

POLICY UPDATE

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CANCER SUPPORT

August 2015

Welcome to 'Policy Update', a monthly bulletin on the latest policy developments of relevance to those with an interest in cancer.

If you are reading this document on screen, the web addresses are hyperlinks which will take you directly to the relevant web pages or documents. If you would like any further information or have any questions or comments about 'Policy Update', please contact Aimee Leverett, on 020 7091 2486 or email aleverett@macmillan.org.uk.

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United Kingdom

Health Secretary sets out ambition for a 21st century NHS.

Jeremy Hunt set out the government's vision for a patient-led, transparent and safer NHS in a speech Thursday. Mr. Hunt said that the NHS needed a profound culture change which puts power into the hands of the millions of patients who use the NHS every day, enabling them to make informed choices about the services they use.

Mr. Hunt called for a step change in transparency – what he referred to as 'intelligent transparency'. He said that by next March, England will become the first country in the world to publish avoidable deaths by hospital trusts as well as ratings on the overall quality of care provided to different patient groups in every local area.

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Taskforce report aims to boost cancer survival and transform patient experience.

Six strategic priorities have been recommended by the Independent Cancer Taskforce to help the NHS achieve world-class cancer outcomes. The cancer report outlines how an additional 30,000 patients every year could survive cancer for 10 years or more by 2020. Of these, around 11,000 would be through earlier diagnosis.

The plan, which aims to make substantial improvements in cancer care in England, comes at a time when cancer cases are increasing.

With survival rates also increasing each year, more people are living with cancer. The report sets out proposals for how patient experience can be transformed both during and after treatment.

This hike in cancer cases, driven largely by the UK's ageing population, means that NHS cancer services are under unprecedented pressure. Resolving the pressure has been a key focus for the Taskforce.

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Making NHS patient feedback more inclusive.

Updated guidance has been published to help make the NHS's biggest patient feedback tool, the Friends and Family Test, more inclusive.

The new guidance covers services across the NHS that are provided to children and young people – with special provisions for looked after children – as well as patients with learning disabilities, dementia, language and literacy issues or patients who are deaf or deafblind.

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Care Act first-phase reforms – local experience of implementation.

The National Audit Office has released a report highlighting the issues their case study areas reported were important to them in carrying out the Care Act.

The report shows how different authorities are addressing the areas of biggest risk around uncertainty in demand from carers and self-funders. They show how they have developed new initiatives or built on existing ways of working to help achieve the Care Act's objectives.

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Calls for NHS to curb inappropriate antibiotic prescribing

Healthcare professionals should encourage sensible use of antibiotics and cut back on unnecessary prescribing of the drugs to help tackle the rise in antibiotic resistance, says NICE.

The first NICE guideline to address this issue recommends that GPs, nurses, pharmacists and dentists promote and monitor the sensible use of antimicrobials – a group of medicines that includes antibiotics.

NICE will publish a second guideline next year that will focus on changing people's knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in relation to the use of antibiotics. There will also be a quality standard on antibiotic prescribing as part of a suite of new public health quality standards.

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England

Primary care inquiry announced.

The House of Commons Health Committee is inviting written submissions on the challenges affecting primary care services in England.

The Committee's aim is to consider whether the Department of Health and its arms' length bodies have the plans and policies in place now to ensure that high quality care is consistently available to patients at the point of need.

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Statement from NHS England and the Health and Social Care Information Centre in response to the Daily Telegraph article, 'Tesco can see your medical records'.

The NHS and the HSCIC released a statement to make clear that the article published by the Daily Telegraph, 'Tesco can see your medical records,' contains a number of inaccuracies.

While a regulated healthcare professional may have secure, controlled access to the Summary Care Record in a pharmacy within a supermarket as with any other

pharmacy setting, this information is not accessible by other means and will never be available to supermarkets for other purposes, such as marketing.

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Scotland

No imposed contract for junior doctors in Scotland.

The Scottish Government has confirmed that a new contract will not be imposed on junior doctors in Scotland. This assurance by the Scottish Government comes after the UK BMA junior doctors committee last week decided not to re-enter negotiations with NHS Employers for a new contract for trainees because of the Government's 'heavy-handed' attempts to force through a contract without safeguards for doctors, and patient care.

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Northern Ireland

Hamilton welcomes debate on 'seven day health service'.

Health Minister Simon Hamilton MLA has said he supports a move towards a seven day Health Service in Northern Ireland. The Minister said he looks forward to working with health service staff and other administrations in the UK to bring about positive, transformational change to the standard of care patients and people receive.

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Rescue mission for practices on verge of collapse.

GP practices in trouble could be rescued from collapse by a new team in Northern Ireland.

The working group — set up by BMA Northern Ireland GPs committee — will look for practices at risk of collapse and find ways to support them, with the Health and Social Care Board.

BMA NI GPC chair Tom Black said: 'We have already seen a number of practice collapses in Northern Ireland and estimate that we may experience approximately six practice collapses this year, increasing to about 20 [practices] next year. This represents a potential of 7.5 per cent of all practices in Northern Ireland in the next 18 months. [The committee] has therefore set up a rescue package team to look at how we can identify struggling practices early and how these practices can be supported.'

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£3.5m investment in local health services is bringing care closer to people's homes.

A multi-million pound investment by the Welsh Government in local health services across Wales is helping the NHS deliver more care closer to people's homes and reduce pressure on hospital services, said Health and Social Services Minister Mark Drakeford.

In November 2014, the Welsh Government created its first £3.5m primary care fund, which included £2m to improve and develop the skills of NHS staff working in the community and GP surgeries.

The fund also provided more eye care services in local communities, with £600,000 allocated to each of Wales' seven health boards to provide additional eye care appointments closer to people's homes instead of in hospitals.

This year, the Welsh Government has been able to increase the size of the primary care fund to £40m, investing in community-based services and the primary care workforce to deliver more high-quality care closer to people's homes and prevent the need for people to travel to hospital for their care.

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Wales

New plan to develop frontline NHS Wales workforce.

A new plan to strengthen the primary care workforce to deliver new models of care and look after more people close to their homes was published by Health and Social Services Minister Mark Drakeford Friday.

The primary care workforce plan will be backed by an extra £4.5m of funding as the Welsh Government continues to invest in primary care to recruit, educate and train the wide range of healthcare professionals who are key to providing health services in local communities.

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New network connecting the public health community.

The Public Health Network Cymru launched in May, and its new website is supporting professionals from all sectors who contribute to public health development in Wales.

The network is free to join for any practitioner, researcher, policy-maker or advisor who has an interest in public health.

The comprehensive new network replaces the topic based national public health networks on physical activity and nutrition, mental health promotion, and sexual health.

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New clinical lead to drive improvements across NHS Wales.

Public Health Wales announced Aidan Fowler will be the new Director for NHS Quality Improvement and Patient Safety/Director of 1000 Lives Improvement service. Starting on 1 September, Aidan will be responsible for driving improvements in patient safety, quality improvement and innovation through the principles of prudent healthcare across the NHS in Wales.

As well as providing national strategic leadership for Health Boards and Trusts across the country, Aidan will provide a new focus and remit for the 1000 Lives Improvement Service.

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