

August 2017

PSNC Briefing 067/17: 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.

Naloxone survey 2017

The Local Government Association (LGA) has published the [results](#) of a survey conducted by the LGA's Research and Information team on behalf of the LGA and Public Health England (PHE).

The survey took place between mid-June and early July 2017 to better understand the use of naloxone across local authorities (LAs).

Key findings from the survey include:

- 90% of respondent LAs made available take-home naloxone;
- 99% of respondents who have made it available did so via drug treatment services, 25% did so via hostels and 25% using outreach workers; and
- 50% of respondents who did not make it available (14) indicated that they would make it available if there was an increase in opiate overdoses or drug-related deaths in their area.

Hexavalent 6-in-1 vaccine to be made available to newborn babies

PHE has [announced](#) that instead of the existing 5-in-1 vaccine that children routinely receive at birth, all babies born on or after 1st August 2017 will be offered a hexavalent 6-in-1 vaccine to include protection against the hepatitis B virus.

There will be no changes to the vaccines or immunisation schedule at the ages of 8, 12 and 16 weeks.

Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation at PHE said: "Until today, only children at high risk of hepatitis B would be immunised. The introduction of hexavalent vaccine means that all children will now be routinely protected against this serious infection, which is a major cause of cirrhosis and liver cancer in later life. The hexavalent vaccine has been extensively tested and shown to be safe and is widely used internationally with millions of doses being given around the world."

Health Profiles: August 2017 data update

PHE has published its quarterly [update](#) for the online Health Profiles for August 2017. This update features one new indicator showing the estimated dementia diagnosis rate for people aged 65 years and over.

Key statistics in the updated profiles include:

- in 2016, of all adult survey respondents in England, 15.5% smoked which equates to around 6.7 million in the population;

- the rate of new sexually transmitted infections in those aged 15 to 64 for England decreased significantly between 2015 to 2016, from 833 to 795 per 100,000 population aged 15 to 64; and
- it is estimated that just over two thirds of cases of dementia had been diagnosed in England in 2017.

Public health outcomes framework: August 2017 data update

The Public Health Outcomes Framework has been updated for August 2017 and [published](#) by PHE. This update contains more recent data for some indicators, equalities or inequalities breakdowns for two indicators and changes to two indicators to account for revisions to the underlying data or the methods used.

Key statistics in the update include:

- in the last four years, nearly 75% of the eligible population have been offered an NHS Health Check with just under half receiving one;
- in 2016, over 1.4 million chlamydia tests were carried out in England among young people aged 15 to 24 years; and
- vaccination coverage increased in 2016/17 for those aged two to four years and those in clinical at-risk groups. However, for those aged 65 and over, coverage fell.

Dementia in older age: barriers to primary prevention and factors

PHE has [published](#) an evidence review and other publications relating to dementia aimed at commissioners and researchers to help them make decisions about preventative measures.

The review was conducted by the Personal Social Services Research Unit at the London School of Economics and Political Science and highlights the various factors that increase the risk of dementia.

The documents highlight that to promote the primary prevention of dementia, it is important to understand both the barriers to primary prevention and factors which facilitate primary prevention.

Key messages from the reviews are:

- around one-third of cases of dementia in old age could be potentially prevented through changes in mid-life behaviour;
- although the evidence is fairly limited, there is sufficient evidence to show that a range of behaviours in mid-life impact on the risk of dementia in later life;
- there is evidence that physical inactivity, current smoking, diabetes, hypertension in mid-life, obesity in mid-life and depression increase the risk of dementia and that mental activity can reduce the risk of dementia;
- there is currently insufficient evidence that alcohol, diet, mental distress, social isolation, loneliness or air pollution affect the risk of dementia in later life; and
- further research is also required to better understand the relationship between the mid-life risk factors and dementia.

Implementation guide and resource pack for dementia care

NHS England has published a [guide](#) which sets out details for the transformation of dementia care and its relevance to commissioners, providers and [Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships](#) (STPs) in supporting the delivery of a number of objectives in the Department of Health (DH)'s [Prime Minister's challenge on dementia 2020](#).

