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## Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 28 / 9 July 2010

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### Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Information

**Date of next HOSC meeting:** Friday 23 July 2010, 10.00 am.

**Location:** Council Chamber, Sessions House.

#### Main Agenda Items:

- 1) Diagnostics - Waiting Times.
- 2) Update on Health and Transport.

#### Internal Meetings:

HOSC Agenda Planning Meeting: Friday 23 July 2010, 14:30 - 16:30

Location: Darent Room, Sessions House.

### Health in Kent

#### ACT is the latest campaign from NHS Cardiovascular Network

ACT on heart attacks is the latest campaign from NHS Kent Cardiovascular Network to raise awareness of the symptoms of a heart attack, and the launch of the ACT campaign coincides with the commissioning of a new round-the-clock primary angioplasty service at a dedicated heart attack centre in the William Harvey Hospital, Ashford.

In the first months of the service, 155 seriously ill heart attack patients from across Kent and Medway have been treated with the innovative procedure the centre offers.

See:

[ACT on heart attacks](#)

## Department of Health

### Local authority profiles

The just published 'Local authority health profiles' offer a snapshot of health across local authority areas by comparing key statistics such as life expectancy, deprivation and early deaths from stroke and heart disease, and helping local authorities, GPs and health services to target their resources effectively and improve the overall health and wellbeing of the population.

This vital information also supports the Government's focus on prioritising prevention in public health issues, putting patients at the heart of local services in order to improve their overall health outcomes and make the demands of the NHS more sustainable.

The summaries show that there are clear variations in health across the country, and key findings include:-

- Life expectancy for men and women continues to increase.
- Early deaths from heart disease, stroke and cancer continue to fall.
- The highest rates of alcohol-related hospital admissions are found in urban areas of the North East and North West, including Liverpool, Newcastle and Middlesbrough.
- There are higher rates of malignant melanoma skin cancer in the South West and South East, including Plymouth, Weymouth and Portland, and Oxfordshire.

See:

[Differences in the nation's health revealed](#)

### Conference hears of the success of Multisystemic Therapy in reducing re-offending

Researchers at a health conference explained how Multisystemic Therapy, a pioneering approach to mental health significantly reduced re-offending in troubled and aggressive young people, particularly boys. Reporting on trials of the therapy, researchers outlined its success in America, and that the initial findings of the first UK evaluation pilot, in families with multiple problems the use of Multisystemic Therapy reduced the risk of re-offending, and led to lower re-offending behaviour which was evident two years down the line. .

In addition, compared to existing approaches, the researchers argued that the therapy can be cost effective, because young people are kept out of custody or local authority care, and parents are encouraged to use the voluntary sector and local support.

The approach, which has been approved by NICE (National Institute for Clinical Excellence) has had successful trials across 10 sites in the UK and is supported jointly by the Department for Education, the Youth Justice Board and Department of Health.

See:

[New therapy brings results for troubled young people](#)

### NHS Alliance paper looks at choice in the NHS

NHS Alliance has published a paper 'Choice beyond consumerism: how far can the NHS and patients go in their quest for choice?' which looks at questions and key issues around health and choice.

See the press release:

[Choice beyond consumerism: how far can the NHS and patients go in their quest for choice?](#)

## **Diagnostic waiting times**

waiting times for 15 key diagnostic tests carried out in the NHS and reports that the main findings this month are:-

- The number of patients, for whom English commissioners are responsible, waiting over 6 weeks for any one of the 15 key diagnostics tests at the end of May 2010 was 3,500, a decrease of 6 (15.4%) from April 2010, and a decrease of 400 (10.1%) from May 2009.
- Of the patients waiting at the end of May 2010, 99.3% had been waiting under 6 weeks, an increase of 0.1% from April 2010 and from May 2009.

See:

[Diagnostics waiting times & activity data, month ending 31 May 2010.](#)

## **Concluding report on the information on the quality of services**

The National Quality Board has published 'Information on the Quality of Services: final report' which is the concluding report from the National Quality Board regarding information on the quality of information of services.

The report provides recommendations to improve how information is created, used and communicated, and advice on how the information system itself should be structured.

For all the relevant documents:-

See:

[Information on the Quality of Services: final report](#)

## **Government**

### **New framework for a Public Health Service**

At the UK Faculty of Public Health conference, Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley has outlined a vision and new approach for a new Public Health Service that will release all of society to work together to get healthy and live longer

The Minister explained the philosophy behind the new approach and outlined that the framework required to deliver more effective Public Health and to create a healthy nation are centred on an approach which focuses on behaviour change; and which goes beyond constraining the supply of illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco, and begins to understand and influence the drivers of demand.

The framework of empowerment is to include:-

- A new responsibility deal between Government and business built on shared social responsibility and not state regulation.
- A new ring-fenced public health budget.
- A new 'Health Premium' to target public health resources towards the areas with the poorest health.
- Clear outcomes and measures to judge progress alongside NHS and social care outcomes.
- An enhanced role for Public Health Directors so they have the resources and authority to improve the health of their communities..
- A new Cabinet Sub-Committee on Public Health, chaired by the Health Secretary, to tackle the drivers of demand on the NHS.

A White Paper, to be published later this year, will set out in more detail how the Public Health Service will work.

See:

[Health Secretary sets out future of public health](#)

## **New review of palliative care funding**

Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley has announced that there will be a new review into the funding of palliative care.

