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The Department of Health has launched a consultation on Personal care at home: proposals for regulations and guidance.

[This consultation document](#) seeks views on the proposals in the Personal Care At Home Bill to provide free personal care for people living in their homes with the highest care needs. It sets out how the scheme is likely to work and what will be contained in regulations and in guidance.

An impact assessment and a link to the current Bill is also available on the [DoH website](#).

The closing date for comments is Tuesday 23rd February 2010.

The Dept of Health has issued a consultation – [Age Equality in Health and Social Care](#).

The consultation asks for comments on the recommendations of a review into the implications for health and social care of new age requirements in the Equality Bill.

The Bill will ban age discrimination against adults in public services. This has particular implications for health and social care because age can be a factor in decisions about some treatments and services. However, a separate review has already concluded that no areas within health and social care should have wholesale exemption from the legislation.

(See:-

[Accompanying Consultation Documents](#) and [Press Release](#)

Launch date - 23 November 2009

Closing date - 15 February 2010

Ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, a report ‘*The health benefits of climate change*’ published by the Lancet and part funded by other organisations, urges health ministers and professionals across the world to recognise the danger that climate change poses to health.

Key findings in the report show that:

- changes towards a low carbon transport system could reduce the health impacts of urban air pollution and physical inactivity.
- housing insulation can reduce deaths from both extreme cold and heat;
- changes in farming practice to reduce livestock and overall meat consumption could improve health by lowering the intake of saturated fat.
- in poor countries, a reduced need to burn solid fuel indoors could have a significant impact on child and maternal health by cutting indoor air pollution.

Speaking at the launch of the report, Health Minister Andy Burnham argues for bringing the human health cost of climate change to the forefront of the debate, to prevent the dramatic impact on people's lives, and makes the case for policies that improve health as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to help 'tip the balance in favour of ambitious climate change action'.

(See:

[*The health benefits of tackling climate change: executive summary*](#)

[*Health impacts of climate change*](#)

[*Call for health professionals to act on climate change*](#)

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) have published an occasional paper ***'Disability, health and access to training'*** which analyses the determinants of training for disabled workers both at the individual and at the firm level, using data from the 2004 British workplace employee relations survey. The report argues that providing disabled people with adequate training is one of the main objectives of recent legislative measures against discrimination, but has found that employer's decisions on training for disabled people, are often based on estimates of the severity of their disablement.

(See also:

[*Employment Relations Occasional Papers*](#)

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) have published a report ***'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: priorities for action'*** which highlights the progress the Government has made in its commitment to priority areas of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and sets out future plans. The document describes how policies for children and young people in England continue to be underpinned by the UNCRC and its commitment to a comprehensive set of rights for all children, and outlines the desire to make it a reality in children's lives.

(See also:

[*Children's Minister launches action plan to address children's rights*](#)

[*Committee says action must be taken on UK children*](#)

The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) have published a research brief ***'Anti-social Behaviour Family Intervention Projects - Monitoring and Evaluation'*** which presents information about the families that received a Family Intervention Project (FIP) intervention aimed at tackling and reducing anti-social behaviour up until 31st March 2009.

The Guardian report that leading health experts have warned Health Secretary Andy Burnham against reversing a Labour Government programme of modernisation and competition within the health service. A letter organised by the centre-left pressure group Progress, three leaders of charity healthcare providers and the two former government advisers, professors Julian le Grand and Paul Corrigan, warn the Health Secretary of

'alienating' charities and other key sectors, and now endangers the near £5bn worth of services the third sector currently provides and waters down a commitment in the 2005 Labour party manifesto that the party would consider third-sector providers 'on equal terms' with those run in-house.

(See:

[Andy Burnham told charities at risk in policy shift](#)

The Human Genetics Commission, the government advisor on genetics, has said that [police should be given new guidance](#) to regulate when it is appropriate to take a sample of DNA.

The police now routinely take a DNA sample from everyone they arrest with some claiming that arrests are made simply to obtain a DNA sample.

There are now about five million profiles on the national DNA database, a rise of 40% in two years, with some groups – such as young black men "very highly over-represented".

Ofsted has published [2008/09 Annual Report](#) which reveals an overall improvement in care, education and skills in England.

