

October 2017

PSNC Briefing 084/17: 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.

Pulse article highlights problems associated with medicines optimisation schemes

An [article](#) has been published in Pulse which highlights issues encountered by a GP under a Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) 'Medicine Optimisation Benefit Share Scheme'.

The article explains how switching patients from generic to branded prescribing perversely affects community pharmacies' ability to keep retained margin, which makes up more than a quarter of their total funding. This lost margin is instead retained by the CCG, with some of it being allocated to GP practices for taking part in the scheme.

It also highlights that in some situations, branded prescribing undercuts the Drug Tariff price, leaving pharmacies to dispense at a loss and that GPs should play no part in this.

Cardiovascular disease prevention: action plan

Public Health England (PHE) has published an [action plan](#) intended for those involved in the commissioning and provision of services for cardiovascular disease (CVD) and its prevention.

The document aims to:

- highlight some of PHE's work to address CVD that took place in 2016/17;
- provide an overview of PHE's major initiatives on CVD in 2017/18; and
- underline PHE's role in providing leadership and support to the NHS and wider partners.

Highlights for 2017/18 include:

- collecting and examine findings from a national data extraction on NHS Health Checks;
- review international evidence/case studies on CVD prevention;
- engaging over 1 million adults on their heart health by promoting access to the Heart Age Tool; and
- working with NHS England and partners to implement improvements in detection and management of high risk conditions for CVD.

NHS hospital bed numbers: past, present, future

The King's fund has published an [article](#) which focusses on NHS hospital beds in England over a 30-year time period and compares the NHS's bed supply with 15 other European Union countries. It also explores drivers underpinning observed changes and considers whether [Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships](#)' (STPs) proposed bed reductions are realistic.

Key facts include:

- the total number of NHS hospital beds in England has more than halved over the past 30 years, from around 299,000 to 142,000 while the number of patients treated has significantly increased;
- the UK currently has fewer acute beds relative to its population than almost any other comparable health system;
- while the rate of decrease in bed numbers has slowed in recent years, there are opportunities to make better use of existing bed stock by preventing avoidable admissions, reducing variations in length of stay and improving the discharge of patients;
- efforts to make better use of the existing stock should focus on the relatively small number of mainly older patients who stay in hospital a long time; and
- in 2016/17, overnight general and acute bed occupancy averaged 90.3%, and regularly exceeded 95% in winter, well above the level many consider safe. In this context, proposals put forward in some STPs to deliver significant reductions in the number of beds are unrealistic.

National child measurement programme: trends in child BMI

PHE has published a [report](#) highlighting findings from its National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP).

The report explores trends in obesity, overweight, excess weight and underweight prevalence as well as changes in Body Mass Index over time.

Key facts include:

- obesity prevalence shows a significant downward trend in Reception boys overall in the 2006/07 to 2015/16 period;
- the trends in obesity in Year 6 boys and girls continue to show year on year increases;
- analysis by Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile continues to show a widening inequality gap in the overweight, obese and excess weight categories for all groups; and
- where obesity and excess weight prevalence is declining overall it is either increasing in the most deprived quintiles compared to the least or is generally declining at a slower rate; and
- where prevalence is increasing overall it is increasing at a faster rate in the most deprived quintiles.

Healthcare on the brink: How parliamentarians can support their local NHS

NHS Confederation has published a [briefing](#) outlining the extent of the challenges facing the NHS and how parliamentarians can support the NHS at a national and local level.

A variety of different issues faced by the NHS are highlighted in the briefing, such as workforce, pay and Brexit. It then outlines what is needed by NHS Confederation's members and what parliamentarians can do to support members.

Highest smoking quit success rates on record

PHE has highlighted the findings of a [research study](#) conducted by University College London whose publication coincides with the launch of Stoptober.

The research shows that quitting success rates are at their highest for at least a decade, up to 19.8% for the first six months of this year which is significantly higher than the average for the last ten years (15.7%). It gives a number of reasons why success rates are at their highest, including:

- better and more quitting aid options. With e-cigarettes now the most popular;
- more restrictions on smoking;
- banning the use of attractive brand imagery on tobacco packaging;

- a strong anti-smoking culture in England; and
- effective stop smoking campaigns such as Stoptober.

RCN calls for new legislation as thousands of members reveal chronic nursing shortages

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has published a new [report](#) highlighting the findings of a survey it conducted, to gain an overview of nursing staff's experiences on the last shift they worked.

The report contains responses from over 30,000 members and the RCN is using the report to highlight that patient care is compromised due to workplace pressures facing staff.

