



January 2014

## PSNC Briefing 003/14: 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.

### Secretary of State's New Year message to the NHS

In his New Year message issued to NHS staff at the start of January, Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Health, said that his key theme for this year is to find ways to treat patients more holistically. He cites the new requirement for a named GP for the over 75s, which will be rolled out from April.

### Leaflets sent to all households on care.data

At the start of January NHS England commenced the distribution of leaflets explaining how the NHS uses patient information to each of England's 26.5 million households.

The leaflet 'Better Information Means Better Care' explains the benefits of sharing information about the care patients have received. The leaflet explains that patients have the right to object to their data being used for purposes other than their direct care. Modern data techniques will allow the NHS and researchers to analyse the characteristics of all patients that come into contact with their GP practices, their treatments, and experiences to help the NHS the quality of care.

In a blow for the public campaign to gain support for use of data from GP records for wider health service purposes, Roger Godsiff, Labour MP for Birmingham Hall Green, tabled an Early Day Motion in mid-January calling for the care.data scheme to be indefinitely delayed. The motion states that signatories have 'no faith whatsoever in Government assertions that patient data will be coded in such a way as to guarantee anonymity'.

In mid-January leading medical research organisations, including Arthritis Research UK, Cancer Research UK, Diabetes UK, the British Heart Foundation and the Wellcome Trust, launched an advertising campaign to raise awareness of the importance of sharing data from patient records with researchers. The campaign coincides with the care.data leaflet drop by NHS England.

### A&E department frequent flyers

In early January the BBC reported the results of data requested from 183 hospitals under the Freedom of Information Act. It revealed that nearly 12,000 patients made more than 10 visits to the same A&E department in 2012/13; just over 150 people attended more than 50 times. The figures highlight one reason that many emergency departments are under pressure this winter and helps to make the case for the development of better support for this group of patients in primary care.

### NHS England's Action for Diabetes plan published

NHS England has set out a vision for how it wants the growing problem of diabetes to be tackled in 2014. The new plan, [Action for Diabetes](#), outlines how it would like to see better prevention of Type 2 diabetes, earlier diagnosis of

all diabetes, and support for people to manage their diabetes better and improve their quality of life.

Action for Diabetes sets out the breadth of activity NHS England is undertaking as a direct commissioner of GP and other primary care services and as a support to secondary and community care commissioners to enable these improvements in outcomes for all people with and at risk of diabetes to be seen.

The vision pledges that NHS England will continue to work with Public Health England on the roll out of NHS Health Checks, a programme aiming to prevent and diagnose thousands of cases of Type 2 diabetes each year. It also details how GPs will be helped to provide good care and best practice, and outlines resources available to commissioners of hospital-based care to improve treatment for people with diabetes.

It makes some further key points:

- NHS England's work to improve diabetes care will be based on the 'House of Care' model of integrated services around the needs of the individual, as part of a wider long-term conditions management programme.
- NHS England has tasked NHS Improving Quality to work with primary care services to trial and roll out new tools to help ensure earlier diagnosis across a range of conditions including Type 2 diabetes, to work on projects to reduce the high death rates associated with diabetic foot disease whether it be due to Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, and on the transition of young people to adult services.
- NHS England recently published an additional 40 general practice level indicators on the NHS Choices website, of which eight are directly related to diabetes care, in a new accountability area designed to provide information to people who want to get involved in conversations about their local health services.

## A&E locum costs exposed by Labour analysis

As concern continues to be expressed over the capacity of A&E departments to cope with patient demand, the BBC reported in early January that data obtained by the Labour party shows that spending on A&E locums was £83.3m last year. The equivalent spend in 2009-10 was £52m, representing a 60% increase in three years.

## GP practice income to be published from the summer

GP has reported that NHS England plans to publish the details of GP practice income for 2013/14 from this summer. This follows discussions on changes to the GP contract late last year, where it was agreed that the GP Committee of the BMA would discuss options for publishing practice income with NHS England.

## Government focus on mental health

The Government has said more needs to be done to help the one in four people who will suffer from a mental health problem at some point in their life. Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, speaking at a conference on mental health, in mid-January highlighted that there is still a long way to go to make mental health as important as physical health and drive out unacceptable practices that still exist, such as long waiting times, people being transferred long distances to get a bed, face-down restraint being used too often and children being cared for on adult wards and facing a cliff-edge of support when they turn 18. People with severe mental illness also face shorter life expectancy – this shows that more needs to be done to help those with mental health problems stay physically healthy.