It provides guidance and information on:

- the policy and strategic context for transforming dementia care;
- access and quality benchmarks for the dementia care pathway;
- how to deliver high-quality dementia care; and
- collecting data and measuring outcomes.

CCG improvement and assessment framework 2016/17

NHS England has published the [Clinical Commissioning Group \(CCG\) improvement and assessment framework 2016/17](#) which replaces the CCG assurance framework and CCG performance dashboard.

The framework aligns key objectives and priorities within the [NHS Five Year Forward View](#), [NHS Planning Guidance](#) and STPs. It has been designed to supply indicators for adoption in STPs as markers of success.

The new framework has been constructed to cover indicators located in four domains:

1. Better Health: this section looks at how the CCG is contributing towards improving the health and wellbeing of its population, and bending the demand curve;
2. Better Care: this focusses on care redesign, performance of constitutional standards, and outcomes, including in important clinical areas;
3. Sustainability: this section looks at how the CCG is remaining in financial balance and securing good value for patients and the public from the money it spends; and
4. Leadership: this domain assesses the quality of the CCG's leadership, the quality of its plan and how the CCG works with partners.

Improving access for all: reducing inequalities in access to general practice services

NHS England has published a [resource](#) on how to identify and address barriers to general practice to allow improved access to the full range of services offered.

The guide provides information on understanding local populations and why patient and public involvement is important. It also illustrates the key factors influencing a patient's ability to access GP services in England and provides ideas and innovations to increase capacity and improve access for all.

10-point plan sets out actions to deliver General Practice Nursing workforce for the future

NHS England has launched a 10-point [action plan](#) to develop the roles of general practice nurses (GPNs) to transform and improve patient care. The plans are attached to an investment of £15 million to help target and prioritise where improvements are needed most.

The plans include measures to:

- increase uptake and promote nursing in general practice;
- support for existing GPNs; and
- encouraging GPNs to return to practice.

GP Forward View Annual Assessment

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) has published the first annual assessment of implementation of the [General Practice Forward View](#) (GPFV).

The RCGP publication provides a summary of progress on the key commitments of the GPFV. It concludes that despite the beginnings of some promising programmes and overall investment, progress is still too patchy and several commitments are not yet being delivered.

The RCGP also offers specific recommendations relating to the progress of individual commitments and are categorised as areas to rethink; improve; deliver; communicate; expand; or continue.

Thousands of new roles to be created in mental health workforce plan

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt has launched a [plan](#) to expand the mental health workforce developed by Health Education England (HEE) and its NHS partners, the Royal College of Psychiatrists and other mental health experts. The plan has been allocated £1.3 billion by the Government to transform mental health services.

The plan shows how the health service will increase the number of trained nurses, therapists, psychiatrists, peer support workers and other mental health professionals to equalise workplace capacity.

The Government has made a pledge to:

- treat an extra one million patients by 2020/21;
- provide services seven days a week, 24 hours a day; and
- integrate mental and physical health services for the first time.

New framework to promote person-centred approaches in healthcare

HEE has launched a new [framework](#) to support person-centred approaches for the health and social care workforce. It aims to distil best practice and set out the core transferable behaviours, knowledge and skills required, applicable across different services and sectors. It also articulates what it means to be person-centred and how to develop and support the workforce to work in this way.

The framework is structured such that it describes the behaviours, knowledge and skills to implement person-centred approaches in three steps:

1. conversations to engage with people;
2. conversations to enable and support people; and
3. conversations with people to collaboratively manage highest complexity and significant risk.

Within each step, the framework provides behaviours and learning outcomes.

Increase in prescriptions for diabetes exceeds rise in overall prescribing

NHS Digital has published [figures](#) which show that prescription items for the treatment of diabetes in primary care have increased by 80.1% over the last decade, compared with a 46% rise across all primary care prescribing.

The report, [Prescribing for Diabetes: England 2006/07 to 2016/17](#) shows that 52 million items were prescribed for diabetes in 2016/17, compared to 49.7 million in 2015/16 and 28.9 million in 2006/07.