Key facts highlighted include:

- over half said there were less nursing staff on shift than planned and that care quality suffered as a result;
- more than a third said they had to leave elements of patient care undone due to a lack of time;
- two-thirds said they worked at least an hour over shift unpaid; and
- almost half of respondents said no action was taken when they raised concerns about staffing levels.

Improving collaboration to protect public health – MHRA and CQC sign MoU

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) have signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) which sets out how they will work together effectively.

MHRA and CQC's working relationship helps maintain an effective regulatory system for health and adult social care in England while promoting patient safety and high-quality care.

Home-testing kits that detect bowel cancer could almost halve invasive examinations by 2020

NHS England has [announced](#) it will be launching a study on a new bowel cancer test which will be able to detect the presence of blood in 1g of faeces.

The study is expected to almost halve the number of invasive colonoscopic procedures on the NHS by 2020 and can be conducted at home.

The study of 6,000 patients is funded by a £550,000 investment from NHS England and will last one year. The research will be led by Croydon Health Service NHS Trust and involves nine other NHS acute trusts in West London (including North West and South West).

Alcohol, drugs and tobacco: commissioning support pack

PHE has published a [commissioning support pack](#) for alcohol, drugs and tobacco to help local authorities (LAs) develop Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and local joint health and wellbeing strategies.

The pack covers the following topics:

- planning alcohol harm prevention, treatment and recovery in adults;
- planning drugs prevention, treatment and recovery in adults;
- planning comprehensive interventions for young people; and
- planning comprehensive local tobacco control interventions.

For each of these topics, there are:

- a set of good practice principles and indicators to help local areas assess need and plan and commission effective services and interventions; and
- bespoke data for each local area to help them commission effective services and interventions.

Prime Minister launches world-leading project on impact of ethnicity on everyday life

The Prime Minister has launched a new website, '[Ethnicity Facts and Figures](#)', to publish the findings on a new audit of how people from different backgrounds are treated by public services.

The new website contains thousands of statistics covering more than 130 topics in areas including health, education, employment and the criminal justice system.

The [health section](#) of the website includes outcomes for different ethnic groups from data collected by Government departments, LAs, hospitals, health trusts and related organisations. The data covers access to treatment, patient experiences, patient outcomes, physical and mental health and preventing illness.

Jeremy Hunt announces salary supplement for trainee GPs

The Health Secretary has [announced](#) new funding to be made available to support general practice.

From 2018, GP practices in areas where recruitment is difficult will receive funding from the new Government-backed Targeted Enhanced Recruitment Scheme to offer a one-off payment of £20,000 to attract trainees to work.

New £15 million programme to help train one million in mental health first aid

PHE has designed a [new campaign](#) which will see up to one million people trained in basic mental health 'first aid' skills with a £15 million investment from the Government.

The campaign will launch next year, for three years, and PHE will work closely with Mental Health First Aid England and other related organisations to ensure the campaign is fit for purpose. There will be an online learning module designed to improve the public's knowledge, skills and confidence in mental health.

Health app assessment: criteria

PHE has published a [guidance document](#) aimed at health app developers and commissioners on what they should consider when developing and submitting a health app for assessment.

The guidance covers:

- evidence of effectiveness;
- regulatory approval;
- clinical safety;
- privacy and confidentiality;
- security;
- usability and accessibility;
- interoperability; and
- technical stability.

CQC's State of Care report published

The CQC has published its annual [State of Care](#) report which looks at trends of care across England during 2016/17. The report has been compiled using inspections and ratings data, along with other information including that from service users as well as their families and carers.

The data in CQC's report covers:

- 21,256 adult social care services;
- 152 NHS acute hospital trusts;
- 197 independent acute hospitals;
- 18 NHS community health trusts;

- 54 NHS mental health trusts;
- 226 independent mental health locations;
- 10 NHS ambulance trusts; and
- 7,028 primary medical care services.

Key facts highlighted in the report include:

- 2 million older people have unmet care needs – up from 1 million last year;
- 5 million people spent longer than four hours in A&E in 2016/17 – up from 1.8 million last year;
- from January to March 2017, the NHS had the highest ever acute hospital bed occupancy at 91.4%; and
- rising demand for GP services is not being matched by a growth in the workforce to meet needs, which means that people may find it harder to access an appointment with a GP.

Prevention in action: How are prevention and integration being implemented?

The British Red Cross has published a new [report](#) on how prevention and integration are being understood and prioritised locally in England.

The report focusses on how councils have acted on the Care Act's vision for prevention and local services.