The report acknowledges overall progress and many successes, but also focuses on where improvements must still be made.

The report considers three matters of national importance and interest

- Looked after children
- Teaching and Learning
- Challenges facing the skills sector

Key findings include

- Nearly two thirds of childcare was good or outstanding in 2008/9 (65%), higher than in the previous year
- 69% of schools were good or outstanding
- Most local authorities are providing good quality services for looked after children

(See also:

[Press Release](#) and [Key Themes](#)

However, ahead of the report's publication the LGA [called on Ofsted to be a "calm, measured voice"](#) that helps to make child protection services work better rather than feeding people's fears.

The LGA believes that Ofsted places too much emphasis on publicly highlighting weaknesses in child protection without adequately reflecting the good work being done by councils across the country.

As Ofsted publishes its annual report the LGA is calling on Ofsted to adopt the following five principles –

- be a voice of reason rather than feeding people's fears
- be independent of external influence, basing its conclusions on facts and research
- use expert and knowledgeable inspectors who can offer advice and support
- assess how well children are being looked after and protected rather than measuring processes and procedures
- be focused on making services better rather than on delivering detached, public judgements

(See also:-

[Ofsted under fresh attack over child protection policy](#) (Guardian)

[LGA blasts focus of Ofsted reports](#)

The Dept of Health has published the [NHS health and well-being Final Report](#) which looks at the health and well-being of NHS staff and its links to productivity, efficiency, and patient experience.

The recommendations are grouped around three headings –

- Improving organisational behaviours and performance
- Achieving an exemplar service
- Embedding staff health and well-being in NHS systems and infrastructure

The central theme of the report is that good staff health and well-being is essential to meet NHS productivity and quality challenges.

(See also:-

[Accompanying Materials](#)

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) report that up to a third of children in some areas have had [swine flu](#), but may not have been ill. The HPA say they have reviewed blood tests which showed higher levels of infection than originally thought, and argue that this could explain why the virus had not really taken off this autumn, as currently the number of new cases is half of what they were in the summer.

In hotspot areas, such as London and the West Midlands, a third of school-aged children may have had the virus, but only one in 10 or less got ill.

Across the UK, the figure is probably about a fifth, the HPA said.

The findings reinforce the fact the pandemic is a mild strain of flu.

The Department of Health (DOH) have published a best practice guide for commissioners [‘World class commissioning for the health and wellbeing of people with learning disabilities’](#) which provides practical support for commissioners and contains a range of tools, techniques, key reference documents and case studies to help improve the health and wellbeing of people with learning disabilities. Recent inquiries have demonstrated the health inequalities faced by people with learning disabilities; and the reasonable adjustments needed to overcome them. This is a practical guide to support commissioners to meet the needs of this group, and ensure they are fulfilling their duty to promote equality.

Poor families in rural areas are being hit harder by the recession than their counterparts in the cities, according to a report.

The report, [‘Peace and quiet disadvantage: insights from users and providers of children’s centres in rural communities’](#), published by the [Commission for Rural Communities](#), reveals that for parents lacking jobs and transport the realities of day-to-day living are extremely harsh.

These families are missing out on services that families in towns and cities take for granted, including primary healthcare, continuing education, childcare and employment.

As part of a new government strategy, every school pupil in England is to be taught that domestic violence is unacceptable.

The [BBC reports](#) that from 2011, lessons in gender equality and preventing violence in relationships will be included in the statutory personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Next year, two helplines will be set up to deal with sexual violence and stalking and harassment.

About a million women are victims of at least one domestic violence incident a year, according to the British Crime Survey. More than £13m is being provided to help support victims of sexual and domestic violence in a range of actions by the police, local authorities, NHS and government.

The charity Refuge has welcomed the announcement and is urging people to speak out against domestic violence

(See also:

[Together we can end violence against women and girls strategy outlined](#)

[Violence against women](#) – Written Ministerial Answer by Alan Johnson

[Young people at heart of strategy to bring an end to violence against women and girls](#)

Nearly one in five adults living in West Kent is at serious risk of developing liver disease by drinking too much alcohol, according to figures from the NHS in West Kent.