In a speech to the International Carers Conference in Leeds, the Minister said that the review, which will be chaired by Tom Hughes-Hallett, Chief Executive of Marie Curie Cancer Care, will look at how Government can make sure that the money intended to help look after people who are approaching the end of life is spent in the right way, and this will better enable patients to choose how and from whom they receive their end of life care.

The Minister argues that the review will make recommendations for a funding system that will cover care provided by the NHS, a hospice or any appropriate provider which encourages more community-based care, so a patient can remain in their own home and will be fair and transparent to all organisations involved in palliative care.

The review will cover both adults' and children's services and will report back by summer 2011.  
See:

[Health Secretary announces review into palliative care funding](#)  
[Funding for children's palliative care](#)

## **Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs recommends that the chemical naphyrone (and related compounds), marketed as the legal high NRG-1, should be made a Class B drug.**

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) has issued advice to Government [‘Consideration of the naphthylpyrovalerone analogues and related compounds’](#) which recommends that the chemical naphyrone (and related compounds), marketed as the legal high NRG-1, should be made a Class B drug.

The review into naphyrone and related compounds is part of the ongoing work the ACMD are conducting on the legal high market and follows advice already made to government and the subsequent bans on mephedrone (and related cathinones), SPICE, GBL and BZP. The ACMD is also calling on the Home Secretary to implement an immediate import ban on naphyrone.

See:

[Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs Naphyrone Report \(2010\)](#)  
[The legal high naphyrone1 - sold as NRG-1 - should be made illegal.](#)

## **Department of Work and Pensions literature review**

A Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) literature review ‘Understanding the needs of people with mental health conditions and/or learning disabilities and the implications for the Pension, Disability and Carers Service’ was commissioned to understand the needs, preferences and experiences of people with mental health conditions and learning disabilities when accessing benefits, specifically Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA).

The main objectives of the review were to understand the existing evidence related to:

- needs and expectations;
- service provision and access;
- networks;
- channel preferences.

The Pension, Disability and Carers Service (PDCS) is keen to identify the particular needs of these groups and any barriers they may face when accessing PDCS services. This report presents the key findings and implications.

See:

[Literature review: Understanding the needs of people with mental health conditions and/or learning disabilities and the implications for the Pension, Disability and Carers Service](#)

## Parliament

House of Commons Debates

8 July 2010

The House of Commons held a debate on anonymity of defendants, in particular, the anonymity of rape victims

See:

[Defendant Anonymity](#)

[Commons debate the anonymity of defendants](#)

### **Westminster Hall debate on fuel poverty**

On Thursday 8 July there was a debate in Westminster Hall on the subject of fuel poverty in rural areas of Britain led by Dr Thérèse Coffey (Suffolk Coastal) (Con):

See:

[Fuel Poverty \(Rural Britain\)](#)

[Westminster Hall debate on fuel poverty in rural Britain](#)

## Other Health Information

### **The annual report of the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness.**

The 2010 annual report of the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness has been published. The report indicates that homicide and suicide rates amongst the mentally ill are on the decline and key findings include the indications that previous rises in homicide may have been caused by drug misuse and the figures for schizophrenia need further monitoring before trends can be understood.

See:

[National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness: annual report, July 2010](#)

[Key findings from the Annual Report 2010](#)

[Press release](#)

[Mental Health Network response to national confidential enquiry into suicide and homicide by people with mental illness report](#)

### **OECD Health Data 2010 argues the total spending on healthcare is rising in all OECD countries**

The Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation (OECD) has released new health data which indicates that in all OECD countries factors like technological change, population expectations and population ageing are causing the total spending on healthcare to rise faster than economic growth, pushing the average ratio of health spending to GDP from 7.8% in 2000 to 9.0% in 2008.

See:

[Growing health spending puts pressure on government budgets, according to OECD Health Data 2010](#)

### **Report looks at the relationship between green space and inequality**

A Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) study '[Community green: using local spaces to tackle inequality and improve health](#)' Investigates the relationship between urban green space, inequality, ethnicity, health and wellbeing, and shows that providing good quality local green space is an effective way to tackle inequality.

See:

[Community green](#)

## **Health Protection Agency issues advice on radon**

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) has launched a new initiative to reduce concentrations of radon in UK homes. HPA argue that Radon, a naturally occurring radioactive gas, is the biggest source of human exposure to ionising radiation in the UK and is responsible for an estimated 1,100 lung cancer deaths a year.

See:

[HPA issues new advice on radon](#)

## **New drug could help with conditions like memory loss**

Age UK reports that early animal research on new nerve drug indicate that new pill could be developed that reverses mental decline linked to ageing such as with conditions like memory loss, Alzheimer's and other symptoms of ageing.

See:

[Research hints at Alzheimer's cure](#)

## **Study indicates a neutral effect between NSAIDs and heart disease**

An Australian study indicates that the overall effect of taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) is neutral when it comes to heart disease. In addition, the study indicated that taking the painkiller ibuprofen does not increase older people's risk of heart attack, and the study also uncovered an unexplained link between the use of the drugs and a reduction in the risk of dying from any cause.

See:

[No ibuprofen link to heart attacks](#)

## **Preventative treatment for migraine**

The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency have approved Botox as a preventive treatment for chronic migraine after a trial of more than 1,300 patients showed success in reducing the frequency of headaches.

But the regulatory body also stipulated that only patients who suffer headaches for at least 15 days a month, half of which come with migraine symptoms, are eligible.

See:

[Botox approved for the prevention of chronic migraine](#)

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