

POLICY UPDATE

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CANCER SUPPORT

February 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.

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United Kingdom

Government backs standardised packaging of tobacco.

After carefully considering the evidence for standardised packaging, and other relevant information, Public Health Minister Jane Ellison has confirmed that the government backs the public health case for introducing the policy.

This means cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco will have to be sold in standardised packs from May 2016. Governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have also stated their intention to implement these UK wide regulations.

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Selected summaries of investigations by the PHSO vol 3.

This report is the third in a series of quarterly digests of summaries of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's (PHSO) investigations. The short, anonymised stories it contains illustrate the profound impact that failures in public services can have on the lives of individuals and their families. The report contains a number of accounts detailing the experiences of people affected by cancer.

Most of the summaries that the PHSO are publishing are cases they have upheld or partly upheld. These are the cases which provide clear and valuable lessons for public services by showing what needs changing so that similar mistakes can be avoided in future. They include complaints about failures to spot serious illnesses and mistakes by government departments that caused financial hardship.

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Smoking in cars set to become illegal in England and Wales.

Parliament has approved regulations which will make smoking in cars carrying children illegal in England. The new rules will come into force on 1 October 2015 and people failing to comply could face a £50 fixed penalty notice.

A ban on people smoking in cars carrying children will also be introduced in Wales on October 1, 2015, Health and Social Services Minister, Mark Drakeford has announced, subject to the approval of assembly members.

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England

New Models of Care Programme.

NHS England and its national partners have announced a new programme to focus on the acceleration of the design and implementation of new models of care in the NHS.

As set out in the Five Year Forward View, rapid progress is needed to speed up the development of new care models for promoting health and wellbeing and providing care that can then be replicated more easily in other parts of the system. Through the New Models of Care Programme, individual organisations and partnerships, including those with the voluntary sector, are invited to apply to be ‘vanguard’ sites. These organisations will have the opportunity to work with national partners to co-design and establish new care models.

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Sir Bruce Keogh says we must meet the needs of a growing and ageing population.

Professor Sir Bruce Keogh, NHS England’s National Medical Director, has warned the NHS’s future is in danger because its model of care cannot meet the relentlessly growing demand for treatment caused by the ageing population.

In an interview with the Guardian newspaper, Sir Bruce said: “If the NHS continues to function as it does now, it’s going to really struggle to cope because the model of delivery and service that we have at the moment is not fit for the future.” He said there need to be changes to the way the NHS treats patients, including far less reliance on hospitals, or the service risked becoming unaffordable and could see its entirely taxpayer-funded status challenged.

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Integrated health and social care programme expanded.

The Integrated Care Pioneers Programme, designed to promote innovative ways of joining up health and social care, has been extended to 11 new areas. The aim is to make health and social care services work together to provide better support at home and earlier treatment in the community to prevent people needing emergency care in hospital or care homes.

The first annual report for the Integrated Care Pioneers Programme sets out the experiences of the first 14 areas to take part in the programme. It provides examples of best practice to help other areas to develop innovative ways of joining up their health and social care services.

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Smoking rates among young people continue to vary widely.

Around 8 million people in England smoke, with 90 per cent having started before the age of 19. It continues to be the single biggest cause of difference in life expectancy between the richest and poorest in England.

The new figures, commissioned by NICE and Public Health England, and modelled by Portsmouth and Southampton universities, are estimates for youth smoking rates based on four measures – regular smoking, occasional smoking, never smoked, and those who have smoked only once or twice and those who have quit.

Nationally, the figures suggest that 12.71 per cent of 15 year olds are regular or occasional smokers. In parts of Greater London such as Harrow, Newham, Redbridge and Brent, less than half this figure smoke regularly or occasionally. However in other areas such as Hartlepool, Gateshead and Plymouth, the figure is much higher at around 16 per cent. South Tyneside and Kingston upon Hull are among areas with the highest rates with 16.27 and 16.68 per cent of 15 year olds respectively.

