

November 2015

PSNC Briefing 059/15: 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.

PHE publish **Shooting Up: infections among people who inject drugs in the UK**

Public Health England (PHE) has published [Shooting up: infections among people who inject drugs in the UK](#). The annual report describes trends in the extent of infections and associated risks and behaviours among people who inject drugs in the UK to the end of 2014. Further information can also be found in the set of data tables that accompany this report.

The report shows that almost half of people (48%) of injecting drug users were unaware of having hepatitis C although rates of HIV among this group remain low (1%).

Risky injecting behaviour, such as sharing needles, among vulnerable drug users puts them at an increased risk of getting HIV, hepatitis C, B and other infections. However, sharing and reusing needles and syringes in England has fallen from 28% in 2004 to 16% in 2014.

Infographic on understanding the spending gap in the NHS

NHS Confederation has produced an [infographic](#) which explains why the NHS is expected to have a £30bn funding gap by 2020/21 and how the gap could be filled.

Health Foundation produces short film on medicines management in care homes

The Health Foundation is running a series of five short films – [the Power of People](#) – on how the lives of people using health services and their families can be improved through the determined efforts of people working in healthcare.

The film, [Pills: Reviewing medication in care homes](#), illustrates the importance of shared decision making with respect to the use of medicines in older care home residents. It features the Northumbria NHS Trust's medication review service, which brings together care home residents, their families and health professionals, to ensure residents are getting the right mix of medicines.

PHE data and analysis tools

PHE has published [data and analysis tools](#), which brings together the many high quality data and analysis tools and resources for public health professionals.

The alphabetical listing of resources covers a wide range of public health areas, including:

- specific health conditions – such as cancer, mental health, cardiovascular disease;
- lifestyle risk factors – such as smoking, alcohol and obesity;
- wider determinants of health – such as environment, housing and deprivation; and
- health protection, and differences between population groups, including adults, older people, and children.

The tools were produced by organisations that are now part of PHE, including public health observatories, the Health Protection Agency, cancer registries, UK screening programmes and the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse.

Briefing published by the King's Fund on devolution

Ahead of further devolution deals expected to be announced as part of the Spending Review 2015, the King's Fund has published a briefing [Devolution: what it means for health and social care in England](#).

The Briefing describes the origins of the devolution agenda and charts its progress in relation to health and social care. Before drawing some broad conclusions, the penultimate section explores some of the key policy and implementation questions that remain unresolved.

Widening the availability of naloxone

The Department of Health, Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and Public Health England have produced a [factsheet](#) explaining the regulations that were introduced on the 1st October 2015, which widened the availability of naloxone, and how they can be implemented.

2020Health publish report on who is more likely to become obese

2020Health has published a research paper, [Fat Chance?](#), which examines the wealth of current knowledge and data on obesity, and addresses one crucial question: 'Who exactly is becoming obese?'

The study looked at 16 data-sets to determine 'who' is obese in the UK, and what are the key correlates linked to rising levels of obesity. These included: age, gender, geographic location, socio-economic status, prevalence of local green space, fast food density in the area, rates of smoking and presence of mental illness.

Key findings and perspectives on the complexity of what is driving obesity UK include:

- evidence that links lower socio-economic groups to obesity remains overwhelming, but what has emerged is that obesity rates are now rising rapidly amongst other groups who are experiencing social instability in their lives;
- gender is also key in understanding the trends in obesity, and so should be factored into future health policy interventions. Previously women were deemed more likely to be obese than men, but obesity rates are now increasing amongst men, especially the middle-aged;
- the prevalence of fast food outlets near working environment has a significant impact on the BMI of men, whilst the lack of green space in a local environment has an impact on obesity rates in girls in particular; and
- half of all people suffering with psychosis are obese.

NHS providers facing significant challenges

NHS providers, both trusts and foundation trusts, are facing significant challenges on both finance and operational performance against key national standards at the mid-point of the year.

Figures setting out the [financial position of the NHS provider sector](#) show that it recorded a half year (1st April to 30th September 2015) deficit of £1.6 billion. In addition, between 1st July to 30th September 2015 many providers struggled to achieve several key national healthcare standards.

In particular, delayed transfers of care – where medically fit patients cannot leave hospital because the care they need is not yet in place – are having a negative impact on NHS organisations meeting other standards, especially in A&E, while spending on agency staff is continuing to have an extremely detrimental effect on their financial position.

The full performance report is available on the GOV.UK website.

Free HIV home test kits launched to increase HIV testing

PHE has launched the first nationally available HIV kit for testing those at higher-risk, alongside announcing new funding for innovative HIV prevention projects.

People at higher-risk of HIV across the country can now order a HIV home-sampling test kit online, and are being encouraged to take the simple finger prick blood sample for National HIV Testing Week, which started on 21st November 2015. Improved treatment for HIV means those diagnosed early can have a life expectancy almost matching that of people who are HIV free.

PHE has also released new [figures](#) which show an estimated 103,700 people in the UK were living with HIV in 2014, with around 17% (18,100) unaware and at risk of unknowingly passing on the virus to others. Among men who have sex with men, 6,500 remain unaware of their HIV infection, as do a further 3,900 men and women from black African communities.

HSCIC publish General Pharmaceutical Services in England – 2005/06 to 2014/15

The Health & Social Care Information Centre has published [General Pharmaceutical Services in England – 2005/06 to 2014/15](#), which shows information about community pharmacy contractors and appliance contractors in England, and the NHS services they provided, between 2005/06 and 2014/15.

Key facts include:

- there were 11,674 community pharmacies in England as at 31st March 2015, compared to 11,647 as at 31st March 2014, an increase of 27 (0.2%). There has been an increase of 1,802 (18.3%) since 2005/06;
- most prescription items are dispensed by community pharmacies. In England in 2014/15 978.3 million items were dispensed by community pharmacies (92.1% of all items dispensed in the community). This is an increase of 30.1 million (3.2%) from 2013/14 when the figure was 948.2 million. This compares with 85 million items dispensed by dispensing practices and 7.8 million by appliance contractors in 2014/15. 14.7% of items dispensed by community pharmacies and appliance contractors were via the Electronic Prescription Service; and
- there were 124 appliance contractors on the pharmaceutical list as at 31st March 2015, 122 of which were actively dispensing between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2015. Since 2005/06 this is a decrease of 17 appliance contractors actively dispensing but an increase of 4.6 million items dispensed.

Valuing carers 2015: the rising value of carers' support

CarersUK has published [Valuing Carers 2015: The rising value of carers' support](#), the third in a series of research reports looking at the value to the UK economy of the support provided by unpaid carers.

Key facts from the report include:

- the economic value of the contribution made by carers in the UK is now £132 billion per year (almost double its 2001 value (£68 billion));
- the support provided by the UK's carers in 2015 saves the public purse £2.5 billion per week; and
- between 2001 and 2015, the number of people aged 85 and over in the UK increased by over 431,000 a percentage increase of 38%.

Multi-country public awareness survey on antibiotic resistance

The [Antibiotic resistance: multi-country public awareness survey](#), commissioned by the World Health Organization, asked 10,000 members of the public across 12 countries about their use of antibiotics, knowledge of antibiotics and of antibiotic resistance.

The survey reveals common misconceptions and misunderstandings including the belief that individuals are not at risk of a drug-resistant infection if they personally take their antibiotics as prescribed.

If you have any queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information, please contact [Rosie Taylor, Head of Service Development](#).