Key facts in the report are:

- drugs used in diabetes (those listed in the British National Formulary (BNF) section 6.1) now make up 11% of the total primary care net ingredient cost (NIC) and 4.7% of prescription items;
- in the financial year 2016/17 there were 52 million items prescribed for diabetes at a total NIC of £983.7 million. This is an increase from 28.9 million prescription items and £572.4 million in 2006/07; and
- antidiabetic drugs (BNF section 6.1.2) make up 45.1% of the total £983.7 million NIC of drugs used in diabetes and accounts for 72% of prescription items for all diabetes prescribing.

Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England, 2016/17

A survey on adult carers has been conducted by Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities, the [findings](#) of which have been published by NHS Digital.

The survey seeks the opinions of carers aged 18 years or over, caring for a person aged 18 years or over, on different topics that are considered to be indicative of a balanced life alongside their unpaid caring role.

Key facts highlighted in the survey include:

- 71% of carers who received support or services were extremely, very or quite satisfied with the support or services they received;
- 1% of carers aged 85 and over have caring responsibilities for someone aged 75 years or over;
- of carers who have had a lot of financial difficulties caused by their caring responsibilities, 38.7% report having little social contact with people and feeling socially isolated;
- 5% of carers spend more than 35 hours per week providing care; and
- 7% of carers provide care for over 100 hours per week.

Sexual health services at tipping point, warn councils

The LGA has published an [article](#) warning that sexual health services are at a tipping point due to increasing demand for the services.

It highlights that in 2016, there were 2,456,779 new attendances at sexual health clinics compared to 1,941,801 in 2012. The LGA says the cuts to public health budgets of £531 million, a reduction of nearly 10%, by the Government has meant that LAs are struggling to keep up with the increased demand.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "While it is encouraging that more and more people are taking their own and their partners' sexual health seriously, we are concerned that this increase in demand is creating capacity and resource issues for councils.

We are concerned that this will see waiting times start to increase and patient experience deteriorate.

The reduction in public health funding could also compound problems further and impact on councils' ability to meet demand and respond to unforeseen outbreaks..."

Deaths related to drug poisoning in England 2016

The Office for National Statistics has published a [report](#) on deaths related to drug poisoning in England and Wales from 1993 onwards, by cause of death, sex, age and contributing substances.

Main points highlighted in the report include:

- there were 3,744 drug poisoning deaths involving both legal and illegal drugs; this is an increase of 2% from 2015 and the highest number since 1993;
- 69% of those deaths were drug misuse deaths;
- people aged 40-49 years had the highest rate of drug misuse deaths in 2016, overtaking those aged 30-39 years; and
- 54% of all deaths related to drug poisoning in 2016 involved an opiate (mainly heroin and/or morphine).

In light of these statistics, the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) has [urged](#) the Government to reverse cuts to LA public health budgets and invest in pragmatic harm reduction measures.

RSPH also highlights that the UK retains a drug death rate almost three times higher than the European average.

Preventing drug related deaths

The LGA has published a [report](#) relating to drug-related deaths across the country. The LGA document discusses how councils are succeeding in reversing the trend in drug-related deaths.

Key facts highlighted in the report include:

- there were 3,744 drug poisoning deaths involving both legal and illegal drugs in England and Wales registered in 2016; this is a 2% increase since 2015 and the highest number since comparable statistics began in 1993;
- of these, 3,744 deaths (69%) were drug misuse deaths;
- deaths in England have remained comparable between 2015 and 2016; and
- the Home Office estimated in 2010/11 that the cost of illicit drug use in the UK was £10.7 billion per year. This figure includes health service use, enforcement, drug-related crime and deaths linked to eight illicit substances.

1,500 extra medical undergraduate places confirmed

DH has published the Government's [response](#) to a consultation it carried out regarding expanding undergraduate medical education student numbers.

The Government will be increasing the number of medical student places in England by 1,500; an extra 500 places will be able to be offered by existing medical schools and another 1,000 places will be allocated across the country based on an open bidding process supervised by Health Education England and the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

The extra places, available from next year, will be targeted towards under-represented social groups such as lower income students as well as regions that usually struggle to attract trainee medics.

Additionally, the Government has also made plans to fund 10,000 additional training places for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals.