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Public satisfaction with the NHS in 2014.

Since 1983, the National Centre for Social Research's British Social Attitudes survey has asked the public about their views on and feelings towards the NHS and health care issues generally. The latest survey was carried out between August and September 2014. It presents a picture of the public's satisfaction with the way the NHS runs, with important services, such as GPs, inpatients and outpatients, and with social care provided by local authorities.

These show overall satisfaction with the NHS increased to 65 per cent in 2014 – the second highest level since the British Social Attitudes survey began in 1983. Dissatisfaction with the service fell to an all-time low of 15 per cent.

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Financial sustainability of NHS bodies report published.

The savings required across the NHS will be difficult to achieve solely by continuing with the same approach used in recent years according to the Public Accounts Committee's report. The Chair of the Committee, Margaret Hodge MP, commented:

"From all our work across all of Government, the fragility of the NHS finances causes me greatest concern. The financial health of NHS bodies has worsened in the last two financial years.

"The percentage of NHS trusts and foundation trusts in deficit increased from 10% in 2012–13 to 26% in 2013–14. Monitor found that 80% of foundation trusts that provide acute hospital services were reporting a deficit by the second quarter of 2014–15.

"The Department has provided some £1.8 billion of additional cash support to NHS trusts and foundation trusts under financial stress between 2006–07 and 2013–14. The overall net surplus achieved by NHS bodies in 2012–13 of £2.1 billion fell to £722 million in 2013–14.

“NHS England, Monitor and the NHS Trust Development Authority recognise that radical change is needed to the way services are provided and that extra resources are required if the NHS is to become financially sustainable. This includes making better use of community and primary care services to reduce pressure on hospitals.”

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Culture change in the NHS.

The Department of Health publication ‘Culture change in the NHS: Applying the lessons of the Francis Inquiries’ sets out the progress made in applying the lessons learned from the failings at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust. The report is structured under the headings ‘Preventing problems’, ‘Detecting problems quickly’, ‘Taking action promptly and ensuring robust accountability’ and ‘Ensuring staff are trained and motivated’. Each chapter sets out the main areas where further action is needed to ensure that safe, effective and compassionate care is the norm.

The report includes an outline of the new inspection regime that has been introduced for hospitals, GPs and adult social care, as well as changes made to levels of clinical staff working in the NHS. It also presents statistics on the numbers of patients receiving harm-free care, and progress on the roll out of the Friends and Family Test.

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The NHS under the coalition government.

The King’s Fund report ‘The NHS under the coalition government’ covers six major themes of the coalition government’s reform programme. These are: commissioning of care, provision of care, regulation of care, competition, governance and accountability, and integration of care. For each theme, it describes the situation the coalition government inherited when it came to power in 2010, the policies it has pursued, and (where available) evidence of their impact.

The report’s conclusions include an assessment that reforms enacted under the coalition government have resulted in top-down reorganisation of the NHS and this has been distracting and damaging. In addition to this, the report views new systems of governance and accountability resulting from the reforms as complex and confusing. The report also states that the Care Act has created a legal framework for introducing a fairer system of funding of long-term care.

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Scotland

A&E waiting times figures published.

Figures for Accident & Emergency waiting times in Scotland show nine out of ten people were seen within four hours between October and December, 2014. In October,

November and December of 2014, performance against the four hour target was 91.8 per cent, 91.8 per cent and 89.9 per cent respectively.

Attendances in 2014 were the highest seen in any year since records began. Over the quarter ending December attendances were also up on last year, with over 9000 more people attending A&E departments. The number of admissions to hospital following an A&E attendance was also at their highest level on record – with 101,488 people admitted over the quarter.

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Commitment to enhancing NHS performance.

The Scottish Government is creating a new £31.5 million Performance Fund to support capacity and quality development measures in the NHS and social care. This new fund is part of the total £383 million additional frontline investment the Scottish Government is making to health spending in 2015/16 and comes as Parliament voted on a total annual health budget of more than £12 billion for the first time.