The statistics show that:

- In 2007 / 08 there were 5,036 admissions to hospital through A&E in West Kent for alcohol-related conditions costing around £3m. This compares with 2,262 in 2002/03
- 16-41 per cent of suicides in West Kent are attributable to alcohol use
- In 2008/09 1,124 people per 100,00 population were admitted to hospital for alcohol-related harm
- 15.2 per cent of people in West Kent binge drink
- The average age of death from liver disease is 59 years, compared to 82-84 years for heart and lung disease or stroke.

These figures come after the first "[Big Drink Debate](#)" at the Hazlitt Arts Centre in Maidstone this week.

People were asked to have their say about drinking habits and the impact they have on their health and lives and representatives from the NHS, police and the alcohol industry answered questions and responded to comments.

The Department of Health (DOH) have published a letter [‘SITREP reporting and operational problems’](#) to strategic health authority chief executives on the importance of appropriate and timely SITREP (situation reports) reporting.

Public have published an article ‘the art of stress management’ which argues that it is a proven fact that during a recession when budgets go down, stress levels go up. In addition, the squeeze on the public purse is putting pressure of another kind on senior managers who are forced to pass on the bad news about budget cuts and job losses, so that many are many are feeling the strain.

(See:

[The art of stress management](#)

[A survey indicates that the amount spent on employing NHS managers has risen by a quarter, or £78 million, in the past two years.](#) Pulse, a magazine for GPs, found that projected spending on management salaries has increased by 25 per cent between 2007/08 and 2009/10 in primary care trusts, which look after community services. It was up from £312million to £390million. But the true figure is likely to be far higher, because only a third - 55 - of the 152 trusts responded.

Health Secretary Andy Burnham says that funds could be ‘re-prioritised’ from health research and development to pay the costs of the [Social Bill](#), which is due to be published next Wednesday. The Bill forms one of the central planks of Labour's pre-election legislation and will, from next October, guarantee free home care for around 400,000 elderly and disabled people and those recently discharged from hospital at a cost to the public purse of £670 million a year.

Other publications released by the Department's research team include a [report on risky behaviours](#) engaged in by young people – looking at smoking, truancy, drinking, graffiti, shoplifting, vandalism and fighting (half of all students have engaged in one of these by the time they are 16); and a [literature review on Early Years Learning and Development](#).

The Department has also produced a briefing on inter-agency training for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This is mandated by Central Government, but there is no ring-fenced funding, and [the briefing](#) looked at the costs and the outcomes of training.

The cost of Inter-agency training was found to be good in comparison with commercial training, and the opportunity to learn together is highly valued, but does rely on the good-will of partners and is vulnerable to cuts in funding.

The Personal Care at Home Bill was formerly introduced to the House of Commons together with the publication of an [impact assessment](#) and the launch of a consultation.

The impact assessment accompanying the Bill has shown that the Government is unsure if the benefits of the scheme will outweigh the costs, according to a report in this week's LGC.

The Health Committee's Social Care inquiry continues today with evidence from organisations involved with helping the elderly and people with disabilities. [Details](#) on the Parliament website.

(Also see:

[Ministers unsure over Free Homecare Cost](#)

[Personal Care at Home Bill introduced to Parliament](#)

The House of Lords Committee on Human Rights has published [‘Legislative Scrutiny: Child Poverty Bill’](#) which is intended to enshrine in law the Government's commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020.

A survey carried out by YouGov on behalf of the Department of Health (DOH) indicates that almost one in five people are exercising to ‘make up’ for a heavy bout of drinking. In addition, the poll also found that one in five people drinks more than double the NHS recommended amounts per day.

The YouGov survey of 2,421 adults for the campaign found nearly 60% of drinkers in England exercise regularly.

Professor Ian Gilmore of the Royal College of Physicians argues ‘this is a higher proportion of exercisers than surveys have found in the population at large, but campaigners say there is no point undertaking a workout to compensate for alcohol consumption - as one in five said they did.’

(See also:

[Heavy drinkers try to burn off booze with exercise](#)

[Exercise ‘no cure’ for heavy drinking damage](#)

[Know Your Limits campaign warns of hidden damage from alcohol](#)

The Department for Health (DOH) has announced that Professor Hamid Ghodse will be the inaugural Chair of the [International Health Advisory Board](#).