NHS England announces world's largest single PrEP implementation trial to prevent HIV infection

NHS England has [announced](#) it will start implementing a trial to provide HIV prevention drugs to people at high risk of HIV infection, through the pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) trial. PrEP, which has an allocated budget of £10 million, will now be provided through the initial three-year trial to an estimated 10,000 people – the largest study in the world.

From September, sexual health clinics in London, Brighton, Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield are expected to first start enrolling people on to the trial.

Hundreds more people surviving heart failure, independent study finds

NHS England has highlighted a recent [report](#) which found that improvements in patient care mean hundreds more people are surviving heart failure. It found that the mortality rate dropped from 9.6% to 8.9%, meaning approximately 500 lives have been saved in the past year compared to 2014/15.

The report, [National heart failure audit](#) covers the region April 2015 to March 2016 and was originally published by the British Society for Heart Failure.

21 teams selected to put innovative ideas into practice

The Health Foundation has [published](#) the 21 projects selected as part of the sixth round of the [Innovating for Improvement](#) programme.

The programme, worth £1.5 million, aims to improve health care delivery and/or the way people manage their own health care.

The selected projects will be led by clinical teams and will develop their innovative ideas and approaches, put their ideas into practice and gather evidence about how their innovation improves quality.

Next stage of childhood obesity plan announced

DH and PHE have [announced](#) a calorie reduction programme on foods children consume the most, in order to tackle the growing obesity problem.

Foods included in the programme are likely to be ready meals, pizzas, burgers, savoury snacks and sandwiches.

To inform this work, a review of the evidence on children's calorie consumption will first be taking place, and PHE will be publishing the findings of the review in early 2018. A consultation with the food industry, trade bodies and health non-governmental organisations will then take place, to develop guidance and timelines for the calorie reduction programme.

DH and PHE have also [announced](#) that a new obesity policy research unit will be established at University College London. The National Institute for Health Research Obesity Policy Research Unit has been allocated funding of £5 million and will conduct long-term research into childhood obesity.

It will also be looking at social inequalities, marketing and evaluate action that has been taken so far, to make sure the plan works.

What's it like to live in a care home? Findings from the Healthwatch network

Healthwatch has published a [report](#) which summarises the findings of local Healthwatch staff and volunteer visits to care homes to find out what daily life is like for care home residents.

Across England, 197 care homes were visited in 63 different LA areas. Healthwatch visitors spoke to residents, their families and staff and compiled reports which were shared with the providers, the public and the Care Quality Commission.

The analysis by Healthwatch uncovered three main themes:

1. The quality of care varies between homes, but also within the same home, with too few homes getting the basics right every time;
2. good care homes meet all people's health and care needs, working seamlessly with other services when their residents need additional support; and
3. the best residential services are the ones that focus on enabling people to continue living as if they were still in their own home.

Healthwatch will be conducting similar reviews looking at domiciliary care services and conducting further research to find out what people want from the future of social care.

Patient access to medical technology

The Medical Technology Group has published a [report](#) based on an analysis it conducted on patient access to medical technology.

The Group examined data from 209 CCGs across England to find out how effective they are at giving patients access to medical technology.

The report has found that there remains wide variation across the country when it comes to giving patients access to innovative technology; the report sets out recommendations to help the NHS change this. Some of these recommendations are:

- CCG commissioning rates should contribute towards their overall rating;

- NHS England should establish a tribunal board to consider whether individual CCGs have overly restrictive commissioning policies which are contrary to national guidelines;
- NHS England should be required to inspect the bottom ten CCGs in terms of their commissioning levels; and
- the aggregate score for each CCG should be published online for the general public to access.

Co-production should be the norm, not the exception

The charity, Rethink Mental Illness, has published a report, [Progress through Partnership](#), which states that the majority of CCGs do not have clear plans for involving people with experience of mental illness in the design and commissioning of mental health services – also known as co-production.

Key facts highlighted in the report are:

- only 15% of CCGs who responded stated they had used co-production at least once in mental health commissioning;
- only 1% of CCGs explicitly stated an ambition for co-production in mental health that was aligned to the vision of the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health; and
- only 14% of CCGs had plans to do more to involve people with experience of mental illness in their work.

