

POLICY UPDATE

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CANCER SUPPORT

November 2013

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 Anna Baranski, Policy Analyst, on 020 7840 4984 or email abaranski@macmillan.org.uk

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UK-wide

MPs debate 'Bedroom Tax'

MPs debated repealing the Housing Benefit 'Under Occupancy Charge' (otherwise known as the 'Bedroom Tax') in a motion brought by the Opposition. Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary Rachel Reeves led calls to repeal the charge. The motion was defeated by 26 votes in spite of a rebellion by 5 Liberal Democrat MPs, including Health Select Committee member Andrew George who declared the policy "immoral". Work and Pensions Minister Steve Webb stated it would help those living in overcrowded conditions, freeing up larger houses by encouraging people with spare rooms to downsize. A government-supported amendment to the motion on "the need to bring expenditure on housing benefit under control," passed by 31 votes.

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England

Public expenditure on health and social care evidence session

The Health Committee held its first oral evidence session on public expenditure on health and social care. Sir David Nicholson, Chief Executive of NHS England and Paul Baumann, Chief Financial Officer of NHS England gave evidence to the Committee on NHS pay, Integration and transformational change costs and about the performance of the NHS against the "Nicholson challenge" - a four per cent efficiency gain, or a saving of £15 billion to £20 billion in the period to 2015.

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NHS England launches major exercise to shape the future of specialised services

NHS England is inviting patients, patient groups, commissioners, clinicians and others to a special event in December to give their views on the future of specialised health services and how they are to be provided by the NHS over the next five years. This forms part of NHS England's wider 'Call to Action' project, which was launched in July, signalling the start of an open debate with the public about the future delivery of NHS services.

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NHS Mandate 2014 to 2015 published

The NHS Mandate between the government and NHS England sets out the ambitions for the health service.

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Hunt makes Commons statement on Government response to Francis

Making a statement on the Government's response to the Francis Report, Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt paid tribute to the whistle-blowers and members of Cure the NHS who had brought failings in the NHS Trust to light. He gave credit to Sir Robert Francis and his team, stating that their diligence had led to an "outstanding" report that would lead to a better NHS. He went on to highlight some of the changes the Government were proposing in response to the Francis Report. Concluding, the Health Secretary highlighted that Sir Robert Francis had welcomed the Government's report published today, adding that he had described it as a "carefully considered and thorough response" to the report.

Whilst welcoming much of what the Secretary of State had said, Shadow Health Secretary Andy Burnham questioned why 86 Francis Report recommendations were not being implemented.

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New initiative aimed at increasing access to radiotherapy

NHS England has announced the list of provider hospitals chosen to take part in a new £4.8 million initiative, aimed at increasing access to specialist radiotherapy services. The 10 centres will provide Selective Internal Radiotherapy (SIRT) to around 220 patients a year as part of a time-limited programme called 'Commissioning through Evaluation'. It is anticipated that the programme will be funded for between 1-3 years.

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Carers, social care and cancer survival rates debated during Health Questions

A&E performance dominated Health Questions which took place this week in the Commons, but issues related to carers, social care and cancer survival also featured. Low-levels of carer identification, Care Minister Norman Lamb argued, would be improved by Care Bill provisions and £1.5 million of funding to raise awareness of the issue amongst healthcare professionals. The impact of social care budget cuts on care standards was then raised, following Shadow Care Minister Liz Kendall's claim many elderly people were "trapped" in hospital due to insufficient in-community care provision. John Baron, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Cancer, meanwhile, asked how CCGs would be accountable if they failed to meet five-year cancer survival and early diagnosis targets.

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Northern Ireland

Publication of first Patient Client Experience Report

Health Minister Edwin Poots welcomed the publication of the first Patient Client Experience Standards Report. The PHA has published its first Patient Client Experience Standards Report,

which demonstrates that although healthcare is often highly pressurised, all Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts are ensuring that patient experience remains a priority. The report highlights areas of good practice and areas where further improvements are required to enhance the experience of patients and clients. The core standards set out for review by the DHSSPS are respect, attitude, behaviour, communication, and privacy and dignity.

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Scotland

Digital health care: £10m personalised community health and wellbeing project online

A ground breaking online service will help improve health and wellbeing in Scotland, Health Secretary Alex Neil has announced.

Unveiling Living it Up (LiU), a £10 million digital health, care and wellbeing project, Mr Neil said the project would help people link up with health and wellbeing services in their local area.

LiU provides personalised advice on improving and managing health and wellbeing. The unique technology matches an individual's needs and interests with professional information, local services, and beneficial activities and events in their community.

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Committee calls for clarification on plans to integrate health and adult social care

Legislation which will integrate the delivery of health and adult social care in order to improve outcomes for patients has been supported by the Health and Sport Committee. However, a number of issues have been raised by the Committee that need clarification including the reach of Ministerial powers, the role of GPs and also the extent to which the Scottish Government expects both health board and local authorities to commit towards financing the delivery of joint health and social care.

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Scottish response to Francis recommendations

To coincide with the response to the Francis Inquiry by the Department of Health, Scottish Health Secretary Alex Neil announced plans to examine how some recommendations could be implemented in Scotland – particularly how best to introduce a criminal offence of wilful neglect, and giving full consideration to the introduction of a duty of candour for health boards.

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Cancer Mortality Rates

Cancer Mortality in Scotland 2012 statistics show Cancer mortality rates to have decreased by approximately 11 per cent over the past 10 years. Health Secretary Alex Neil commented on the decrease and stressed a determination to “do more to meet the challenge posed by rising cancer rates, including that posed by the aging population and in particular take more action to improve cancer survival through early diagnosis”.

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More information on your local health service published online

New data on how local health services across Wales are performing will be easily accessible from 13 November 2013. The website, mylocalhealthservice.wales.gov.uk, was launched in September providing performance data on a range of health services. It will now include:

- performance by GP practice on their care of patients with asthma, diabetes, dementia, atrial fibrillation, coronary heart disease and stroke;
- GP practices opening hours and appointment times at Health Board level, including appointments offered before 8.30am and appointments offered in the evening;
- mortality data at district general hospital level; and,
- an improved user interface making it easier to access information.

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Wales

Draft Budget for 2014-15, “A Budget that reflects our shared priorities for Wales”

Finance Minister Jane Hutt has said the Welsh Government remains committed to delivering on the NHS despite cuts to the budget of nearly £1.7billion since 2010-11 by the UK Government. The 2014-15 Draft Budget includes a £50m Intermediate Care Fund for 2014/15 providing a stimulus in the promotion of integrated health and social care, as well as longer term health and well being of the people of Wales

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Refreshed Public Health Wales Strategy Launched

Public Health Wales has launched its refreshed strategy at its staff conference. The new document reflects changes in the organisation and its environment and outlines its new strategy which has been designed to help make the connection between the work Public Health do and a healthier, happier, and fairer Wales. The revised document sets out the organisation’s purpose to protect and improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities and reiterates its three commitments – health improvement, healthcare improvement and health protection.

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