 population, lower than the incidence of 0.91 per 100,000 reported for 2014;
- the incidence of acute hepatitis B continues to remain higher in males than females;
- London is still the region with the highest incidence and this has increased slightly from the previous year;
- the highest increase was reported from the East Midlands region; and
- the largest decrease was reported from the South West and North East regions.

JCVI statement on the flu vaccine nasal spray

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has, in light of recent evidence emerging from the United States (US), reviewed updated data from the 2015/16 season in the UK and other countries in order to assess the effectiveness of the flu vaccine nasal spray for children.

There is evidence from the US suggesting that the children's flu vaccine nasal spray has lower effectiveness than the inactivated vaccine. The JCVI carefully considered this and published a [statement](#) stating that despite of this, it fully endorsed the use of the flu vaccine nasal spray and recommends widening the roll-out of it.

Extension of the Influenza programme to children in England

PHE has published a [report](#) which discusses the implementation of the national rollout of the influenza immunisation programme to children. The report gives an overview of the experiences from the pilots that took place over the 2013/14 and 2014/15 seasons. The information was analysed in terms of workload, vaccine uptake and logistics of delivery, to help facilitate the full-scale roll-out of the vaccination programme.

NHS England to improve mental health care for armed forces veterans

NHS England has [announced](#) that it will be developing new services to meet the needs of armed forces veterans. This is due to feedback that NHS England has received highlighting the need to improve the navigation of veterans around NHS mental health services, and to further increase understanding among healthcare professionals on the unique issues faced by members of the armed forces.

The views of the Ministry of Defence and veteran charities will help inform the developments; provider contracts are estimated to start in April 2017.

Doctors set out safe working plan for general practice

The British Medical Association has published a report proposing a model of 'locality hubs' that could be rolled out across the UK intended to address the unsustainable increase in GP workload.

[Safe working in general practice](#) aims to stimulate discussions around the workload crisis, and describes the model in more detail in relation to current service pressures and policy priorities. It also showcases examples of where this model is already being rolled out.

Key recommendations from the report are:

- the immediate introduction of 15 minute appointments which would allow improved decision making and case management, and should reduce the administrative burden outside clinic times by facilitating more activity within the appointment;
- 115 appointments per week should be considered to be the quantified commissioned activity of an NHS GP; this figure brings the daily face to face total down to below 25 patients; and
- if the NHS commissioned an integrated service from practices, with a modest 20% reduction in GP activity, both patients and clinicians might improve their demand management and focus more accurately on actual clinical need.

STPs: what we know so far

The Nuffield Trust has published a [briefing](#) on [Sustainability and Transformation Plans \(STPs\)](#). The briefing discusses work in progress from a number of STP areas from July and August 2016 by highlighting trends, ideas to be explored, issues that need resolution and the steps that will need to be taken to ensure success.

The paper starts by looking at the main service changes that will be taking place that could have significant implications for organisations. Proposals for efficiency improvement, financial management, demand reduction and management, prevention and the enabling areas of workforce are addressed. Finally, it discusses issues relating to the process and challenges of implementation that have already emerged.

NHS providers' Quarter 1 of 2016/17 performance report published

NHS Improvement has published a [report](#) on the performance of NHS providers during the first quarter of 2016/17. The figures show that out of the 214 providers included, 185 have met their commitments in full. The introduction of STPs in 2016/17 allowed providers to stabilise and become more financially sustainable.

The report deficit of NHS providers during quarter 1 of 2016/17 was £461 million; this is £5 million better than the sector's planned deficit. During this period, spend on agency staff decreased by £100 million compared to the same period last year. A&E services, however, continue to face large pressures. Attendances to A&E during the said period were 5.34 million; this figure is 6.3% higher than last year's period.

Report on understanding quality in district nursing services published

The King's Fund has published a [report](#) on how district nursing care should be delivered according to the views of patients who are already receiving this care, unpaid carers and district nursing staff. It looks at the implications of the growing demand-capacity gap, workforce issues and the impact these challenges have on the quality and safety of patient care.