Dementia education on risk inspires people in midlife to consider healthier lifestyles

The Alzheimer's Society has published a [report](#) highlighting the findings of a pilot which saw healthcare professionals deliver dementia risk reduction messages as part of NHS Health Checks. The pilot found that 75% of people in midlife, who received the NHS Health Check, would make lifestyle changes now to reduce their risk.

The joint pilot by Alzheimer's Research UK, Alzheimer's Society and PHE took place across Manchester City, Bury, Southampton City and Birmingham as part of the NHS Health Check programme.

Key findings from the report include:

- the quantitative results indicate that the dementia component increases awareness of the lifestyle factors that increase the risk of dementia;
- linking the risk reduction for dementia with risk reduction in other related areas was considered by the qualitative respondents as a logical and sensible way to introduce the subject of dementia, and it felt like a natural step to extend the NHS Health Check discussion to incorporate it; and
- the messages around reducing the risk of dementia were also seen to challenge misconceptions that you can't take any positive actions to prevent the onset of dementia, and that dementia is not actually inevitable. This increased a sense of personal accountability.

Statistics on NHS stop smoking services

NHS Digital has published its [annual report](#) on NHS stop smoking services in England, covering the time period between April 2016 to March 2017. The report includes information on the number of people setting a quit date and the number who successfully quit at the four-week follow up; results are provided at national, regional and LA levels.

Key facts include:

- the number of people setting a quit date fell for the fifth consecutive year to 307,507 in 2016/17. This represents a decrease of 15% on 2015/16;
- the number of successful self-reported quitters also fell for the fifth consecutive year to 155,875. This was a decrease of 16% on 2015/16; and
- 72% (112,823) of self-reported quitters had their results confirmed by Carbon Monoxide (CO) validation.

Partnership approaches to improving health outcomes for young people

The LGA has published a [report](#) on how health inequalities facing young people can be reduced. The report features case studies on the different approaches that can be taken to support their health and provide an opportunity to reflect on what made each initiative a success and how it can be implemented in other areas.

Nurses call for an urgent social media campaign to warn new students of meningitis threat and encourage vaccination

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is [calling](#) for an urgent targeted social media campaign to encourage school leavers to receive the meningitis (MenACWY) vaccine.

Over the last few years there has been a rapid increase in the W strain of meningococcal disease which is harder to diagnose and therefore treat. The RCN article highlights that PHE figures reveal that only a third of 18-year olds received the vaccine last year.

Helen Donovan, RCN Professional Lead for Public Health and an expert in vaccination, said: “A targeted social media campaign could save lives. The low take-up is a serious concern as people starting university are particularly at risk. Letters are not enough – it’s vital we communicate with young people using platforms they are likely to use.”

RCPCH publishes new guidance on breastfeeding

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) has published new [guidance](#) on breastfeeding, highlighting the health benefits and importance of tackling the low rates in the UK.

The RCPCH has highlighted that social stigma is a major barrier to breastfeeding, and more should be done to support women to continue breastfeeding beyond the first few weeks. The new guidance is based on the latest research and aims to give practical advice on breastfeeding duration, health benefits of breastfeeding as well as financial savings to families and health services.

Physical inactivity levels in adults aged 40 to 60 in England

PHE has published a [statistical publication](#) featuring data from Sport England’s Active Lives Survey which looked at physical inactivity and brisk walking levels in people aged between 40 and 60 in England.

The survey took place during 2015/2016 and was designed to measure participation in sport and physical activity in England.

Key facts from the survey include:

- 41% adults aged 40 to 60 in England walk less than ten minutes continuously each month;
- 9% of men and 37.9% of women aged 40 to 60 in England walk less than ten minutes continuously each month at a brisk pace; London reported the highest proportion of adults aged 40 to 60 that walk less than ten minutes continuously each month at a brisk pace, with those in the South West reporting the lower proportion (36.8%);
- 7% of 40 to 60 year olds are physically inactive; and
- 9% of adults aged 40 to 60 from the most deprived areas are classed as physically inactive, compared to 11.3% in the least deprived areas.

In addition, PHE has published an [evidence summary](#) on the health benefits of brisk walking each day for ten minutes.

It also covers:

- dose-response relationship of physical activity and health;
- physical activity in mid-life; and
- walking as a physical activity intervention.

