

POLICY UPDATE

WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT

July 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 Christopher Smith, Policy and Partnerships Officer, on 020 7091 2222 or email christophersmith@macmillan.org.uk.

United Kingdom.....	2
England.....	2
Scotland.....	4
Northern Ireland.....	6
Wales.....	6

United Kingdom

The Budget: funding cuts and pay freeze.

An NHS pay freeze will further 'demoralise and devalue' doctors who protect patient care amid budget cuts, the BMA has said.

The comments follow chancellor George Osborne's summer Budget in which he said public sector pay awards will be 1 per cent per year for the next four years.

[Click here for more information](#)

New social contract between the public, health and care services.

Jeremy Hunt has called for a new social contract between the public, health and care services.

In a speech to the Local Government Association (LGA) annual conference in Harrogate the Health Secretary urged the public to take more personal responsibility:

- for looking after the elderly
- for their own health
- in using finite NHS resources

He argued that, while integration of health and social care is vital to delivering the highest standards of health and care, personal responsibility needs to sit alongside system accountability.

[Click here for more information](#)

QualityWatch: UK faces 'mountain to climb' in improving care quality, new comparative study finds.

The UK can and should do better in preventing unnecessary hospital admissions and improving survival from some of the biggest killer diseases, a new report comparing performance across high-income countries reveals.

Focus on: international comparisons of healthcare quality, published by the Nuffield Trust and the Health Foundation, is one of the most comprehensive studies yet to compare the quality of care in the UK health system with that of similar countries over time. It shows that the UK's performance has improved on almost every measure since the start of the millennium. However, it also finds that the UK lags behind most other countries (where data are available) in several areas of care, including higher rates of preventable hospital admissions, lower cancer survival and higher mortality rates from heart attacks and strokes.

[Click here for more information](#)

England

Pharmacists plan to ease GP workload.

Up to 250 clinical pharmacists are to be recruited to GP practices to provide direct patient care and help to ease workload.

The £15m, three-year pilot project for England will see pharmacists support about one million patients with self-limiting illnesses or long-term conditions.

It is part of the GP workforce 10-point plan agreed between the BMA GPs committee, Royal College of GPs, NHS England and Health Education England.

It aims to alleviate intense GP workload pressures and make general practice a more attractive career.

The pharmacists will be part-funded by NHS England. GP practices will have to demonstrate significant workforce challenges and clinical demand to take part in the pilot.

[Click here for more information](#)

NHS England announces annual investment decisions for specialised services.

NHS England has set out its planned investment decisions for certain specialised services as part of its annual commissioning round.

The decision follows a three-month public consultation on the principles and processes NHS England will follow when making investment decisions. Feedback from the consultation has helped inform the way these decisions have been made.

Thirty nine proposed new investments have been carefully considered against the principles NHS England follows when making investment decisions.

[Click here for more information](#)

NHS launches new offer to put health at the heart of new communities.

NHS England Chief Executive Simon Stevens has launched a new initiative together with Public Health England, to put health at the heart of new neighbourhoods and towns across the country.

Speaking at the Local Government Association annual conference, Mr Stevens backed a renewed focus on new affordable housing by offering support from the NHS to help “design in” health and modern care from the outset.

[Click here for more information](#)

Palliative care bill to push for ‘sea change’.

New legislation could see a 'sea change' in the delivery of palliative care in England, ensuring that patients' needs come first.

Outgoing BMA president Baroness Lora Finlay has tabled the Access to Palliative Care Bill, which she said would benefit patients and their families by ensuring greater and equal access to care.

Baroness Finlay said the bill would tackle the inequalities in care brought about by the fragmentation of services and funding cuts, by placing new legal duties on commissioners and regulators.

[Click here for more information](#)

NICE's new symptom-based approach will help to save thousands of lives from cancer.

Thousands of lives in England could be saved each year if the NHS follows updated guidance to help it diagnose cancer earlier, NICE says.

NICE has updated and redesigned its guideline to support GPs to recognise the signs and symptoms of 37 different cancers and refer people for the right tests faster.

[Click here for more information](#)

Health and social care leaders set out next steps to transform NHS services and improve health outcomes using technology and data.

Health and social care leaders have unveiled detailed plans on how to make technology work harder and faster for patients and increase transparency across more services.

To drive up quality and efficiency, MyNHS will be expanded to include new information on local NHS commissioners and care homes. This step builds on the popularity of the MyNHS site, which has attracted over 200,000 visits since it was launched in September last year.

To underpin this and support the NHS on its journey to harness the power of data and technology, the National Information Board (NIB) will look at the feasibility of turning the entire NHS estate into a free Wi-Fi zone. Wi-Fi would reduce the administrative burden on doctors, nurses and care staff, currently estimated to take up to 70% of a junior doctor's day, freeing up more time to be spent with patients.

[Click here for more information](#)

NHS is set to treat hundreds of cancer patients with an innovative type of radiotherapy.

The first centres to treat patients with stereotactic ablative radiotherapy (SABR), as part of NHS England's latest national evaluation programme, has started accepting patients.

NHS England has invested £15m over three years to assess the use of SABR through its Commissioning through Evaluation initiative, which will allow up to 750 new patients a year to access the treatment at 17 centres across the country.