Key findings from the report are:

- activity has increased significantly over recent years, both in terms of the number of patients seen and the complexity of care provided;
- there are significant problems with recruitment and retention of staff, and available workforce data indicates that the number of nurses working in community health services has declined over recent years, and the number working in senior 'district nurse' posts has fallen dramatically, creating a growing demand–capacity gap; and
- this is having a negative impact on staff wellbeing, leading to poor morale, stress and fatigue. Some staff are leaving the service as a result.

Cuts to public health risks widening health inequalities, says report

The House of Commons Health Committee has published a report, [Public health post-2013](#), which focusses on the Government's approach to public health and reducing health inequalities.

The report provides an analysis of the impact that public health budgets cuts will have on local authorities (LAs) in terms of the services they can deliver and challenges they are facing. It also features discussions on the new system of devolved public health powers to LAs, the public health workforce, the role of the NHS in public health and two case studies on health protection and health in all policies.

Key recommendations from the report include:

- the Government must commit to protecting funding for public health. Not to do so will have negative consequences for current and future generations and risks widening health inequalities. Further cuts to

public health will also threaten the future sustainability of NHS services if we fail to manage demand from preventable ill health;

- LA directors of public health should be required in their statutory annual reports to publish clear and comparable information for the public on the actions they are taking to improve public health and what outcomes they expect to achieve, and to provide regular updates on progress; and
- NHS England and PHE should clarify how the two organisations are seeking to pool their expertise and resources around public health in order to ensure that the local health system feels adequately supported and not conflicted by confusing messages or requirements.

Vaccine cuts cases of meningitis and septicaemia in UK infants

PHE has published [research findings](#) which show that the number of meningitis and septicaemia cases caused by meningococcal group B (MenB) infection has nearly halved over the last year.

The vaccine against the disease, which is now offered to all new born babies in the UK, has been highly effective against the infection and is potentially lifesaving, according to PHE.

The number of MenB cases in infants aged less than one, the age group most likely to be affected by MenB, dropped by around half. Since the programme began, only 37 cases have been recorded in the eligible age group, in comparison to 74 cases in the same period from the previous four years before the vaccine was routinely administered.

Physical activity profile data launched by PHE

PHE has launched the [Physical Activity tool](#) which provides data alongside national benchmarks to support local organisations promote physical activity, and can also support commissioning and service improvement.

The data is grouped into three domains: key indicators, related conditions and supporting information. The tool presents data at a local level covering England, and includes data on walking and cycling, related risk factors of physical inactivity and related conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

The Physical Activity tool provides evidence at population level and can help promote physical activity at an organisation, programme and individual level.

Prescribing exercise outdoors could reduce obesity, say councils

The Local Government Association (LGA) is [calling](#) for more GPs to 'prescribe' exercise outdoors instead of prescribing medicines for people who are overweight and obese. Outdoor exercise can include walks, activities in the park or family exercise classes.

The LGA has also featured some case studies where this model of 'green prescriptions' is already being implemented or underway in some parts of the country:

- Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities, Avon and Somerset: GPs are encouraging patients to visit the national parks as part of their treatment or as an alternative to medication. Surgeries will also be providing Walking for Health Packs to promote walking in the outdoors;
- Weymouth and Portland Borough Council: This council is part of the National Choices Group which runs activities such as gardening and sailing, that GPs can refer patients to;
- Liverpool City Council and Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG): A Liverpool Active City Strategy is being delivered whereby GPs refer patients into schemes and activities; and
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council: An IT system has been developed which connects GPs with leisure centres so they can book patients directly on to an exercise-on-referral scheme. Patients are met by a trainer who is able to tailor a suitable programme for them.

CLr Izzi Seccombe, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "The green prescription model is something that could help to tackle major health conditions such as obesity and diabetes. There are already some good examples where this is being piloted in the UK, and it is something we should consider on a nationwide basis."

2016 Health Profiles published

PHE has [published](#) the 2016 [health profiles](#), which provide an overview of health and wellbeing for each LA in England.

The Health Profiles tool is intended as a starting reference to use when highlighting local issues or for discussion with Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs).

There are different indicators, such as inequality, life expectancy and causes of death and disease and poor health, listed by LA. A standard benchmark value is set for each indicator; the profiles show whether a particular LA's performance for an indicator is better, similar or worse than the standard.

Using information technology to improve the NHS

A new report published by the National Advisory Group on Health Information Technology in England has advised the Department of Health (DH) and NHS England about making secondary care increasingly digital.