MHRA seizes more than 100 unreliable HIV home-testing kits

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has issued a [warning](#) to people not to use or buy Hightop HIV/AIDS Home Test Kits after seizing 114 potentially unreliable products from two UK-based suppliers.

The MHRA is advising people who believe they have used a Hightop HIV/AIDS Home Test Kit to seek a further HIV test at their local sexual health clinic or through their GP as the self-test kits may be unreliable and provide false results.

NHS Health Check quarterly statistics: August 2017

PHE has published updated [NHS Health Check data](#), covering April to June 2017 (quarter 1 for 2017/18).

Key facts include:

- the total eligible population for an NHS Health Check in the last quarter was 15,503,796;
- 4% of the eligible population were offered an NHS Health Check in the last quarter;
- 9% of total eligible population received an NHS Health Check; and
- 2% of those offered an NHS Health Check received one.

Colleges join forces to make young people's mental health a priority

The Royal Colleges of General Practitioners (RCGP), Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), and Psychiatrists (RCPsych) have committed to [five shared principles](#) to improve the care and support of children and young people with mental health problems.

The Colleges have, in addition to the principles, also committed to a number of ongoing actions:

- ensuring the highest quality training and standards in children and young people's mental health;
- supporting the development of evidence based models of care that are focussed on integration of care; and
- calling for greater investment and resources to be focussed on developing services in children and young people-friendly settings that promote early intervention and resilience.

Expansion of the GP International Recruitment Programme

The RCGP and NHS England have published a [document](#) which describes how they are intending to expand the GP International Recruitment Programme.

The document sets out principles and action points to enable them to recruit a total of extra 2,000 international doctors over the next three years into English general practice.

The timeline is as follows:

- 2017 – phase one: recruitment begins for 600 doctors;
 - GP International Recruitment Office is established; and
 - marketing begins;
- 2018 – streamlined processes introduced;
 - expanded capacity for assessment; and
 - phase two: recruitment begins for next 1,000 doctors
- 2019 – phase three: recruitment begins for a further 400-1,000 doctors.

Primary Care Home: Evaluating a new model of primary care

The Nuffield Trust has published an [evaluation report](#) of the National Association of Primary Care (NAPC)'s Primary Care Home (PCH) model, which looks at how sites can make early progress with implementing and evaluating their local PCH models and potential challenges.

The evaluation was commissioned by the NAPC and includes the following key messages:

- participating in the PCH programme had strengthened inter-professional working between GPs and other healthcare professionals, and stimulated new services and ways of working tailored to the needs of different patient groups;
- policy-makers must accept that these new working relationships will take time to establish, as widespread service change requires support from people at all levels across organisational boundaries;
- developing the PCH model needs significant investment in time, money and support to enable change;
- the complex external context in which PCHs are emerging, particularly the development of STPs, could help or hinder their development; and
- good quality data and the ability to use it as essential for future evaluations of these models. The lack of joined-up data between different parts of the NHS and social care could further impede progress.

Developing Accountable Care Systems: lessons from Canterbury, New Zealand

The King's Fund has published an [article](#) relating to developing Accountable Care Systems in Canterbury, New Zealand. The health system has undergone a significant programme of transformation over the past decade and as a result, the health system is supporting more people in their homes and communities and moderated demand for hospital care, particularly among older people.

The article summarises useful lessons for the NHS in terms care redesign and covers:

- what changes did the Canterbury system make?
- what was the impact of these changes? and
- what can the NHS learn from the experience in Canterbury?

New additional section to Health & Care Review – Media monitoring

As part of PSNC's ongoing work to help contractors and LPCs stay up to date on what is going on in the wider health and care landscape beyond community pharmacy, a new section has been added to the PSNC weekly Health and Care Review called 'Media monitoring'. In this section, we will highlight a selection of the main health related stories that have been published in the national media during the week.

Saturday 12th August– Monday 14th August 2017:

- The Daily Mail led with a very positive pharmacy story on [cardiovascular checks](#).
- There was [controversy](#) over the weekend as the Royal College of Midwives announced it would no longer promote 'normal birth'.
- The [Guardian](#) had a story on prescriptions tripling for Viagra.