SABR is a modern, more precise delivery technique of radiotherapy which delivers high doses of radiation while causing less damage to surrounding healthy tissue than conventional radiotherapy.

[Click here for more information](#)

Transforming general practice: what are the levers for change?

The current model of general practice is largely considered to be in need of reform, according to the Nuffield Trust. Through national policies including NHS England's Five Year Forward View and the Prime Minister's Challenge Fund, there has been a significant focus on transforming the sector through scaled up networks; federations and super partnerships of GPs and upskilling the workforce to deliver change.

As a consequence, general practice is under immense strain as they are expected to deliver these changes, implement new models of care and take more care into the community.

'Transforming general practice: what are the levers for change?' examines academic evidence on current methods of driving change, as well as expert testimonials and case studies, to present a series of recommendations on how policy makers and regulators can support general practice to deliver these changes.

The briefing argues that financial rewards, which are currently used to incentivise small scale changes by the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF), are at risk of being overused and are not the best way to encourage widespread reform in general practice.

[Click here for more information](#)

Scotland

Standards for the care of older people in hospital launched.

New standards for NHS Scotland aim to improve the care of older people in hospital. A key goal of the standards is strengthening the involvement of patients and carers in discussions and decisions about the care that is delivered.

NHS boards in Scotland are now expected to work towards meeting these standards. Each standard includes a statement of the level of performance that NHS boards are to achieve.

[Click here for more information](#)

Unfilled consultant posts continue to rise.

The BMA has warned of a major recruitment and retention problem among Scotland's consultants as the latest figures show vacancy rates continue to rise.

Official statistics from ISD Scotland show that vacancies WTE (whole-time equivalent) rose by 25.5 per cent between March 2014 and 2015, rising to 407.6 posts in March 2015.

Posts are also remaining unfilled for longer, with the number of WTE posts vacant for six months or more rising by 86.4 per cent to 147.7 per cent.

[Click here for more information](#)

Progress on tackling delayed discharge.

Health Secretary Shona Robison praised staff working in the NHS and local authorities for their efforts to reduce the number of patients delayed in hospital, waiting to be discharged.

However, the Health Secretary said that more needed to be done to reduce delays even further and called on local authority and NHS partnerships to renew their efforts to tackle delayed discharge.

[Click here for more information](#)

£4 million investment in cancer care.

Health boards across Scotland are being given a £4.05 million boost to help meet cancer waiting times, Health Secretary Shona Robison announced.

This comes as figures published show that every NHS health board in Scotland has achieved the 95 per cent target standard of patients receiving treatment within 31 days of the decision to treat being taken.

[Click here for more information](#)

Wales

Public Health (Wales) Bill.

The Bill was introduced into the National Assembly on 8 June 2015.

It brings together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. It focuses on shaping social conditions that are conducive to good health, and where avoidable health harms can be prevented.

[Click here for more information](#)

Wales replaces the axed UK Independent Living Fund.

A new £20m fund to support more than 1,600 disabled people in Wales with their care needs comes is now in operation, following the closure of the Independent Living Fund (ILF) by the UK Government.

Disabled people with significant care needs will receive direct cash payments from local authorities to help meet the cost of the care and support they need.

Until Tuesday June 30, when the ILF closed, people received ILF payments to pay for a range of care and support, including help with eating and drinking; cooking and preparing food and drink; assistance with dressing; cleaning, laundry and other domestic duties.

[Click here for more information](#)

£10m to improve NHS care for major health conditions.

A £10m investment to improve NHS services for major health conditions such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke has been announced by Deputy Health Minister Vaughan Gething.

The investment by the Welsh Government will also improve liver, critical care, neurological, respiratory, end-of-life care and mental health services across Wales.

Each condition has its own delivery plan, which has been put together by clinicians, patients and advocates for excellent care. They outline the actions which will be taken to improve patient outcomes and experience.

[Click here for more information](#)

Spending on cancer services in Wales reaches a record high.

Spending on cancer by the Welsh NHS has reached a record high, new figures published by the Welsh Government show.

The NHS Expenditure Programme Budgets for 2013-14 show the Welsh NHS spent £5.6bn - equivalent to £1,803.82 per person - on health services, including primary care services, such as GPs and dentistry, as well as hospital-based. This is 2.4% higher than spending on health in 2012-13.

The figures show spending on cancer increased from £360.9m in 2012-13 to £380.1m in 2013-14. Spending per head of population increased from £117.41 to £123.32.

[Click here for more information](#)

Patient satisfaction with NHS care continues to improve.

Patient satisfaction with the NHS care they receive is continuing to improve, according to the latest Fundamentals of Care audit published.

Wales is the only nation in the UK to conduct an in-depth, country-wide assessment of the quality of care provided. It combines a survey of patient experience, a staff

survey and an audit which measures the delivery of care and assesses how care standards are delivered.

The audit measures a range of care standards, including safety, alleviating pain, preventing pressure sores and rest and sleep for patients being cared for in Welsh hospitals.

Patients reported they were happy with the care they received to alleviate pain and provide comfort and 99% said they felt safe when receiving care in hospital.

[Click here for more information](#)