[Making IT work: Harnessing the Power of Health Information Technology to Improve Care in England](#) lays out overall recommendations into two broad categories: 10 overall findings and principles, followed by 10 implementation recommendations.

In response to the report, DH [announced](#) that 12 new global exemplars to lead on best practice will be established and a new academy dedicated to upskilling NHS staff in digital use will be set up. The 12 NHS organisations will receive up to £10 million and will deliver novel approaches to digital services and share the information so other organisations can learn from them. They will also be partnered with an international organisation to draw from their expertise. The funding will also cover staff training and the implementation of chief clinical information officers.

NHS e-Referral Service saves £10 million in first year

NHS Digital has [reported](#) that following its redevelopment of the NHS e-Referral Service, the service has saved the NHS £10 million in its first year of operation. Since the new service replaced its predecessor, the Choose and Book system, a 60% reduction in running costs have been achieved since June 2015.

The National Audit Office has estimated that if all secondary care acute trusts used the NHS e-Referral Service effectively, the health service could save up to £50.5 million a year.

Supporting self-management and spreading change

The Health Foundation has published, as part of its series on [Realising the Value](#) with Nesta, two new guides on how people can take a more active role in their health and care. The two guides are:

1. [Spreading change](#) – this guide outlines how behavioural science can help spread the take-up of person- and community-centred approaches to health and wellbeing, and is aimed at people who promote this approach in their work; and
2. [Supporting self-management](#) – this guide outlines how the science of behaviour can help people to self-manage their health and wellbeing.

Diabetes care review launched by CQC

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has launched a review which explores the quality of care for people with diabetes in England.

[My diabetes, my care: Community diabetes care review](#) holistically looks at care services to see how they work together to deliver high quality diabetes care. The authors of the report spoke to people aged 18-65 years with type 1 or 2 diabetes about their experiences, as well as commissioners, services and staff in 10 different locations about how care in their community is delivered. A specific focus on black and ethnic minority groups, as well as people with learning difficulties was included.

Key facts from the report include:

- most people surveyed had received the checks recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Generally, people reported they were able to discuss their care with primary care staff and they felt they received good explanations about their care;
- people at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes were not always identified early enough, or supported to manage their risk;
- some people need more emotional support when they are diagnosed and on an ongoing basis. This includes those with type 2 diabetes, where the need might be more than expected; and
- people did not always know or understand the results of their annual diabetes check-ups. Very few had a personalised care plan they could take with them when they moved between services.

The CQC report also includes some recommendations to improve care services, which include:

- services to develop a local plan to improve diabetes care, supporting people to self-manage in a way that is suited to their individual needs;
- commissioners and services to engage with their community to increase awareness and understanding and to encourage people to have health checks; and
- education courses are developed and evaluated so that everyone, including those from black and minority ethnic groups and with a learning disability, can gain the knowledge and skills they need to manage their diabetes.

Large-scale general practice in England: what can we learn from the literature?

The Nuffield Trust has published a [report](#) which presents the findings of a literature review on general practice.

The report, published in collaboration with the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, aims to answer the following questions:

1. Which organisational form(s) have large-scale collaborations of GP practices adopted in England?
2. What are they expected to deliver?
3. What evidence is available on their impact in England?
4. What can we learn from initiatives with similarities?

Plans launched for seven-day hospital pharmacy services

NHS England has published a report, [Transformation of Seven Day Clinical Pharmacy Services in Acute Hospitals](#), which sets out a plan for how hospital services in the NHS will be transformed to enhance the quality of patient care.

The report makes 13 key recommendations for how services could be improved, especially at weekends, to fulfil specific outlined aims, such as:

- a greater focus on all patient facing medicines optimisation roles across the patient pathway;
- implementation and the optimal use of technology, including electronic prescribing and medicines administration systems;
- an ability to appropriately and consistently identify high risk patients; and
- collaborative working to share and consolidate non-clinical infrastructure services between hospital and primary care pharmacy services.

The report also provides a summary of how national or local organisations and individuals should support the delivery of the plan.

Latest results and trends on women's smoking status at time of delivery published

NHS Digital has published a [report](#) on the latest results and trends on women's smoking status at the time of delivery in England.

