

**Subject:** Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 45 / 6 November 2009

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## Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 45 / 6 November 2009

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**The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has issued two literature reviews looking at children and alcohol, one looking at how they learn acquire their attitudes to alcohol, and one looking at the effectiveness of prevention programmes to prevent excessive use by young people.**

**[“Influences on how Children and Young People learn about and behave towards Alcohol”](#)** finds that children are most influenced by their parents’ attitude to alcohol, copying what they do rather than listening to what they say. Alcohol’s representation in the media also has a strong influence on children’s behaviour, but high levels of family support tend to decrease excessive use.

**[“Alcohol Prevention Programmes”](#)** looks at programmes which have been deployed and their success and concludes that young people’s norms about drinking need to be changed

**The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has published a self assessment toolkit ‘[An accommodation self assessment toolkit for the Socially Excluded Adults Public Service Agreement](#)’.** The toolkit is designed to assist local housing authorities to deliver improved accommodation outcomes for the four client groups in PSA 16, in partnership with probation, children’s services, adult social care, primary care trusts and other local partners including voluntary sector and registered social landlords.

The guidance forms part of an authority’s role in mainstream homelessness prevention, involving early intervention, support, advice and information, and the toolkit also gives an opportunity to assess the associated commitment to deliver improved employment outcomes for the four groups.

The toolkit is available on the [DCLG housing](#) webpage

**The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have published a good practice guide ‘[Homelessness prevention and meeting housing need for \(ex\)offenders: a guide to practice](#)’.** The guide aims to assist those who work with (ex)offenders to help prevent them from becoming homeless and to meet their housing needs, and focuses on three main areas:

- partnership working to increase capacity in housing provision.

- multi-agency approaches to assessment and planning.
- the provision of on-going support.

It draws on existing initiatives to provide examples of practice.

The Justice Ministry have published guidelines '*Electoral registration data standards*' offering guidance for electoral registration officers on standards for the formatting of names, dates of birth and addresses in electoral registers.

The guidance provides information on::

- understanding the standards
- managing the matching process
- dealing with technical issues
- managing suppliers
- claiming funding

The guidance is available on the [news webpage](#) of the Ministry of Justice website. .

**The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have implemented new rules that will ensure that Child Benefit will no longer be taken into account when calculating entitlement for [Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit](#).** This will mean that more than 200,000 working families will gain about £1000 a year, and overall, will be an average of £20 a week better off.

Secretary of State Yvette Cooper said:

'We want to do more to help families who are working hard to get by during the recession. Tax credits already ensure families are better off in work, but this extra cash is a practical way to make sure that the benefits from working are even more effective, and will help to reduce child poverty.'

**The think tank Policy Exchange has published a research note ['Poverty of Ambition: why we need a new approach to tackling child poverty'](#) which recommends that the current child poverty targets should be replaced and the Child Poverty Bill withdrawn.** The research note argues that arguing that the Government should abandon the broader concern to improve child wellbeing and the causes of poverty.

**The House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Select Committee has issued the 5<sup>th</sup> special report ['Allegations Against School Staff: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2008-09'](#).** The report contains the Government response to the recommendations made on the practice guidance and systems for handling allegations against school staff which were made in the Fifth Report of the Session 2008 – 9.

**The Children, Schools and Families Select Committee has published the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Report ['Policy and delivery: The National Curriculum tests delivery failure in 2008: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2008-09.'](#)** The Special Report contains the Government's response to the recommendations made by the Committee in its Sixth Report of Session 2008-09, on Policy and delivery: The National Curriculum tests delivery failure in 2008, which considered the many factors contributing to the failures in the delivery of the 2008 National Curriculum tests.

**Research from *NHS Lifecheck* an easy to use on line health service that helps to assess new mothers and babies' health and well-being, indicates that after the first eight weeks of motherhood, a crucial period occurs when young mothers are left on their own, and feel isolated and anxious.** The research, which also involved the Department of Health (DOH), indicates that new mothers had the most new questions at this time around weaning (81%), sleeping (42%) and safety in the home (22%).

Key findings include:-

- 60% experience a drop in regular visits from friends and family.
- 54% say their partner is less able by this point to get home or be at home to help out.
- 32% say they don't have any time for themselves.
- 20% felt the realisation that baby care tasks are 'repetitive and mundane'.

However, advice and support is available at this time from child health clinics, general practice and Sure Start Children's Centres.

(See:

[NHS Lifecheck](#)

[When new mums need help most](#)

**The website of the Office of Schools Adjudicator has published the ['OSA Annual report, September 2008 - August 2009.](#) The website also offers copies of the reports on 'Fraudulent Applications,' 'Random Allocation' and 'Twins and Multiple Births'.**

Please see the [Schools Adjudicator's](#) website for access to all of these reports.