Key findings in the report include:

- 37% of joint health and wellbeing strategies still do not incorporate a full understanding of prevention;
- all too often, LAs and Health and Wellbeing Boards fail to recognise the importance of interventions aimed at minimising deterioration and the loss of independence for people with established needs, or preventing the reoccurrence of a health and social care crisis (i.e. 'tertiary' types of prevention);
- LAs and STPs also demonstrate an inconsistent level of understanding of 'integration' as well as ambition; and
- local decision makers across the board emphasise both the need to invest in prevention and integration as well as the practical difficulties of doing this, especially in the current economic climate.

Professional regulation in health and social care

The House of Commons Library has published a [briefing](#) on professional regulation in health and social care which describes the main functions of professional regulators and highlights common debates surrounding health regulation.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Services, England – 2016/17

NHS Digital has published [statistical data](#) relating to activity taking place in Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services. These include family planning services, community contraception clinics, integrated genitourinary medicine and SRH services and young people's services.

Key facts include:

- 7% of the resident female population between the ages of 13 and 54 had at least one contact with an SRH service. For males in the same age group, 1% of the resident population had at least one contact;
- females aged 18 to 19 were most likely to use an SRH service, with 18% having at least one contact; and
- the number of emergency contraception items provided to females by both SRH services and at other locations in the community has fallen by 42% over the last ten years, from 457,000 in 2006/07 to 264,000 in 2016/17.

Getting into shape: delivering a workforce for integrated care

Reform has published a [report](#) on how a new NHS workforce policy could be implemented to support integrated care and reform.

Some of the recommendations include:

- undergraduate training should be uncapped across the health and social care system;
- doctors who choose not to work for the NHS should reimburse the cost of their training;
- STP training budgets should be included within their funding envelope and they must seek to deliver training that cuts across all sectors and for all staff; and
- STPs should develop and trial the full range of alternative and flexible routes into health and social care.

House of Commons briefing on STPs

The House of Commons Library has published a [briefing](#) on STPs and explores how STPs have been developed, their funding and accountability arrangements and progress they have made so far.

People with learning disabilities: health checks audit tool

PHE has published an [audit tool](#) designed to check the quality of health checks for people with learning disabilities.

The tool can be used to:

- identify good practice and encourage services to improve their practice further;
- establish whether health checks and primary care services are provided consistently across a geographical area;
- monitor progress; and
- embed key 'reasonable adjustments; within primary care.

Adult social care funding: State of the nation – October 2017

The Local Government Association (LGA) has published a [document](#) on adult social care and what the Government needs to do to encourage high-quality, person-centred and safe care.

Key facts in the document include:

- English councils will have managed reductions to their core funding from national Government totalling £16 billion between 2010 and 2020;
- the consequences of underfunding include an ever more fragile provider market, growing unmet need, further strain on informal carers, less investment in prevention, continued pressure on an already overstretched care workforce, and a decreased ability of social care to help mitigate demand pressures on the NHS; and
- in dealing with the pressures facing social care and health in the short and long-term, the Government must develop a balanced approach that does not give one part of the system primacy over the other.

Half of adults aged 55 and over have experienced mental health problems, says Age UK

Age UK has [collaborated](#) with NHS England to encourage older people to see their GP if they experience symptoms suggestive of mental health disorders.

New YouGov research for Age UK has revealed that death of loved ones (36%) ill health of themselves (24%) and financial worries (27%) are the most common triggers for mental health problems.

Age UK and NHS England are also calling on GPs to spot the warning signs of worsening mental health. A new guide by NHS England, '[Mental health in older people](#)' has been published to help GPs spot signs of anxiety and depression, and identify a range of mental health problems including those which specifically affect older people

New NHSCC report shows mental health 'of primary importance' to CCGs

NHS Clinical Commissioners has launched a new report, '[Of primary importance: Commissioning mental health services in primary care](#)' featuring case studies of CCGs and their partners embedding mental health in primary care.

The report aims to share good practice and provide ideas and support to others who wish to adopt similar approaches.

Case studies in the report include:

- Community Living Well in West London which helps those with long-term mental health conditions and covers a full range of psychological therapies from guided self-help, through to sessions of short-term psychodynamic or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, carers therapy and a wellbeing service;
- work in Sheffield where Improving Access Psychological Therapies workers are attached to each of the CCG's individual 85 practices, and are incorporated as part of the practice multidisciplinary team; and
- the Well Centre, a primary care health centre in Lambeth for young people aged 13 to 20 offering support with all areas of health including mental wellbeing.

PHE Cancer Board plan

PHE has published its [approach](#) to coordinating its cancer network for the next five years (2017 to 2021).

It is aligned with the [Five Year Forward View](#) (5YFV) and the [Independent Cancer Taskforce Report](#) and highlights how PHE will meeting the Taskforce's recommendations and its role in fighting against cancer.