Key statistics include:

- 2% of pregnant women were known to be smokers at the time of delivery. This compares to 10.8% for the most recent quarter (quarter 4, 2015/16) and 10.7% for the same quarter last year;
- the proportion of pregnant women known to be smokers at the time of delivery has been below the national ambition of 11% since quarter 1 in 2015/16;
- there are some geographical differences amongst all NHS England Regions, smoking prevalence at delivery varied from 15.6% in Lancashire to 4.7% in London; and
- amongst the 209 CCGs, smoking prevalence at delivery ranged from 25.5% in NHS Blackpool to 2.1% in NHS West London.

Young children still exceeding sugar recommendation, says PHE

PHE, in response to the latest published data from the [National Diet and Nutrition Survey](#), has [warned](#) that children aged 4 to 10 years are consuming more than double the recommended amount of sugar, although consumption of sugary drinks has fallen compared to six years ago.

The figures show that sugar makes up 13% of children's daily calorie intake, meanwhile the official recommendation for the daily intake in this age bracket is a maximum of 5%. Additionally, teenagers consume three times the official recommendation for sugar intake, and adults twice as much.

The report covers a range of topics including consumption of selected food groups, intakes of energy, macronutrients and selected vitamins and minerals and nutritional status.

New recommendations to address deaths from drug misuse published

PHE's independent expert group and the LGA have published new recommendations in their report, [Understanding and preventing drug-related deaths](#), that address the rising number of deaths caused by drug misuse in England.

The group's report highlights a number of principles for action by LAs, drug treatment providers and others, including:

- coordinate whole-system approaches that can address health inequalities and meet complex needs, with better access to physical and mental healthcare, and to other support which could include housing and employment;
- maintain a personalised approach to drug treatment and recovery support, tailored to the user's needs, according to national guidelines; and
- ensure that the risk of death is properly assessed and understood, addressing any identified poor practice.

PHE estimates 3.8 million people in England have diabetes

PHE's National Cardiovascular Intelligence Network has [launched](#) the new [Diabetes Prevalence Model](#), which estimates that 3.8 million people in England aged over 16 had type 1 and type 2 diabetes in 2015. This is around 9% of the adult population.

Of these, 90% of diabetes cases are type 2, which is largely preventable or manageable by lifestyle changes. Additionally, it is estimated that 1 in 4 people have diabetes but are unaware they have it.

Based on current population trends, by 2035 4.9 million people will have diabetes. Type 2 diabetes currently costs the NHS £8.8 billion each year and tackling the rise in the disease is vital to the sustainable future of the health service.

Engaging local people – a guide for local areas developing STPs

NHS England has published a [guidance document](#) for local areas that are developing STPs in each of the 44 footprint areas.

This new guide provides advice on:

- using lay representatives and establishing patient reference or advisory groups;
- considering and carrying out formal consultation with enough time for the public to make their views heard; and
- testing options with local councils and other important stakeholders, where possible by building on the work of existing bodies such as HWBs

It also covers legal duties around engagement and consultation and will be of particular interest to communication and engagement leads for STPs and footprint leaders.

Health and work: infographics

PHE, in collaboration with The Work Foundation, has published a set of 12 [infographics](#) that illustrate the relationship between health and work. The infographics aim to raise awareness on various aspects relating to the lives of working people, such as mental health, the cost of ill health, managing health at work for employers and welfare.

They are intended for use by local and national stakeholders, public health practitioners, LAs and policy makers to inform their work on health, employment and unemployment.

New £816 million investment in health research

A new five-year funding package has recently been [announced](#) which will enable leading NHS clinicians and universities to benefit from new facilities and support services.

The £816 million investment has been awarded to 20 NHS and university partnerships across England through the National Institute for Health Research.

Mental health research will see funding increase to nearly £70 million, dementia to over £45 million, deafness and hearing problems will receive over £15 million and antimicrobial resistance research rises to around £45 million.

Tobacco standard packs: supporting smokers to quit

The latest edition of PHE's [Health matters](#) series has been published and focusses on standardising tobacco packaging.

The publication provides more background information on the new standard pack including the evidence behind the introduction and the impact this move is likely to have on future potential smokers.

The way that smoking affects the body is also discussed, as well as the groups of people who are likely to need the most support, such as people living with mental health conditions and pregnant women.