(See also:

[Ed Balls' response to the Chief School Adjudicator's Annual Report 2008/9](#)

**A paper from the think-tank Demos ['The making of me'](#) argues that many commentators and researchers have argued that creativity and culture make more prosperous and cohesive societies.** The paper argues that the role of families is fundamental to this concept, and looks at how families could be better supported and how more might be got from existing investments in this area.

(See also:

[Making of Me](#)

**The House of Commons Communities and Local Government Select Committee have published ['The Supporting people programme'](#) report which considers how well the Government has delivered against its commitments in the 2007 Supporting People Strategy.**

**In a keynote speech, David Cameron has launched a petition on NHS spending and announced the five Conservative priorities for a Department of Public Health.**

The petition urges the Government to increase spending on the NHS every year, and to stop precious NHS money being wasted on targets and bureaucracy.

The five priorities are as follows:

- We will create a patient-led NHS where patients are able to choose between a wide range of public and independent sector providers where and when they receive treatment, and where patients are able take control of their own health records.
- We want to take day-to-day political interference out of the NHS and put healthcare professionals in charge of delivering patient care, according to the demands of patients and in competition with other providers.
- We will devolve decision-making to doctors and nurses but they will be more accountable than ever for the results they achieve, but to patients not politicians, because we will measure health outcomes, publish extensive data about what providers achieve and pay those providers by results.
- Having set the framework for these reforms to the NHS, we will be able to focus government action on improving public health.
- That action will include reforming long-term care to enable people to stay in their own homes and communities.

(See:

[David Cameron: Our health priorities](#)

## [Petition to protect the NHS from spending cuts](#)

**The Department for Health (DOH) reports that top Olympic winner and TV presenters Mark Foster, Philippa Forrester and Cerri Burnell have all thrown their weight behind the [debate on the funding of care](#) by supporting the short film that highlights four real life experience of why care matters, and as the Big Care Debate enters its final week, they are asking everyone to have their say on the future of the care and support system.**

The film features four individuals who currently receive care and support to highlight the fact that the Government is looking to create a National Care Service that is simpler, fairer and more affordable than the current system.

They are giving everyone the opportunity to shape Government policy on the future of the care and support by getting involved in the Big Care Debate. Everyone can have their say on how they would like the National Care Service to be funded.

This debate affects everyone. In 20 years time a quarter of the entire adult population in England will be over 65 and the number of people over 85 will have doubled. Half of all men and two in three women will end up needing care, and if someone has more than £23,000 in savings, they will need to meet all the costs themselves.

**Gordon Brown has called on councils to make better use of existing powers to combat anti-social behaviour after the government indicated little new legislation was planned on the issue.**

The prime minister was speaking at a question and answer session in Tower Hamlets, London, alongside the home secretary Alan Johnson and communities secretary John Denham to launch the Home Office's [Justice Seen, Justice Done campaign](#).

Mr Brown told community leaders at the event that the government had acted to bring in measures including acceptable behaviour contracts and higher sentences for the carrying of knives and the possession of guns which had to be implemented.

Mr Johnson cited the case of Fiona Pilkington, the Leicestershire mother who killed her disabled daughter and committed suicide after suffering a decade of abuse from local youths. The jury at an inquest in September into their deaths noted that the family's complaints of anti-social behaviour were not linked or prioritised. "Local services had 15 powers but they weren't used," he said of the case.

See also:

[Brown urges better use of anti-yob powers](#)

**State-run nurseries will close or be forced to charge parents for their services as a result of a government funding shake up, ministers have been warned.**

New rules are being brought in to give private and voluntarily-run nurseries a greater share of resources but it is feared they could [subsidise profits at the expense of England's 430 state-run nurseries](#). They come as part of a drive to increase each three and four-year-old's entitlement from 12.5 to 15 hours of free childcare a week by next September.

**Expectation is growing that the Conservatives will dramatically scale back the Building Schools for the Future programme if they form the next government.**

One Opposition source close to the discussions [told the Financial Times](#): "What makes a school effective is teaching. It's not about whether it's in a £20m building built by an award-winning architect." It is believed that Francis Maude, the shadow Cabinet Office minister, signalled a cutting back of the programme in recent meetings with leading construction industry figures.

**Universities in the UK are worth £59bn for the economy, says a report into the economic impact of higher education.**

The report, based on figures for 2007-8, highlights the [growing role of universities as major employers and revenue earners](#). Universities created, directly or indirectly, over 668,500 jobs - or 2.6% of the workforce, says the report. The figures follow the launch of the government's blueprint to increase the economic importance of universities.

