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Sent: 22 January 2010 09:50

Subject: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 4 / 22 January 2010

This bulletin is produced weekly by The Information Point

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Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 04 / 22 January 2010

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Care Quality Commission 'Count me in' census.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) have published the results of the ['Count me in' census, 2009](#) which is designed to promote equality in healthcare and monitor the ethnicity of inpatients and people subject to the *Mental Health Act*.

The CQC 2009 report argues that the NHS, councils and wider community bodies should work together to improve preventative services to ensure they meet the mental health needs of people from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, and to reduce the risk of admission and detention the report underlines the need for better needs assessments and bespoke community based services.

See:

['Count me in' census 2009](#)

[Preventative mental health services must improve](#)

The Department for Health has published the final evaluation report and learning resources for 'Partnerships for Older People Projects' (POPPs).

The aim of the POPPs programme is to deliver and evaluate through supported initiatives, care for older people within their own homes and communities.

(See:

[Partnerships for Older People Projects \(POPPs\)](#)

The publication of ['Adult autism strategy consultation: a summary of the submissions received in response to the online consultation'](#) highlights the findings from the consultation including the importance of training, awareness raising and better diagnosis pathways.

Over 1,100 responses were received for this consultation, including those from people with ASC, families and carers, voluntary sector organisations and health and social care bodies.

The publication of the [‘National Cancer Survivorship Initiative vision’](#) provides an update on the first year of the National Cancer Survivorship Initiative (NCSI),

NCSI was announced in the Cancer Reform Strategy (2007) and formally launched in September 2008 and is a partnership between the Department of Health and Macmillan Cancer Support with support from NHS Improvement.

The document describes the emerging vision for improved care and support for people living with and beyond cancer, and brings together the work of service users, carers, clinicians, commissioners, charities and researchers.

The guide [‘Improving the Process of Death Certification in England and Wales: overview of Programme’](#) has been published.

The guide replaces the previous edition, and provides an overview of the Death Certification Programme and an update on the current progress, and is intended for those who may have an interest in the proposed improvements to the process of death certification.

[‘Selling alcohol responsibly: a consultation on the new code of practice for alcohol retailers - overview report’](#) provides a summary of a multi-strand consultation initiated by the Home Office.

The consultation on the issue was held between 13 May and 14 August 2009. The main audiences were licensing authorities, enforcement agencies and health bodies and retailers, and respondents agreed that the problems of binge drinking and alcohol related crime are serious and need addressing.

The code of practice for alcohol retailers essentially consists of a range of mandatory licensing conditions and discretionary local conditions which enable the Home Office to take forward legislation to further reduce alcohol related crime and disorder.

See:

[Written Ministerial statement: alcohol retailers](#)

[Alcoholism: current Parliamentary material](#)

[Statement: New code of practice for alcohol retailers](#)

A Written Ministerial Statement [‘Safeguarding Adults’](#) was made in the House of Commons on 20 January 2010.

Phil Hope, Minister of State at the Department of Health, made a written ministerial statement on the results of a Government consultation exercise on safeguarding vulnerable adults. The Government response to the consultation will cover the following:

- Setting up an Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group (IDMG) on Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults which will include Ministers from the Department of Health, Home Office, Ministry of Justice, the Attorney-General's Office and Communities and Local Government.

- New legislation to strengthen the local governance of safeguarding by putting Safeguarding Adults Boards on a statutory footing.
- Launching a programme of work with representative agencies and stakeholders to support effective policy and practice in safeguarding vulnerable adults.

See also:

[Statement: Safeguarding vulnerable adults from harm](#)

[Better protection for vulnerable adults](#)

[Written Ministerial Statement. Government response to the consultation on safeguarding adults: the review of the no secrets guidance. Tuesday 19 January 2009](#)

The Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology has issued a POSTnote [‘Diagnosing dementia’](#).

The paper argues that dementia currently affects 700,000 people in the UK, yet only 1 in 3 cases receives a formal diagnosis from a doctor. In addition, dementia costs the UK economy £17bn a year and is one of the main causes of disability in later life.

The POSTnote argues that a key aim of the Department of Health's 2009 National Dementia Strategy is early diagnosis as an aim intended to improve quality of life through increased support, prevention of harm and reduction in care home admissions. This briefing outlines current diagnostic practices, research into newer tools and service provision proposals that aim to increase early diagnosis

The Department of Health (DOH) have published the standard NHS contracts for acute hospital, mental health, community and ambulance services and supporting guidance.

The contracts support the NHS Operating Framework for 20010-2011 and should be read in conjunction with the Principles and Rules for Co-operation and Competition and the PCT Procurement Guide.

The NHS standard contracts cover agreements between PCTs and all types of provider delivering NHS funded services, and the contract will apply to agreements from 2009-10 for:-

- NHS trusts
- NHS Foundation Trusts
- New agreements between PCTs and independent sector providers
- New agreements between PCTs and third sector providers

Guidance on each of the contracts is also published to support the implementation and interpretation of the contracts.

For details of all the contracts:-

(See:

[The standard NHS contracts for acute hospital, mental health, community and ambulance services and supporting guidance](#)

The contribution public libraries are making to the health and wellbeing of communities is the subject of a new project launched by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).

The MLA has commissioned the Reading Agency and the Library and Information Statistics Unit (LISU) to consider the contribution public libraries are making to the health and wellbeing of the communities they serve. The project team, which will include expert input from Professor Neil Frude who launched the original Cardiff Books on Prescription Scheme, will examine the current

landscape of health-related library work, focusing in particular on partnerships with health service providers such as the NHS and on a wide range of other models, creative bibliotherapy, health information and public health activity. The project will also look at the future potential for this work. and conduct a national survey of English library authorities to discover the extent of their current contribution to the health and wellbeing of local communities and the potential to showcase examples of good practice. Findings will be reported in May 2010.