Condom distribution schemes in England

PHE has conducted a [study](#) on condom distribution schemes in England and published the findings in a report. It provides an assessment of the number and types of condom distribution schemes (CDSs) in England and can be used to develop a standardised framework for evaluating C-card schemes.

Key findings include:

- CDSs were available in nearly all areas of the country;
- C-card schemes (a type of multi-component CDS) were successful in engaging the key population;
- pharmacies were the most commonly reported C-Card outlets; GPs were the most commonly reported other CDS outlets;
- almost equal proportion of young men and young women used C-Card schemes;
- high number of repeat users of C-Card schemes, including users registered from previous years, were indicative of their success and popularity; and
- of the reporting LAs, almost £1.5 million was spent on C-Card schemes (£1.4 million) and other CDSs (£0.1 million).

Making the case for quality improvement: lessons for NHS boards and leaders

The King's Fund has published a [report](#) in collaboration with The Health Foundation which makes the case for quality improvement to be at the centre of local plans for redesigning NHS services. It draws on existing literature and examples from the NHS of where quality has been improved.

Key facts highlighted in the report include:

- now, more than ever, local and national NHS leaders need to focus on improving quality and delivering better-value care. All NHS organisations should be focused on continually improving quality of care for people using their services. This includes improving the safety, effectiveness and experience of care;
- the use of methods and tools to continuously improve quality of care and outcomes for patients – should be at the heart of local plans for redesigning NHS services;
- improving quality and reducing costs are sometimes seen as conflicting aims when they are in fact often two sides of the same coin; and
- the potential benefit is even greater if quality improvement techniques are applied consistently and systematically across organisations and systems. However, this is not currently the case. To deliver the

changes that are needed to sustain and improve care, the NHS needs to move from pockets of innovation and isolated examples of good practice to system-wide improvement.

New annual A&E statistics report published

NHS Digital has published a new annual [report](#) highlighting hospital A&E activity in England during 2016/17. The report combines information from NHS Digital's Hospital Episode Statistics and NHS England's A&E Attendances and Emergency Admissions Monthly Situation Reports.

It includes figures on the number of A&E attendances broken down by department type and age, A&E waiting times and the busiest A&E periods.

Key facts in the report include:

- there were 23.4 million attendances recorded at Accident and Emergency in England during 2016/17;
- 89% of patient attendances spent four hours or less in A&E in 2016/17;
- Monday is the busiest day of the week. In 2016/17 May and July had the highest number of attendances per day, however a higher proportion of attendances are admitted to hospital in the winter months November to February; and
- 3% of attendances returned to A&E within seven days in 2016/17.

Introducing a new local authority public health dashboard

PHE has published a new [local authority public health dashboard](#) to support local councillors and senior council officers prioritise resources across different public health service areas. It aims to raise the profile of key issues with councillors and residents and help with local discussions about resources and how they should be used.

The dashboard currently covers a range of service areas such as: the best possible start in life; child obesity; drug treatment; alcohol treatment; NHS Health Checks; sexual health services; and tobacco control.

For each service area, there is a summary rank indicator made up of several indicators. Each LA has been given a ranking and description based on how it compares with all other LAs with a similar deprivation index.

Literature review: the economic costs of lung disease and the cost effectiveness of policy and service interventions

York Economics Consortium has, on behalf of the British Lung Foundation and the British Thoracic Society, published a [report](#) to identify the economic costs of lung disease and the cost-effectiveness of different NHS activities to combat lung problems.

Key facts in the report include:

- asthma total annual direct costs to the UK in 2012 were £964.9 million; and
- COPD direct costs for England were £1.5 billion; and
- certain interventions, notably self-management in asthma, smoking cessation in COPD, awareness campaigns for lung cancer, and vaccination for pneumonia are all likely to be cost effective and, in several cases, are dominant strategies.

Nation faces older people homelessness 'time bomb', councils warn

The LGA has published an [article](#) to highlight the number of older people who are homeless, after figures showing it has risen by 130% in eight years.

Since records began, the number of people aged over 60 that councils accepted as homeless has increased from 270 to 620 per quarter. Between April and June 2017, councils were accepting nearly 10 people per day who are over the age of 60 and homeless.

The LGA is calling for the Government to address the undersupply in specialist housing for older people, and an adaptation to the implementation of welfare reforms to reduce the risk of homelessness.

Emergency department survey 2016

The CQC has published the [results](#) of the latest national emergency department survey which sought the views of people who attended emergency and urgent care departments at various acute and specialist NHS trusts during September 2016.