Read the full report: [The impact of universities on the UK economy](#)

See also:

[Universities "worth £59bn to UK"](#) (BBC)

**A-levels are not sufficient to identify the aptitude and potential of all those who should benefit from a university education, the government says.**

[A framework for higher education](#) in England over the next decade says social mobility must be reinvigorated. Innovation and Skills Secretary Lord Mandelson said priority would go to new routes into higher education, especially for older students. Research money should focus on science clusters, and teaching must improve.

Lord Mandelson said that an "independent review of tuition fees" would be appropriate in order to fund the changes. However, there will be no report on the matter until after the general election.

Read the report: [Higher Ambitions: the future of universities in the knowledge economy](#)

Read the [executive summary](#)

(See also:

[University places "wider access"](#)

**New standards for the care of sick babies have been published in an attempt to improve services in England.**

Specialist baby care was heavily criticised by the National Audit Office two years ago. Ministers have now responded by [demanding one-on-one nursing care](#) for the most ill babies as well as better transport services between hospitals. But campaigners and doctors have voiced their concerns, because there is no new money for the service.

A spokeswoman for Bliss, the premature baby charity, said: "We are concerned that, with the lack of upfront investment, this could be another wasted opportunity to deliver the care that vulnerable babies desperately need."

Professor David Field of the British Association of Perinatal Medicine admitted money was a concern, but he added: "It does at least give us something with which to go to managers and put the case for services. It is the first time we have had a set of written standards."

(See also:

[Department of Health press release](#)

**Forecasts of a huge rise in obesity among children in England have been significantly downgraded following a new analysis of data.**

The [National Heart Forum](#) found evidence that the rate of increase in childhood obesity may be starting to slow. Its figures suggest that by 2020 the proportion of boys aged 2-11 who will be

overweight or obese will be 30% - not 42% as previously predicted. For girls of the same age the revised prediction is now 27% - down from 48%.

**The LGC reports on an example of [joint working between Hammersmith & Fulham council and the local Primary Care Trust](#) to provide more joined up care for the elderly.**

They are working to integrate the PCT budget with that of the local council community care budget. By avoiding duplication and focussing in service delivery significant savings can be achieved.

See also [Merger cost shunt risk remains](#) (LGC)

**A report by the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence has found that the social care regulator the [General Social Care Council failed](#) to investigate misconduct cases as a result of financial pressures.**

The report found that at times financial considerations, rather than the need for public protection influenced the referral of cases.

**The Ministry of Justice has published a [response](#) to the recommendations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission's human rights inquiry, which focused on the extent to which human rights are embedded in the delivery of public services.**

**The LGC reports that the government have [delayed the publication of detailed financial workings](#) on proposals to reform the nation's social care system.**

The figures were originally due to be released in November but are now unlikely to appear until next year.

The delay is due to changes announced at the recent Labour Party conference.

**An [audit of the security of supply chains](#) for council services in the east of England has shown that almost 5% of the money spent contracting essential services such as children's and adult social care may be passing through firms that are at significant financial risk.**

Most of the high-risk supply was for services in the care industry, such as nursing homes or residential care homes and there was concern that potential interruptions to supply chains would have on the provision of residential care.

**The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has said that employers need to pay more attention to the levels of [workplace stress](#).**

Bad managers were the single biggest cause of stress but simple steps such as giving positive feedback, allowing flexible working and giving extra days off as a reward could cut the impact by a third.

**The House of Commons debate on [Thalidomide patients](#) was urged by MP Charlotte Atkins to take action on the health care situation faced by the remaining Thalidomide victims who have complex health care needs.** The MP argues that although the Thalidomide Trust has established an independent health support service which includes its own mechanism to reclassify an individual's degree of disability, the Trust has the ability to carry out only ten to twenty reviews per year.

The Department of Health has offered Thalidomide patients the chance to participate in a pilot scheme to examine the roll out of a personal health budget.

The National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death (NCEPOD) has launched the report detailing deaths in acute hospital ['Caring to the end'](#) which investigated the process of care of patients who died within four days of admission.

(See also:

[Poor care 'could be killing patients'](#)

[Terminally ill denied death at home by failings in care system](#)

The Commonwealth Fund have published a study ['A Survey of Primary Care Physicians in 11 Countries, 2009: Perspectives on Care, Costs, and Experiences'](#). The study of more than 10,000 primary care physicians in 11 countries finds the United States lags far behind in terms of access to care, the use of financial incentives to improve the quality of care, and the use of health information technology. In other countries, national policies have sped the adoption of such innovations.