PHE Chief Executive Duncan Selbie, said: “The introduction of standard packs is a crucial part of our broader efforts to stop young people from taking up smoking. Research shows that they are less attractive and less misleading to children, giving the health warnings greater impact.”

Public unaware that obesity causes cancer, says Cancer Research UK

A new [research report](#) published by Cancer Research UK, based on a nationwide survey of 3,293 people, shows that around 75% of people in the UK are unaware of the link between obesity and cancer. People from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and male participants were less likely to be aware of the link.

Key facts from the study include:

- 78% of those asked didn't know obesity was linked specifically to ovarian cancer;
- 69% didn't know there was a link with breast cancer and 53% didn't know about the link to pancreatic cancer; and
- there was better awareness of the link with bowel cancer with 60% of those surveyed knowing the association and 55% of people linked obesity with liver cancer.

Vital role of school nurses threatened as paperwork eats into time with children

The Children's Commissioner for England has published the [findings](#) of a survey it conducted relating to primary and secondary school nurses' work pressures.

Key facts from the survey include:

- school nurses spend twice as much time on paperwork than on direct work with children in schools;
- time pressures meant their role in supporting and promoting children's health and wellbeing, mental health, healthy relationships and sex education was being compromised; and
- the majority of school nurses stated that children and young people in the schools they work in were unaware of their service.

PHE reminds young Londoners to practice safe sex

PHE is [calling](#) for young Londoners to practice safe sex, as a report showed that in 2015, those aged 15 to 24 years in London made up 36% of all new sexually transmitted infections (STIs) diagnoses of gonorrhoea, chlamydia, genital warts, genital herpes and syphilis. Worsening sexual health in London is one of the biggest public health concerns facing the capital, which is why it is a priority area for PHE London.

PHE has issued a series of recommendations for safe sex which focus on regular testing for STIs.

Commissioning for better health outcomes

The LGA has published a [guidance document](#) that outlines the principles of good commissioning.

The guide, which was developed with commissioners from councils and partner organisations, features case studies that have been chosen to illustrate positive approaches to commissioning across the country in response to various public health challenges.

The guide explains the role of councils in improving health outcomes, a background to commissioning, principles of good commissioning and case studies, which include:

- an integrated 0-5s service in Cheshire East;
- a new children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing service for Halton; and
- a schools-based programme to help young people build resilience and manage risk in Essex.

New NHSCC report shows how CCGs are tackling the challenges of early intervention in mental health

NHS Clinical Commissioners (NHSCC) has published a report which shows how CCGs are tackling the challenges of early intervention in mental health.

[*Support from the Start: Commissioning for early intervention in mental ill health*](#), developed by NHSCC's Mental Health Commissioners Network features four projects as case studies and aims to highlight good practice to enable others to learn and support implementation of similar services in their area.

The four featured projects are:

- early intervention in psychosis in Salford;
- a programme to boost the resilience of school children in Hounslow;
- providing a service to help those who have been bereaved through suicide in Cornwall; and
- supporting women with perinatal mental health issues in Coventry and Warwickshire.

The report also highlights key advice from the people involved in the featured projects.

Help for people with learning disabilities to live independently

DH has [invited](#) LAs to apply for a share of a £25 million housing and technology fund for people with learning disabilities.

The main aims of the fund are to:

- use new technologies to improve and adapt existing accommodation, enabling people to remain living independently;
- prevent unnecessary in-patient admissions;
- provide solutions for people who require urgent housing and are at risk of entering inappropriate services like hospital or residential care;
- encourage community-based solutions that promote independence and choice over housing; and
- save money and resources – specially adapted housing reduces the need for costly hands-on care.

This £25 million fund builds on £20 million already earmarked by NHS England as part of its [Transforming Care programme](#). This will be used for schemes across the country from April 2016 to March 2017, including new housing and services.

Social care for older people – a joint report

A [report](#), jointly published by The King's Fund and the Nuffield Trust, looks at the current state of social care services provided for older people in England. The report also considers the implications of LA spending cuts on social care providers and older people, their families and carers.

The report shows that the social care provider sector is under pressure, struggling to retain staff, maintain quality and stay in business, which has a direct impact on discharging older people from hospital.