Tuesday 15th August 2017:

- The [Daily Mail](#) reported that patients have been told to wait for two days before taking antibiotics for a sore throat, in a bid to tackle antibiotic resistance.
- A new study has shown that overweight people deemed 'healthy' still have a higher risk of coronary heart disease. This was reported by [ITV](#) and the [BBC](#).
- The [Independent](#) had an article on the growing number of drug-related deaths in the UK, attributing the rise to the growth in synthetic opiates.
- The [Guardian](#) reported that a nationwide study of GPs has concluded that 70% of GPs do not feel confident discussing levels of physical activity with patients.

Wednesday 16th August 2017:

- [The Sun](#) reported on an article in the Lancet which has argued the merits of Ketamine being used to treat patients suffering from depression and who are not responding to other forms of medication.

- [The BBC](#) reported on how new university students are being encouraged to get free meningitis vaccinations. However, according to the Royal College of Nursing only a third of those eligible for the jab took up the offer last year.
- [The Daily Express](#) reported on how the automatic blood pressure devices usually used to test for hypertension in the UK are not always accurate, and that a new device developed in Israel which uses photoplethysmography may allow for a more accurate way to measure systolic blood pressure.
- [The Times](#) reported on how concerns have been raised over the lack of limits on the supply of Imodium, following a number of fatal overdoses.

Thursday 17th August 2017:

- The [Telegraph](#) reported concerns that hospitals are at risk of further cyber-attacks due to staff using weak passwords.

Friday 18th August 2017:

- [The Telegraph](#) reported on a study which has shown that women who take the oral contraceptive pill are protected from arthritis later in life due to hormonal changes prompted by the pill. This was also covered by [the Daily Mail](#).
- [The Daily Mail](#) reported on a new study in the British Medical Journal which indicates that teenagers who use electronic cigarettes are four times more likely to go on to smoke tobacco. The study is the first UK evidence that 'vaping' may act as a 'gateway' to smoking. This was also covered by [ITV](#).

Tuesday 22nd August 2017:

- A nationwide campaign on arthritis awareness has achieved lots of coverage, including in the [Express](#).
- The [Mail](#) has a story on shortages of care home beds.
- [The Telegraph](#) reports on efforts to create Healthy New Towns, leading on a proposal to offer supermarket discounts if people hit NHS exercise targets.

Wednesday 23rd August 2017:

- [The Telegraph](#) has reported on how the baby boomer generation now accounts for almost half of alcohol related hospital admissions. Official figures show a tripling in alcohol-related hospital admissions among those aged between 55 and 74, over the last decade, making up 45% of such cases, with more than 500,000 admissions in 2015/16. At the same time, the proportion of cases involving younger drinkers has dramatically fallen. This was also covered by the [Guardian](#), and [The Times](#).
- [The Daily Mail](#) reports on new research by the University of Bristol which has found men and women who are overweight in their 'bachelor years' will likely have children with slow metabolism. At least a fifth of Western parents-to-be now start pregnancy overweight or obese – and while most programs to combat this issue target pregnant women, urging them not to over-eat during gestation, this new study warns that lifestyle before conceiving – among both men and women – could be more critical than a woman's pregnancy diet.
- [The Times](#) has reported on the NHS's newly announced plans to boost GP numbers. These include allowing GPs in training who fail their exams to re-sit them up to six times, as well as bringing in 2,000 foreign GPs in an 'industrial scale' recruitment programme as it labours to meet promises of 5,000 more by 2020.

Friday 25th August 2017:

- [The Guardian](#) has reported on the Royal College of Nursing and their call to the Government to spend more on school nursing services, arguing that "Children with conditions such as asthma, epilepsy or allergies could experience a life-threatening emergency at any time."
- [The Sun](#) has reported on efforts by British scientists to develop a pill that gives users the benefits of physical activity without actually needing to exercise. Named Piezo 1, it acts as an 'exercise sensor', boosting blood

flow to the brain and muscles to sustain activity. It also restricts the amount pumped to the stomach and intestines.

- [The Times](#) also has an opinion piece on the NHS, comparing it those health services in other developed nations and suggesting different models of funding.

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