(See also:

[Doctors rate NHS as best in the world](#)

The Times report that trials of a revolutionary new approach to [treating cancer using a nanotechnology therapy](#) that attacks cancer cells with a 'stealth smart bomb' is to begin patient trials next year. This is the first clinical test of a pioneering approach to medicine, where the nanoparticle, which targets tumour cells while evading the body's immune system, promises to deliver larger and more effective doses of drugs to cancers, while simultaneously sparing patients many of the distressing side-effects of chemotherapy.

Animal studies have indicated that the treatment can shrink tumours to 'essentially to zero' while being better tolerated than conventional cancer treatments, but final toxicology studies are about to begin.

(See also:

[Shame of Britain's cancer death rates: Toll is 20% higher than Europe and getting worse](#)

## **Forthcoming Parliamentary Business**

**MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2009**

### **HOUSE OF COMMONS**

#### **Main Chamber:**

##### **Oral Questions**

Culture, Media and Sport, including Topical Questions; Olympics.

##### **Legislation**

Coroners and Justice Bill – Consideration of Lords Amendments

##### **Adjournment**

Provision of acute services for mental health patients - Mr Charles Walker

#### **Select Committee:**

##### **Children, Schools and Families**

*Subject:* Sure Start Children's Centres.

### **HOUSE OF LORDS**

#### **Main Chamber:**

## **Legislation**

Health Bill – Consideration of Commons Amendments - Baroness Thornton.

## **Grand Committee:**

### **Orders and Regulations**

Draft Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (Amendment) Order 2009 - Lord West of Spithead.

## **Tuesday 10 November 2009**

### **HOUSE OF COMMONS**

#### **Main Chamber:**

##### **Legislation**

Health Bill [HL] – Consideration of Lords Amendments.

#### **Westminster Hall**

##### **Business**

Rape crisis centres - Lynda Waltho.

Public transport and the disabled - Mr John Randall

Centre for Defence Medicine at Selly Oak - Ms Gisela Stuart.

#### **General Committee:**

##### **Fourth Delegated Legislation Committee**

*Subject:* Family Proceedings Fees (Amendment) Order 2009 (S.I., 2009, No. 1499).

#### **Select Committee:**

##### **Joint Committee on Human Rights**

*Subject:* Equality and Human Rights Commission

*Witness(es):* Trevor Phillips OBE, Chair of the EHRC.

##### **Defence**

*Subject:* The Green Paper and readiness and recuperation of the Armed Forces

*Witness(es):* Rt Hon Bob Ainsworth MP, Secretary of State for Defence

### **HOUSE OF LORDS**

#### **Main Chamber:**

##### **Oral Questions**

Pedestrians and cyclists and the near-silent operation of electric and hybrid vehicles - Lord Low of Dalston.

##### **Legislation**

Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill – Third reading - Lord Goodlad - 3675/  
Baroness Morgan of Drefelin - 3576/ Lord Young of Norwood Green.

#### **Select Committee:**

##### **Joint Committee on Human Rights**

*Subject:* The work of the Equality and Human Rights Commission

*Witness(es):* Trevor Phillips OBE.

## **Wednesday 11 November 2009**

## **HOUSE OF COMMONS**

### **Main Chamber:**

#### **Legislation**

Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill – Consideration of Lords Amendments.

### **Westminster Hall:**

#### **Business:**

Application of sex discrimination legislation to religious organisations - Robert Key.

Maximum workplace temperature - John McDonnell.

Reducing female mortality in Africa - Mr Phil Willis.

## **HOUSE OF LORDS**

### **Main Chamber:**

#### **Oral Questions**

Domestic violence - Lord Sheikh.

#### **Legislation**

Policing and Crime Bill – Third Reading - Lord West of Spithead/ Lord Brett.

Coroners and Justice Bill – Consideration of Commons Amendments - Lord Bach.

## **Thursday 12 November 2009**

## **HOUSE OF COMMONS**

### **Main Chamber:**

#### **Legislation**

Policing and Crime Bill – Consideration of Lords Amendments.

### **Westminster Hall:**

#### **Business**

2.30pm - 5.30pm A debate on the 3rd Report from the Health Committee, Session 2008-09, entitled 'Health Inequalities', HC 286-I, and the Government's response, Cm 7621.

## **HOUSE OF LORDS**

### **Main Chamber:**

#### **Oral Questions**

Young persons detained under immigration powers at Yarl's Wood - Lord Dubs.

The results of consultation on prisoners' voting rights - Lord Ramsbotham .

## **Friday 13 November 2009**

### **Prorogation**

The House of Commons and House of Lords will next sit on Wednesday 18 November for the State Opening of Parliament.

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