The Department of Health published [Closing the Gap: Priorities for Essential Change in Mental Health](#) which builds on the mental health strategy [No Health Without Mental Health](#) published in 2011. The document is an action plan for mental health, outlining 25 areas for health and care services to take action which will make a difference to the lives of people with mental health conditions.

Key measures include:

- Patients will have a choice about where they get their mental health care;
- From 2015, waiting time standards will begin to be introduced for mental health;
- The Friends and Family Test will be rolled out to mental health services;

- Talking therapies will be expanded so that 300,000 more people can receive treatment;
- Children with mental health problems will get more support – including an aim to roll talking therapies for children and young people out to the whole country by 2018 and better support for children moving from adolescent services into adult services; and
- £43 million will be invested in pilots on better housing for people with mental health problems or learning disabilities.

Alongside the publication of the Department's mental health action plan, NHS England said that it would tackle the issue of early death in patients with serious mental illness, a group who have the life expectancy of people living in the 1950s.

It is estimated that there are more than 40,000 deaths among people with serious mental illness which could be reduced if they receive the same healthcare checks and interventions as the general population. Statistics show that patients with serious mental health conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and other psychoses are dying earlier from conditions such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, lung disease and liver disease.

Support for implementation is being developed by NHS England and its partners including:

- Using a best practice model which will pick up patients with serious mental illness who have physical health conditions that need assessment and treatment;
- Working closely with experts in medicines management to ensure the effects and side effects of psychotropic medications are routinely monitored and addressed;
- Introducing incentives for physical health checks and treatments to be undertaken in all mental health in-patient settings; and
- Working with public health and commissioners so targeted stop smoking schemes for people with mental health issues are commissioned.

The focus this year will be on patients in in-patient settings but it is intended that this learning is applied in the future to improve the care of patients in contact with primary care and mental health teams in the community.

### **e-switching for GP practices?**

NHS England aims to give people the ability to interact directly with the NHS using IT, such as allowing them to book and rearrange appointments, order repeat prescriptions, track the progress of test results, contact their GP or hospital electronically with a query and provide electronic feedback. In a paper for January's NHS England board meeting it also suggests that patients could switch GP provider electronically. The proposal has not received positive feedback from GP leaders.

### **Complex Care GP practices**

In a recent blog, Dr Martin McShane, NHS England's Director for Improving the Quality of Life for People with Long Term Conditions, has called for a radical change to the way the NHS cares for an ageing population. He suggests that one model might be to establish Complex Care Practices which would have registered lists of patients of less than 500 people per GP. Only people with the most complex care needs would be registered with the practice and they would be cared for by a GP-led multidisciplinary team.

### **Patient records access prospective only?**

In a recent written answer to a parliamentary question regarding patients' access to their electronic health records from 2015, Dr Dan Poulter, Under-Secretary of State for Health has said that the commitment to records access will only apply to new information placed on the patient's record from the point that online access is made available in the patient's GP practice.

### **NHS sustainable development strategy published**

NHS England and Public Health England have published a vision showing how key organisations in the health and care system will join forces to address sustainability challenges. Reducing carbon emissions, protecting natural

resources, preparing communities for severe weather events and promoting healthy lifestyles and environments are key to the concept. The strategy is the first to be produced for the whole health and care system, including the NHS, public health and social care.

The aim is to reduce the negative impact on the environment by managing energy use and reducing waste by switching to other sources of energy, improving recycling facilities or using fewer disposable items. NHS organisations are being encouraged to develop a local strategy, measure their success with regular reporting and evaluate their progress.

The new strategy includes the first ever calculation of the carbon footprint of the whole NHS, public health and social care system. This is estimated at 32 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2012, representing 40% of public sector emissions in England.

### **CSUs won't be sold off**

At its January Board meeting, NHS England ruled out selling off Commissioning Support Units (CSUs) when the current NHS England hosting of CSUs ends in 2016. Instead NHS England will consult on four future options for CSUs: transforming into a social enterprise; a staff owned mutual; a customer-controlled social enterprise (with CCGs retaining a stake); or a joint venture company, which could include a mix of financial investors, including private providers of commissioning support.

If you have any queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information, please contact [Alastair Buxton, Head of NHS Services](#).