The new Board will support the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson in his capacity as Chief Medical Advisor to the UK Government on areas of international health, and the organisation's work will include acting as a source of independent, expert advice, establishing a

network of expertise and raising the profile of the work on international health undertaken with the Department of Health.

The Department of Health (DOH) has issued guidance [‘Applying the NHS Performance Framework to Mental Health Trusts’](#) which informs mental health trusts, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) of the criteria against which mental health performance will be assessed. The document should be read alongside Implementing the NHS Performance Framework.

(See also:

[NHS Performance Framework: Implementation guidance](#)

Medway Council and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have combined to help business benefit from a new and innovative support programme [‘Estates Excellence’](#) which addresses the health and safety needs of organisations on industrial estates in the Medway area.

The scheme enables advisors to visit business and offer free training for managers and workers for those organisations in chosen priority topics including 'Get it Right' and 'Get Efficient' and reducing red tape, as well as themed activities like 'Fit for work'.

The Project Director of Estates Excellence, Heather Bryant said 'We welcome the involvement of Medway Council in this wide-reaching project. There has been a great response from business to this work, and we aim to help all eligible Medway businesses as well as many others in the coming weeks'

Five high street restaurant chains have set out how they intend to take further steps to [provide their customers with healthier choices](#) and build on the commitment to make eating out a healthy option.

Burger King, KFC, McDonald's, the Subway chain and Wimpy will continue to support the Food Standard Agency (FSA) in efforts to make eating out healthy by reducing salt, saturated fat and energy intakes, and to provide more healthier choices and information for consumers:

Key commitments includes:-

Calorie labelling: Four companies took part in the Agency's initiative to introduce calorie labelling at point of choice or ran their own trial. Wimpy made a long-term commitment and rolled out calorie labelling nationwide.

Salt reduction: All companies report salt reductions across core menu items. For example, the Subway chain achieved an average 33% reduction in salt levels across its range of core products; Wimpy extended its salt reduction programme to all 50 of its core ingredients; and KFC launched lower salt versions of its Crispy Strips and Boneless Bites, with 15% salt reductions, and tortillas meeting FSA salt targets.

Sat fat reduction: McDonald's introduced a range of smaller premium menu items, and Burger King reduced the saturated fat content of its oil by 11%. Saturated fat reduction also features as a key area for investigation and action by the companies in 2010.

Clair Baynton, Head of Nutrition at the FSA, said: 'The fact that these well-known companies are updating their commitments is good news for those of us who eat out and good news for public health. We welcome the efforts made by these companies to help all of us enjoy healthier diets.'

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have released a statistical report [‘Homelessness prevention and release’](#) which indicate that 2008 -9, 130,000 households in England were prevented from becoming homeless or helped to find alternative accommodation by their local council.

The Homelessness Prevention and Relief statistics have been collated to highlight the excellent preventative work being carried out by local authorities and their partners, in addition to the

action they are already taking to meet their legal obligations to help people under the homelessness legislation.

This work is also backed by £170m homelessness funding from central Government, councils in England are working in partnership with the voluntary sector and others to provide support for families and individuals who are at risk of becoming homeless.

(See also:

[Homelessness Prevention and Relief: England 2008/09](#)

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) have released a report ['HIV in the United Kingdom: 2009 Report'](#) which indicates that the number of people living with HIV in the UK continues to rise, with an estimated 83,000 infected at the end of 2008, of whom over a quarter (27%) were unaware of their infection. The report argues that this number will continue to rise as people with HIV live longer on effective therapy

(See:

[HIV in the United Kingdom: 2009 report: key findings](#)

[A third of HIV patients diagnosed late](#)

The House of Commons Library has published a Standard Note ['Tax relief and childcare'](#) which discusses the introduction of the two current reliefs for employer-provided childcare, and the case that has been made for a wider tax relief. The Note on to look at the announcement by the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, in his speech to the Labour Party conference on 29 September 2009, that the Government would withdraw this relief to fund the extension of free childcare for two year olds.

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