The survey contains responses from more than 45,000 people and highlights both positive and less positive aspects of their experiences of the care they received.

Some key findings include:

- 78% of people felt they were treated with respect and dignity all of the time;
- 73% felt they definitely had enough time to discuss their medical problem with staff;
- 53% of people who were discharged home from a major A&E department said they had not been made fully aware of important symptoms to look out for before they left; and
- 32% of patients reported waiting over an hour after arriving at A&E before they were first examined by a doctor or nurse and 4% said they waited more than four hours.

New technology, earlier diagnosis and better coordination of care in cancer

NHS England's National Cancer Programme has published a [report](#) to highlight progress that has been made by NHS England in line with [Achieving world-class cancer outcomes: a strategy for England 2015-2020](#). The strategy was developed in 2015 by an Independent Cancer Taskforce that was asked to deliver the vision set out in the NHS 5YFV.

The two-year progress report describes achievements in the following areas:

- modernisation of radiotherapy equipment throughout the country;
- a new Be Clear on Cancer campaign launched in February 2017 to encourage early diagnosis of cancer;
- new models of care introduced to ensure cancer is diagnosed earlier and improve survival; and
- establishment of Cancer Alliances across the country to bring together clinical leaders, healthcare workers, patients and charities for better coordination of care.

PHE Cancer Board plan

PHE has published its [Cancer Board Plan 2017-2021](#) to outline the work that PHE will be undertaking to achieve recommendations by the Independent Cancer Taskforce Report and the 5YFV.

The plan discusses how PHE will deliver on the Taskforce Recommendations, consolidate and accelerate its cancer intelligence function, work in collaboration, communicate and raise awareness and invest in cancer activity.

How does the NHS in England work? An alternative guide

The King's Fund has published an [animation](#) to explain how the NHS England works, which organisations it is made up of and how it is changing.

CQC regulating health and social care

The National Audit Office has published a [report](#) which looks at whether the CQC is taking appropriate action to address the risks to people's care through examining:

- the extent to which the Commission's current performance is ensuring high-quality care and encouraging improvement;
- how the Commission uses its resources and measures its performance; and
- how the Commission is preparing to implement its new strategy with a smaller budget and for potential longer-term changes in the delivery of care.

The report focusses on core CQC functions of registration, monitoring, inspecting and rating, responding to concerns and taking enforcement action.

Key findings include:

- the CQC has completed its inspection and rating programme, comprising more than 28,000 provider locations;
- the Commission's systems for bringing information together on the quality of services are not supporting inspectors effectively; and
- the Commission increasingly takes action when care falls below fundamental standards.

Latest NCMP data show obesity in reception children rises again

PHE has published [figures](#) from its NCMP for England for the 2016/17 school year for children in Reception and Year 6.

Key findings include:

- almost a quarter of Reception children were overweight including obese. In Year 6 it was over a third;
- for Reception, obesity increased from 9.3% to 9.6% and for Year 6 it remained fairly stable at 20% in 2016/17;
- obesity prevalence was higher for boys than girls in both age groups; and
- obesity prevalence for children living in the most deprived areas was more than double that of those living in the least deprived areas for both reception and year 6.

NHS targets super-sized chocolate bars in battle against obesity, diabetes and tooth-decay

NHS England has [ordered](#) hospitals to remove super-size chocolate bars and sugary snacks off the shelves to fight obesity, diabetes and tooth decay. NHS England has also announced a 250-calorie limit on confectionary sold in hospital canteens, stores and vending machines.

Hospital chiefs will have to ensure that four out of five items purchased on their premises do not exceed the limit, which is an eighth of a woman's and a tenth of a man's recommended daily intake, or lose out on funding ring-fenced for improving the health of staff, patients and their visitors.

What do the numbers say about emergency readmissions to hospital?

Healthwatch has asked hospital trusts across England for a daily breakdown of their emergency admissions data for the last five years and published their findings in a new [report](#). The report features responses from over half of hospital trusts.

Key findings in the report include:

- between 2012/13 and 2016/17 the number of emergency readmissions rose by 22.8%. This compares with a 9.3% rise in overall admissions to hospitals during the same period;
- the numbers of emergency readmissions within 24 hours rose even faster with a 29.2% increase; and
- the number readmitted within 48 hours account for 1 in 5 of the overall total of emergency readmissions (21.6%).

Millions to benefit from new mental health support

The Prime Minister has commissioned an independent review of mental health and employers, the findings of which have been published in [Thriving at Work: the Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers](#).

The report makes 40 recommendations for the public and private sector. As a result of the report, NHS England and the Civil Service as employers will abide by the recommendations as part of [new measures](#) and the Prime Minister has written to key business groups to draw attention to the review and encourage them to implement the recommendations.