The authors of the report conducted an analysis of national trends in adult social care expenditure and activity for older people, examined related NHS data, and used a case study approach to describe local activity. Interviews and focus groups were also conducted and included participants from LAs, CCGs, NHS providers, independent sector social care providers, voluntary organisations, Healthwatch and other local groups.

Number of written complaints about NHS falls by 4%

NHS Digital's annual report, [Data on Written Complaints in the NHS 2015-16](#) has been published and provides information about who complained, what the complaints were about, when complaints were made and whether the complaints were upheld.

The report gathers data on written complaints about NHS Hospital and Community Health Service (HCHS) as well as Family Health Service (FHS), which includes GP and dental services.

Key facts include:

- for the first time since 2010/11, the number of HCHS written complaints has fallen, dropping by 3.8% from 2014/15 to 2015/16;
- the number of FHS written complaints has also decreased, falling by 4.7% from 2014/15 to 2015/16; and
- there were 198,739 written complaints received over the last financial year – the equivalent of around 544 per day – which was 4.2% fewer than in 2014/15.

NHS England and NHS Improvement set out next steps to implement the NHS 5YFV in 2017/18 and 2018/19

NHS England and NHS Improvement have published a document, [Delivering the Forward View: NHS Operational Planning Guidance for 2017/18 and 2018/19](#) which provides NHS organisations with an update on national priorities and financial challenges for local systems. It also outlines a range of new Commissioning for Quality and Innovation national indicators.

The guidance explains how the NHS operational planning and contracting processes will adapt to support STPs and will help local organisations plan more strategically.

A range of additional measures to help the NHS deliver on the commitments of the [NHS Five Year Forward View](#) (5YFV) have also been announced, including:

- new incentives worth more than £100 million to help tackle unnecessary delays in discharging patients from hospital;
- incentives to reduce people attending A&E with mental health problems; and
- further steps to ensure the sustainability of general practice.

Older people's contribution to understanding and preventing avoidable hospital admissions

A new [study](#) has been published by the University of Birmingham which looks at possible practical solutions to overcome the problems of avoidable hospital admissions by focussing on the views of older people themselves.

The study, from the Health Services Management Centre and Department of Social Policy and Social Work at the University features interviews with older people, survey responses from their GPs or hospital doctors and focus group interviews. The research focussed on whether the older people felt it was appropriate to be admitted to hospital and whether they thought anything could have prevented their admission.

Key findings include:

- some older people appeared to have delayed getting in touch with emergency services, being very aware of the need to use scarce NHS resources wisely;
- few older people mentioned receiving social care services prior to admission and staff felt that social care services needed more funding and capacity in order to prevent emergency admissions; and
- in the run up to admission, GPs and other primary care professionals were often in touch with the older people and at the point of admission, ambulance staff played a key role.

Role for whole of Government in improving mental health support

The House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts has published a [report](#) which looks at whether a ‘parity of esteem’ between mental and physical health is achievable, and how to improve access to mental health services.

Conclusions from the report include:

- achieving parity of esteem between mental and physical health is a laudable ambition but pressure on the NHS budget will make it very difficult to achieve;
- structures are not in place to enable joined-up working across government to ensure the most appropriate action is taken to support people’s mental wellbeing;
- it is difficult for people to access the support they need because the way mental health services are designed and configured is complex, variable and difficult to navigate;
- there is insufficient information about the numbers of mental health staff and their skills, and there is not yet a clear plan to develop the workforce needed to achieve parity of esteem; and
- current structures, practices and payment mechanisms do not incentivise commissioners and providers to deliver high-quality mental health services for all who need them.

RCP report: Underfunded, underdoctored, overstretched: The NHS in 2016

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) has published a [report](#), the first of a series in their Mission: Health campaign that will focus on three major themes: working for health, delivering health, and creating health.

The report has identified three key action points that are needed to cope with the rising demand for healthcare services. These are:

1. increase NHS funding – a new NHS budget is needed that meets demand, sets realistic targets for efficiency savings, protect funds for transformation and invests in the long-term sustainability of the NHS;
2. train more doctors – the UK needs to increase the number of medical students and doctors training to be hospital specialists, incentivise doctors to work in the most challenging and in-demand areas of medicine, and take cross-governmental action to relieve immediate pressure on the NHS workforce; and
3. improve the working lives of NHS staff – the RCP will work with member doctors to find new solutions to workforce pressures, push for action from across government and the NHS, and showcase the very best of medicine.