Announced during Deputy First Minister John Swinney's budget statement, the new fund for 2015/16 will build on work already being carried out to ensure the right health and care capacity is in place to meet the needs of the people of Scotland.

This will include support to maintain hospital performance during transfers to new facilities, such as the new £842 million South Glasgow hospital.

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Health & Social Care Information Sharing – A Strategic Framework 2014-2020.

The focus of this Information Sharing Strategic Framework is on sharing information in support of people's interactions with care services. This framework sets out the elements and considerations that will guide partnerships in developing their programmes of work. It sets out a delivery plan of actions and recommendations for the Scottish Government, local partnerships and organisations, and the Information Sharing Board (ISB), which owns this document and has steered its development.

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Scotland's NHS – beyond 2020.

The Scottish Government is to ask patients and staff to help shape a refreshed long-term vision for Scotland's NHS. Speaking in a debate in Parliament, the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Shona Robison, reaffirmed her commitment to the Scottish Government's 2020 Vision – which focuses on preventative healthcare and shifting more care into the community.

Ms Robison said the Scottish Government will produce a refreshed plan to reach the 2020 Vision and extended an invite to all politicians, as well as patients, families, clinicians and other stakeholders to work with the Government to develop a longer term 10 to 15 year plan for the NHS. During the debate, the Cabinet Secretary also provided more details on

the £100 million invested by the Scottish Government to tackle delayed discharge – highlighting the significant action being taken to support the NHS as the system moves towards full integration of health and social care.

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Northern Ireland

Emergency Care Waiting Time Statistics (October – December 2014).

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) has published statistics on the time spent waiting in emergency care departments within Northern Ireland during the months of October, November and December 2014.

This shows that during December 2014, 73.5% of attendances at Type 1 emergency care departments were treated and discharged, or admitted within four hours of their arrival, compared with 91.5% at Type 2 departments, and 100.0% at Type 3 departments. It also shows that 92 (0.2%) of the 56,656 attendances at emergency care departments in Northern Ireland waited longer than 12 hours to be either treated and discharged home, or admitted.

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Wales

Welsh NHS to fund new drug for patients with leukaemia.

A new cancer drug to treat leukaemia will be available to patients on NHS in Wales, Health and Social Services Minister Mark Drakeford has confirmed. The Welsh Government has ratified a recommendation by the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) that ponatinib, marketed under the trade name Iclusig, will be made available to leukaemia patients in Wales when other avenues of treatment have failed.

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More than nine out of ten people in Wales satisfied with NHS care – major survey finds.

The National Survey for Wales is a face-to-face survey of people across Wales. Each year 14,500 people aged 16 and over are asked for their opinions on a wide range of issues affecting them and their local area. In 2013-14, the National Survey included questions on overall satisfaction with health services; satisfaction with care; access to care and patient involvement. The results are used to measure progress against key Welsh Government commitments and objectives.

The survey shows more than nine out of 10 people (92%) in Wales are satisfied with the care they received from their GP and 91% are satisfied with the care they received at hospital. 84% of people said the GP knew all the relevant information about them, while 90% of people said that they or their carer were given all the information needed at their GP appointment.

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NICE

Nice grants seal of approval to guidelines on rare form of cancer.

NICE has given its seal of approval to the process an independent group used to develop clinical guidelines on a rare form of eye cancer.

Funded by the charity Melanoma Focus, and produced by an independent guideline development group, the process behind new guidelines on uveal melanoma is the latest to be accredited by NICE. Uveal melanoma is a very rare condition, but is also the most common type of melanoma that affects the eye. It occurs along the uveal tract, which affects the choroid, ciliary body and iris, and can lead to loss of sight or of the eye itself. The condition is managed differently from other forms of melanoma, and until now there has been no guidance on how it should be treated.

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