(See:

[Libraries and community health](#)

A study by the Nuffield trust has found that the [NHS in England provides better value for money](#) than elsewhere in the UK.

The study found that there are fewer health staff per head in England, but higher levels of activity and productivity, as well as shorter waits.

[Safeguarding 2.0](#), a project designed to harness recent developments in technology, particularly social media and the web, is being backed by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (Nesta).

The project aims to explore how the web can be used to communicate better between organisations to ensure those working in child protection have quick, easy and reliable access to the fullest possible picture

The Nuffield Trust has published a briefing ['Funding and Performance of Healthcare Systems in the Four Countries of the UK Before and After Devolution'](#)

The report argues that the health services of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are all funded by the UK taxpayer, but have developed different systems of governance and different methods of providing healthcare, and examines the impact of this by studying key performance indicators for the NHS in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland at three time points – 1996/7, 2002/3 and 2006/7.

The report also undertakes a completely new comparison of NHS performance in the English regions and the devolved countries. This is the first time such an analysis has been conducted.

See:

[Funding and performance of healthcare systems in the four countries of the UK: summary briefing](#)
[Funding and Performance of Healthcare Systems in the Four Countries of the UK Before and After Devolution](#)

The NHS Information Centre (NHS IC) supports Making Public Data Public.

As part of a Smarter Government commitment to make data more visible to the public, the Government has launched a new data website, on which existing data has been made available from across public sector organisations, including the NHS. As a central source of national health data and statistical information, The NHS IC has provided over 400 data entries to the new site. Initially, including recorded hospital activity from the hospital episode statistics and national care quality indicators from the Indicators of Quality Improvement resource.

See:

A new advisory panel to give cancer patients from black and minority ethnic backgrounds a greater voice in their care has been launched.

The National Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Cancer Patient Advisory Panel, the latest initiative from the National Cancer Action Team aims to give cancer patients and carers from BME backgrounds an opportunity to share the experiences they have had of the care provided. Comments and suggestions for improvements from the site will then be disseminated amongst NHS organisations to help raise the quality of care and support given to cancer sufferers.

See:

[New voice for BME cancer patients](#)

The Chief Medical Officer advises the public to get vaccinated against Swine Flu.

The Chief Medical Officer for England has published statistics which indicate the Swine Flu cases have fallen, but deaths and serious illness remain a concern, and has advised people still have their Swine Flu jabs.

See:

[Public strongly advised it is still important to have the Swine Flu jab](#)

[Swine flu](#)

The Department of Health (DH) has published the 2009 report '[Department of Health's public bodies, 2009](#)'.

Government departments are required to publish detailed annual data on the public bodies carrying out public functions, and providing independent advice and expertise, which they sponsor.

Bariatric surgeons argue that access to [NHS weight-loss surgery](#) is 'inconsistent, unethical and completely dependent on geographical location',

Senior bariatric surgeons speaking in conference argue that there should be consistency and transparency across the NHS for patients requiring weight loss surgery, so patients are clear about their entitlements, and doctors can treat all patients equally.

The current system means constraints on NHS funding creates uncertainty for patients requiring weight loss surgery, as in some areas NHS decision makers are opting to ignore professional guidelines and are denying patients' access to surgery, while in other areas, patients who already meet the criteria are forced to wait until either they become more obese or develop life-threatening illness like diabetes or stroke. But according to the NHS Constitution published in 2009 morbidly obese patients – those with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 40 or more – have a legal right to be properly assessed for weight loss surgery under guidelines set out by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. (NICE).

See:

[Hospitals 'encourage the overweight to eat more to get operation'](#)

[2010/005 NICE responds to weight-reducing surgery concerns](#)
[Study supports NICE bariatric surgery recommendations](#)

A commissioning guide for [adults with schizophrenia](#) has been published by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE).

This commissioning guide will enable healthcare professionals to offer the best treatment and management for adults with schizophrenia by signposting and providing key clinical and service-related issues to consider during the commissioning process. The guide identifies specific areas of clinical practice that should be adopted and provides PCTs with a commissioning tool to identify their local service requirements, review current services and highlight future needs.

Direct Access Audiology patients referral to treatment (RTT) waiting times data, November 2009 has been published.

The main points from the recently published data are:

- Data are being published on Direct Access Audiology patients whose referral to treatment (RTT) pathways were completed during November 2009 (completed pathways) and on those patients who were still waiting at the end of November 2009 (incomplete pathways).
- In total, 36,523 patients for whom English commissioners are responsible completed their Direct Access Audiology RTT pathway during November 2009. Of these, 99.7% were seen within 18 weeks.
- At the end of November 2009, 51,922 patients were awaiting Direct Access Audiology treatment. Of these, 99.4% had been waiting less than 18 weeks.
- A data completeness assessment is published alongside the figures on completed pathways, which compares the number of completed pathways (with a known clock start) reported in the Direct Access Audiology RTT return against the expected number of pathways. Currently, national data completeness stands at 103%.

See:

[Direct Access Audiology](#)

A project '[Design for patient dignity](#)' is part of a programme of works by the Department of Health to improve patient privacy.

As part of this groundbreaking new project 'Design for Patient Dignity' the Department of Health has teamed up with the Design Council and six teams of leading UK product, interiors, fashion and systems designers, architects and manufacturers have been appointed to work on an exciting range of briefs that will help to improve the hospital environment and patient experience.

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