A digital NHS? – A report by the King’s Fund

The King’s Fund has published a [report](#) that focusses on the digital agenda in healthcare and looks at the key commitments made and progress to date. The report has been categorised into three themes: interoperable electronic health records; patient-focussed digital technology; and secondary use of data, transparency and consent.

Key findings from the report include:

- to maximise uptake, patients and the public need to be aware of the benefits of digitisation, while being reassured about data security and use;

- clinicians and frontline staff must be involved in designing and rolling out new technology; and
- digital technology can transform how patients engage with services, drive improvements in efficiency and care co-ordination, and help people manage their health and wellbeing.

The economics of housing and health

The King's Fund and the New NHS Alliance have published a [report](#) based on work commissioned by the National Housing Federation, which looks at the economic case for closer working between the housing sector and the health sector, and how housing associations can help meet the ambitions of the NHS 5YFV.

The report makes five economic arguments for housing and health by featuring case studies. It also includes specific economic cases about the impact of housing associations on mental health and falls prevention.

The case studies in the report illustrate the economic benefits that housing associations can provide through:

- providing safe, decent homes that enhance wellbeing. This has health impacts that are valued, and can save the NHS money;
- alleviating the overall cost burden of illness and treatment;
- helping to offset and reduce costs of delivering health care to individuals;
- demonstrating cost-effectiveness in helping to meet the objectives of the NHS and of improving health more broadly; and
- demonstrating the cost-benefits of their interventions in terms of the value of improvements to people's health and savings to the NHS.

The return of nationwide Stoptober campaign

PHE is [urging](#) the remaining 7 million smokers across the country to take part in its annual campaign, Stoptober, which started on 1st October 2016.

Last year, out of the 2.5 million smokers who made a quit attempt during the PHE campaign, 500,000 people (20%) were successful; the highest recorded success rate and up from six years ago at just 13.6%.

Launch of the Children's Oral Health Improvement Programme Board

PHE has announced the launch of a new programme board which aims to ensure that every child grows up free from tooth decay as part of having the best start in life.

The [Children's Oral Health Improvement Programme Board](#) brings together stakeholder organisations which include NHS England, the LGA and the British Dental Association.

The Board has published an [action plan 2016 to 2020](#) infographic and includes their five objectives.

Dr Sandra White, National Lead for Dental Public Health, PHE said: "There is an opportunity to change the future for our children and a welcome appetite from a number of organisations who want to work together to improve oral health in children. Improving oral health is everyone's business."

Opportunity to propose new screening topics

For the first time, the UK National Screening Committee (NSC) is [calling](#) for individuals or organisations to submit a proposal for a condition to be considered for a population-wide screening programme as part of a pilot.

The pilot evaluation will consider the volume of work generated by submissions and will assess its effectiveness. If successful, it is hoped that the process can continue annually.

Any proposals received will be evaluated against UK NSC screening criteria, but any condition previously considered by the Committee will not be included.

NHS England prepare to invest in three new units for mums with mental ill health

NHS England will be [investing](#) in three new inpatient units for mothers with serious mental health problems to help them stay with their babies.

The three new units will provide in-patient support services for women and their babies with the most complex and severe needs who require hospitalisation or who are experiencing severe mental health crisis.

Invitations to express an interest in providing these services have been sent to provider organisations; procurement for the units should begin in Autumn 2016 and contracts awarded to allow work to begin by March 2017.

Social care for older people with multiple long-term conditions

NICE has published a new [quality standard](#), which covers the planning and delivery of coordinated, person-centred social care and support for older people with multiple long-term conditions (LTCs).

It specifically focusses on people aged over 65 as this is the largest group of people affected by multiple LTCs. It includes older people living in their own homes, in specialist settings or in care homes, and those who receive support with funding for their social care and those who do not.

The quality statements are:

1. including physical and mental health needs in a care and support needs assessment;
2. discussing services that could help at a care and support needs assessment;
3. named care coordinator;
4. care planning; and
5. review of health and social care plan.

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