NHS England and the Civil Service will:

- introduce a set of core and enhanced standards which will ensure employees have the knowledge, tools and confidence to understand and look after their own mental health and that of their colleagues;
- have support in place to help prevent mental illness being caused or worsened by work and equip those to have a mental illness to thrive; and
- be held account for delivering these standards by their relevant regulators.

Tuberculosis in England: annual report

PHE has published a [report](#) on Tuberculosis (TB) in England based on TB case notifications made to the enhanced TB surveillance system.

Key facts in the report include:

- in 2016, there were 5,664 TB cases notified in England, down from 5,727 in 2015;
- following a sustained annual decline of at least 10% in the number of TB cases since 2012, the decline slowed to 1% in 2016; and
- as in previous years, the main burden of disease was concentrated in large urban areas with London accounting for the highest proportion of cases in England.

Stoptober 2016 campaign evaluation

PHE has published an [evaluation](#) of the Stoptober campaign in 2016, an annual campaign which encourages smokers to quit for 28 days in October.

Key findings in the evaluation include:

- Stoptober 2016 was successful in driving campaign cost efficiency, but this was done at the cost of reduced overall scale;
- PHE modelling estimates that total incremental campaign driven quit attempts were 124,500 versus 385,000 in the previous year;
- the campaign in 2016 has benefited greatly from four years of previous sustained investment. Without this it is likely that brand awareness and other key metrics in 2016 would have been lower; and
- the results suggest that Stoptober 2017 will start from a lower base of awareness, meaning that, without greater investment in 2017, Stoptober is likely to shrink further and more rapidly.

'Data revolution' crucial to transformation

The NHS Confederation has published a [guide](#) aimed at NHS non-executive directors to explain NHS data and how it can be used to determine what is happening within an organisation. It is the first in a series of briefings unpacking data across the healthcare system.

The briefing examines activity in both primary and secondary care settings and considers the role of data sharing towards efficiency savings.

Tobacco control policy overview

The House of Commons Library has published a [briefing](#) which summarises the Government's tobacco control plans (2011 and 2017), tobacco control policies, such as standardised packaging, smoking in public areas and sale of tobacco products to children as well as smoking cessation services.

Improving healthcare access for people with learning disabilities

PHE has published a [toolkit](#) for social care staff on how to ensure people with learning disabilities get better access to medical services.

A health charter has been published which adult social care providers and staff can sign up to. It lists various steps that can be taken and a series of pledges that providers and organisations can make to improve the care of people they support.

Alongside the charter, PHE has also published a self-assessment tool and information sheets, slide sets and various other resources.

Public health: everyone's business?

NHS Providers has published a [report](#), as part of its *Provider Voices* series, which looks at public health.

The report features 12 interviews that look at concerns including:

- promoting the public health role as we move towards accountable care;
- dealing with the challenges of constrained funding;
- harnessing digital technology;
- developing the role of the public health clinician; and
- working to shape the wider determinants of health inequalities.

What does becoming a multispecialty community provider mean for GPs?

NHS England has published a series of [short films](#) to help GPs learn more about what being part of a developing multispecialty community provider (MCP) is like and what it can mean for them.

Each film is specific to a region where the MCP is based; the films have been developed with five GPs across the country and feature the GPs sharing their personal experiences.

There are six videos in total: five covering individual themes and one looking at the national picture.

Media monitoring

Saturday 30th September, Sunday 1st and Monday 2nd October 2017

- This morning, Labour called for an inquiry after the collapse of a private ambulance firm that has contracts with the NHS and other private health organisations, according to the [Guardian](#).

Tuesday 3rd October 2017

- [The Daily Telegraph](#) reported that a new form of radiotherapy treatment, which shapes radiation beams to tumours, could help patients suffering from prostate cancer, whose condition was previously thought to be incurable. This was also covered by [The Times](#), and the [Daily Mail](#).
- [The Sun](#) reported on a Swedish study which has shown that pensioners prescribed aspirin, should continue to take one aspirin a day to help limit the risk of a heart attack or stroke. This was also covered by the [Daily Express](#).

- [The Times](#) reported that researchers from the University of Nottingham are trying to improve the disposition of patients aged over-65 who visit their GPs to receive their annual flu jab, after discovering that ‘a sunny disposition improves their response to the vaccination.’

Wednesday 4th October 2017

- [The Telegraph](#) reported that nine in ten areas will have a shortage of care home beds within a decade, a watchdog has found. Research by Which? indicates there will be 42,000 fewer care home beds than are needed, and that 87% of areas will be short.

