

POLICY UPDATE

WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT

March 2016

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

Six ways in which NHS financial pressures can affect patient care.

With the unprecedented slowdown in NHS funding growth since 2010, The King's Fund have looked at the different ways in which these financial pressures can affect patient's access to high-quality care.

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England

The Health Foundations Fit for Purpose report.

The Health Foundation has released a new report titled Fit for Purpose.

The report 'gives an overview of the components of workforce policy in the English NHS and the bodies which shape it' and 'proposes ways in which workforce policy could be strengthened to improve the quality and productivity of care.' One of the key recommendations is the formation of a National Workforce Strategy Board.

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Hundreds of GPs gearing up to leave, finds survey.

The crisis in general practice in England is set to worsen — 46 per cent of practices report they have GPs who are planning to retire or leave the NHS.

A BMA survey has found that practices are facing a toxic cocktail of soaring demand, problems with recruitment and retention and financial challenges.

The results are highlighted in a series of 'heatmaps' of parliamentary constituencies showing the worst-affected areas, launched as part of the BMA's Urgent Prescription for General Practice campaign.

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A perfect storm: an impossible climate for NHS providers' finances?

The Health Foundation has published a report examining the financial performance of the NHS in England. The main focus is on the finances of NHS providers and the financial position of the commissioners of care (NHS England and clinical commissioning groups).

It examines commissioners' budgets and how spending has changed by type of provider, as well as the specific issues facing NHS providers. It also includes the findings of a statistical analysis that set out to identify factors that are most strongly associated with an acute or specialist provider's deficit.

NHS to introduce new £600m financial incentive to improve staff health.

The NHS in England is to step up its efforts to improve the health of its 1.3 million staff by offering financial incentives to support their health and provide them with healthy food options. From April, hospitals and other providers of NHS care will for the first time be funded to improve the support they offer to frontline health staff to stay healthy. They will be able to earn their share of a national incentive fund worth £600m in 2016/17 if they make the changes recommended by NHS England.

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Junior Doctors contract dispute.

On the 21st March, MPs responded to a debate on an e-Petition concerning the Junior Doctor's contract dispute. Health Minister Ben Gummer said that attempts to reform contracts were motivated by a concern for patient safety. Opposition MPs raised the issue of low morale amongst Junior Doctors and highlighted that rising numbers are looking to emigrate.

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BMA announces full walkout.

On the 23rd March, the BMA confirmed that the twenty hours of industrial action scheduled for April 26th will now be escalated to a total withdrawal of junior doctor services. BMA Council Chair Mark Porter stated that the escalation had become inevitable in light of the Government's plans to impose the new contract from August.

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Raising ambitions for personal health budgets.

Momentum grows for the rollout of personal health budgets as CCGs across the country prepare to expand availability of these to others who could benefit from April this year. These will be outlined in 'local offers' currently being developed by CCGs, which will be agreed by their local Health and Wellbeing boards, enabling increasing numbers of people to access more flexible, person centred care.

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Scotland

New cancer app for health professionals.

A new app which will help GPs, pharmacists and other health professionals with referrals for patients suspected of having cancer has been launched.

The app, developed with health professionals and patients, is available to download for free via the Apple and Google app stores. It features a quick reference guide for doctors and other health professionals dealing with patients suspected of having cancer.

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Bid to transform urgent care welcomed.

Doctor's leaders have welcomed a commitment to test new models of urgent out-of-hours and community care in Scotland, saying it is vital that they are able to cope with demand now and in the future. Health secretary Shona Robison announced that £10m would be available in 2017 to fund a national delivery plan to transform urgent care.

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Cancer strategy needs back-up, BMA warns.

Scotland's new cancer strategy must be backed by resources and the right workforce if it is to get the best results for patients, Doctor's leaders have warned. BMA Scotland Council Chair Peter Bennie welcomed the £100m cancer plan, but said it must align with other health policies, including recently announced elective treatment centres, and the integration of health and social care. He said it was important that they aligned with proposals to take a system-wide approach to planning health service delivery at national and regional levels, as outlined in the recent National Clinical Strategy, which is due to come into force in April.

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Northern Ireland

Health Minister announces £11.5 million investment in cancer care.

Health Minister, Simon Hamilton, has announced an £11.5 million expansion to the specialist cancer nursing (CNS) workforce, creating around 60 new specialist cancer nursing and support worker posts over the next five years. Hamilton revealed that the additional posts would be funded by the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), in partnership with two charities. The HSCB will invest £2.4 million, Macmillan Cancer Support will provide a £7 million investment and Friends of the Cancer Centre have pledged a further £2.1 million.

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Hamilton welcomes improved cancer survival rates in Northern Ireland.

Health Minister Simon Hamilton has welcomed the publication of figures which show that more people are surviving cancer for longer in Northern Ireland. The Minister

was commenting on the latest statistics published by the Queens University Northern Ireland Cancer Registry (NICR) on the incidence and survival rates for cancer in Northern Ireland. The figures show that over 54% of all cancer patients survived five years after diagnosis for patients diagnosed between 2004 to 2008; this shows an improvement compared to patients diagnosed in the period 1993 to 1999 and this trend is expected to continue in the period 2010 to 2014.

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Hamilton announces 100 extra nurse training places in Northern Ireland.

Health Minister Simon Hamilton, MLA, today announced a 15% increase in the annual number of pre-registration nurse training places commissioned in Northern Ireland and the establishment of a new task group on nursing.

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Wales

Largest ever Welsh health research project launched.

A large research project has been launched to better understand the health of people living in Wales.

HealthWise Wales is a confidential research study, which aims to develop an in-depth knowledge of the health of the nation - the information gained will be used to help the NHS plan for the future.

The study hopes to recruit 260,000 people aged 16 and older over a five-year period. HealthWise Wales will involve large numbers of people in Wales in health and social care research.

Personal and medical information of those taking part will remain confidential and will only be used for research- it will not be shared with insurance companies or with individual's doctors.

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Pancreatic cancer drug Abraxane continues to be available in Wales.

The pancreatic cancer drug Abraxane will continue to be available in Wales despite a decision by NICE to not recommend its use in the NHS, Health Minister Mark Drakeford has announced.

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