Thursday 5th October 2017

- The [Daily Mail](#) has reported that the British Medical Association has threatened Jeremy Hunt that GP practices will close their lists ‘en masse’ unless additional NHS funding is made available.

Friday 6th October 2017

- [The Daily Telegraph](#) reported that the number of vasectomies carried out by NHS hospitals and clinics has dropped by nearly two-thirds in a decade. Experts said the trend could reflect social shifts, with greater awareness that relationships might not last, and a reluctance to take steps seen as irreversible. This was also covered by the [Daily Mail](#) and the [Times](#).
- [The Guardian](#) has reported on comments by the President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists that Nurses and midwives should be allowed to give women the pills that end an unwanted pregnancy as part of a relaxation of Britain’s abortion laws.
- [The Guardian](#) has also reported that transplant doctors and health charities have praised Theresa May’s decision to change how organ donation works in England and move to a system of presumed consent – meaning everyone is presumed to agree to the removal and reuse of body parts after their death unless they opt out.

Saturday 7th, Sunday 8th and Monday 9th October 2017

- [The Observer](#) had a long feature on antimicrobial resistance and that bacteria are becoming resistant even to the ‘antibiotic of last resort’.
- The [Sunday Telegraph](#) reported that a study has shown that embedding GPs in A&E departments to free up emergency staff slashes waiting times and hospital admissions for children, but increases antibiotic prescriptions.
- The [Telegraph](#) and the [Daily Mail](#) reported on comments from the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) that doctors should encourage patients to take their own measurements in order to take responsibility for their own health and help tackle the obesity crisis.
- The NHS Confederation’s Niall Dickson has said, in the [Times](#), that it is too late to save the NHS from a winter crisis, even if there is a cash injection from Government.

Tuesday 10th October 2017

- Today’s CQC report made headlines across lots of outlets, with the Mirror warning that the [NHS could ‘die’](#) on its 70th birthday.
- The Times reported on a study finding that [cash incentives for GPs](#) under the QOF do not improve care.
- The Times also had a story on proposals to [end the use of terms like ‘junior doctor’](#), because they may be demeaning.
- The Guardian had a story on the [global cost of obesity](#), as well as the [racial equality report](#).
- A number of papers have stories for World Mental Health Day, including the Telegraph, finding that the UK is in the midst of a [mental health awakening](#).

Wednesday 11th October 2017

- [The Guardian](#) reported that the RCGP is urging ministers to add GPs to the UK's list of occupations with shortages, to make it easier for overseas doctors to help plug the widening gap in the workforce. The RCGP has written to the Home Secretary, asking her to declare family doctors a key group deserving priority in their efforts to work in the UK.
- [The Guardian](#) also reported that a former chief executive of the NHS is among a thousand signatories to a letter to Jeremy Hunt warning of the risks posed by imposing identification checks and upfront charges for NHS care. School nurses, abortion services, community-based midwifery and mental health services, and services for homeless people and asylum seekers will be included in the new regime. Doctors say the rules will deter sick people from getting life-saving treatment and those with infectious diseases could go undetected.
- [The Daily Mail](#) reported on a study by Imperial College London and the World Health Organization which has found that four in ten youngsters aged five to 19 were medically obese or overweight. This up from 2.66 million in 1975 to 4.53 million last year. Similarly, the [Daily Mail](#) also reports that junk food companies spend 27 times more on advertising than the Government does on promoting healthy eating. The 18 top-spending crisp, confectionery and sugary drinks brands spent more than £143 million last year on advertising their products, according to the Obesity Health Alliance, dwarfing the £5.2 million spent on the Government's flagship Change4Life healthy eating campaign.

Thursday 12th October 2017

- [ITV](#) and the [Telegraph](#) have reported that the Society for Acute Medicine has said that the NHS would be 'overwhelmed' and routine operations 'suspended' if there is an outbreak of 'flu this winter.
- The [Guardian](#) and the [Daily Mail](#) have reported that RCGP's Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard has said that many older people are visiting their GP because they are lonely and want human contact.

Friday 13th October 2017

- The BBC reported on proposals for [drug consumption rooms](#) for illegal substances.
- Dementia maintains a record as the [leading cause of death](#) in England and Wales. Finally, across several of the papers and BBC TV, Dame Sally Davies warned of an [antibiotic apocalypse](#), as 10 million people a year could die from drug-resistant infections by 2050.

Saturday 14 October 2017

- [The Times](#) has reported that more than a million care home workers will be given the flu jab on the NHS after health chiefs identified an outbreak among the elderly as the biggest threat to hospitals this winter.
- [The Telegraph](#) reports that Jeremy Hunt, has floated the idea of stopping walk-in patients from attending hospital emergency departments in an attempt to head off a winter crisis in the health service. NHS England has denied it plans to pilot an idea that would require patients to consult their GP or NHS 111 before being allowed to go to A&E. However, Dr Helen Thomas, its national medical adviser for integrated urgent care, said the health secretary was considering testing the idea. "Jeremy Hunt has mentioned to some of my colleagues, maybe we should have a 'talk before you walk' and we may well pilot that," Thomas told a conference, according to a recording released by the doctors' magazine Pulse.
- The [Daily Mail](#) reported that four in ten GPs are on the brink of retirement. Official figures show that 41 per cent – around 10,000 doctors – are 50 or over and are expected to quit within the next five to ten years. Only 8 per cent of GPs are under 30, and in some areas of England the proportion is as low as 0.5 per cent. The NHS workforce data also reveals a sharp rise in the number of pharmacists and physician associates working in surgeries. Their numbers are up 30 per cent and 49 per cent respectively in the six months to March.

Sunday 15 October 2017

- [The Sunday Times](#) reported that NHS doctors and nurses in England will be required to ask every patient from the age of 16 to declare their sexual orientation. Anybody having a face-to-face appointment will be asked

about whether they are heterosexual or straight, gay or lesbian, bisexual or other, including asexual. NHS England says it needs to record the sexual orientation of adults to fulfil its legal duties to provide equally for gay people.

- [The Independent](#) argues that data from patients' health records should be shared with private firms to improve care using artificial intelligence (AI). A study sets out how Britain should become a world leader in AI, to deliver benefits ranging from smarter scheduling of operations to hiring on-demand self-driving cars. Industry experts call for the secure sharing of anonymised data about people's health and lifestyles – arguing they, as well private technology companies, will benefit. The NHS should use facts and figures from supermarkets, transport organisations and town planning to work out ways to encourage healthier lifestyles, the report says.

Monday 16 October 2017

- [The Daily Telegraph](#) reports that a no deal Brexit could place added strain of up to £500 million a year on the NHS. A report backed by the NHS Confederation suggests that tens of thousands of British pensioners living in Europe could be forced to return home if the Government is unable to strike a deal with the EU to continue existing healthcare arrangements.
- [The Guardian](#) reports patients are being denied care at overburdened sexual health clinics after a wave of closures, and are suffering from delays due to a new self-testing scheme for diseases such as herpes and syphilis. Six long-established sexual health clinics in London have shut in recent months as part of a planned switch of care from face-to-face consultations to online services, but a system enabling people to order a kit to test themselves for sexually transmitted infections at home is months behind schedule.

Wednesday 18th October 2017

- The [BBC](#) has reported on its own research, which has shown that NHS waiting times for cancer care, A&E and routine operations across the UK have deteriorated. The article claims that England, Wales and Northern Ireland have not hit any of their three key targets on waiting times for 18 months.
- The [Telegraph](#) claims that adverts for jobs in the social care sector have leapt by 64% since last year, reporting data from recruitment site Reed, which says that the industry is expanding and the number of workers from the European Union decreasing, causing the increase in job adverts.

Thursday 19th October 2017

- Tens of thousands of people have been wrongly fined for claiming NHS dental fees, [The Telegraph](#) reports.

Friday 20th October 2017

- [The Telegraph](#) also reports that the chief inspector of social care has warned that the pressures on hospitals to empty thousands of beds ahead of winter could risk the safety of frail elderly patients, and expressed concern that vulnerable patients would be moved into inadequate facilities, after councils were told funding could be cut if they do not reduce bedblocking rates in their local hospitals.

Saturday 21st October

- The [Sunday People](#) reported that British 'flu deaths may be the worst epidemic in 50 years following the outbreak of a severe strain of the virus in Australia.

Sunday 22nd October

- The [Sunday Telegraph](#) reported that the number of patients leaving Britain and flying overseas for medical treatment has trebled as NHS waiting times reach a record high.

Monday 23rd October

- The [BBC](#) reported that new 'health tourism' rules came into force, which require NHS providers to check patients are eligible for free care and charge them up front if they are not.

Tuesday 24th October

- The BBC reported that operating theatres are [wasting two hours a day](#) through poor scheduling.

Thursday 26th October

- A story covered by many news outlets, including the [Mirror](#), [Times](#), [Telegraph](#) and [ITV](#) was that the NHS is considering introducing a new 'Airbnb' style scheme where homeowners with spare rooms would be paid to take in willing hospital patients recovering from surgery, in an attempt to tackle the bed shortage.

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