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Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 15 / 9 April 2010

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Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Information

Date of next HOSC meeting: 10 am, 14 May 2010

Location: Council Chamber, Sessions House

Main Agenda Items: The Future of PCT Provider Services and the Use of Community Hospitals

Other Information:

Internal meetings:

The next HOSC Agenda Planning Meeting will be on Thursday 29 April 2010, 10 – 12 in the Darent Room, Sessions House.

There will be a briefing about the Care Quality Commission for HOSC Members on Tuesday 25 May 2010, 10 – 12, Pendragon Room, Invicta House

Department of Health

MOT scans

Following a study and consultation, the Department of Health (DOH) has accepted the recommendations of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE) and announced that companies advertising Computerised Tomography (CT) scans as an 'MOT' for people who have no relevant symptoms but who are anxious to keep one step ahead of possible illnesses, will see the service they provide become clarified in law.

In addition, the DOH will be formally asking the Royal College of Radiologists and the Royal College of Physicians to prepare guidance for practitioners based on the balance of risk and benefit involved in the CT scanning procedures concerned.

See:

[Better protection for MOT scans](#)

[Consultation response to the COMARE 12 Report: recommendations on CT scanning of asymptomatic self-referred individuals](#)

2010 election guidance

The Department of Health (DOH) has sent a guidance letter to all Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) providing NHS Chief Executives with information on handling the General Election period. The letter includes an updated guidance note for NHS organisations and advice on where to direct further queries. A similar letter has been issued today to ALB Chief Executives.

See:

[General election 2010 guidance](#)

Enhance recovery

The Department of Health (DOH) has published guidance '[Delivering enhanced recovery: helping patients to get better sooner after surgery](#)' based on the new approach to preoperative, interoperative and postoperative care of patients undergoing surgery.

Enhanced recovery is transforming NHS elective and cancer care pathways by using a number of evidence based interventions as a model of care enabling patients to recover sooner following surgery. This guide, developed using learning from centres across the UK, provides a starting point to support implementation of enhanced recovery.

Human rights training materials

The Department of Health (DOH) has launched 'Human rights training materials and human rights resources', a suite of training materials designed for use in training sessions for frontline workers - primarily health and social care workers - supporting people with a learning disability.

See:

[Human rights training materials and human rights resources](#)

Housing rights

The Department of Health (DOH) have launched the 'Housing rights ' resource pack to cover many subjects around different housing options available for people with learning disabilities.

See:

[Housing rights resource pack](#)

Swine Flu vaccine

The Department of Health and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) have reached an agreement on the outstanding orders of Swine Flu vaccine.

As part of measures taken to protect the UK population from swine flu, the Government ordered sufficient vaccine to protect the entire population if needed. But as evidence about the swine flu virus developed, experts advised that vaccinating the entire population would no longer be necessary.

See:

[Deal reached on surplus pandemic vaccine](#)

[Unused swine flu doses leave taxpayers facing a £150m loss](#)

The impact of sexual orientation on cancer awareness

The Department of Health (DOH) has produced a report '[Cancer awareness: the impact of sexual orientation](#)' which details the results from a survey of heterosexual, gay, lesbian and bisexual respondents, using the CR-UK Cancer Awareness Measure (CAM). The purpose of the survey was to compare levels of cancer awareness among different sexual orientation groups.

Skipton Fund

The Skipton Fund, the scheme which makes payments to those infected with hepatitis C through contaminated NHS supplied blood, blood products and tissues is to be reviewed early.

The Government announced the commitment to review the fund following Lord Archer of Sandwell's independent inquiry into contaminated blood, but after consultation with Ministers and those infected with hepatitis C, their families and carers, reconsidered the date.

See:

[Government to review the fund for hepatitis C sufferers](#)

2010 / 2011 Valuing People Now delivery plan

The Department of Health (DOH) has published '[Valuing People Now Delivery Plan 2010-11](#)' which sets out the key priorities of this cross government strategy which will improve employment and housing opportunities and better health outcomes for people with learning disabilities and their family carers.

Diagnostics waiting times

The Department of Health (DOH) have published the Diagnostics waiting times and activity data for February 2010.

See:

[Diagnostics](#)

Government

Out of hours services

The House of Commons Health Select Committee has published a report '[The use of overseas doctors in providing out-of-hours services](#)' which argues that changes must be made immediately to improve the vetting system for overseas doctors providing out-of-hours GP care in the UK.

See:

[MPs call for urgent changes to overseas doctors vetting system](#)

[System of vetting foreign medics 'needs improving'](#)

[Vetting of foreign doctors 'will save lives'](#)

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Parliament

Rail safety statistics

The House of Commons Library has produced a Standard Note [‘Rail safety statistics’](#) which discusses trends in rail safety statistics. The Note shows that rail safety in the UK has been improving for a number of years and has continued to do so since the turn of the century.

In 2008 there were four fatalities in train incidents, lower than the seven that occurred in 2000/01. The 10-year average passenger fatality rate has fallen to 0.2 fatalities per billion passenger kilometres in 2008 having begun the century at 0.4 fatalities. Additionally there were fewer broken rails and Signals Passed at Danger in 2008 than was the case in 2000/01.

In 2007 the UK had a lower rate of passenger fatalities per billion passenger kilometres than was seen in total across the European Union and also across the fifteen countries that made up the original European Union.

Other Health Information

Later life

A report from Age Concern [‘Agenda for Later Life 2010’](#) report sets out the change that's needed to transform older people's lives for the better. It reflects a positive, forward-looking vision for our ageing society. It sets out the agenda for later life.

See:

[Agenda for Later Life 2010 report](#)

Workers who are off sick for more than seven days will now be given "Fit Notes" instead of Sick Notes.

Doctors will still be able to say someone is not fit for work, but they will also be able to spell out aspects of [jobs workers can still perform](#). The onus will be on employers to help staff return to work in some capacity. But the British Medical Association says more needs to be done so firms understand their responsibilities.

The overhaul of the sick note system was announced a year ago by government adviser Dame Carol Black, the national director for health and work. She calculated that ill-health was costing the economy £100bn a year.

Hospital closures

Members of the organisation National Voices have supported earlier patient involvement in hospital closures and the re-design of health. In a letter to The Times, the Jeremy Taylor, Chief Executive of National Voices argues that members expect a wave of service changes including hospital closures as the NHS scrabbles to find savings.

Mr. Taylor also said the parties were happy to talk about the need for savings and moving care into the community

See:

[Treat patients and carers as grown-ups](#)

[MPs 'need to be open and honest' over hospital closures](#)

Chlamydia testing

Researchers from St. George's University of London argue that the results of a study indicate that women should be tested for chlamydia every time they have a new sexual partner to cut their chances of inflammatory pelvic disease.

The study of 2,500 students found that annual screening is not enough to prevent cases of pelvic inflammatory disease, which can cause infertility.

In those who were found to have Chlamydia, immediate treatment cut the risk of pelvic disease by 80%. The researchers concluded that most cases of pelvic inflammatory disease were in women who did not have chlamydia when they were tested a year earlier.

See:

[Randomised controlled trial of screening for *Chlamydia trachomatis* to prevent pelvic inflammatory disease: the POPI \(prevention of pelvic infection\) trial](#)
[Chlamydia test after every new partner call](#)

Inherited deafness

Dutch researchers have identified a new genetic fault which may account for some cases of inherited deafness. The research means that parents with the hereditary condition may be able to predict more accurately the chances of passing it on to their children, and eventually contribute to treatments.

See:

[Childhood deafness gene uncovered](#)

Guidance for patients and the public

The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) have launched a new web page that allows patients, carers and members of the public to search for the versions of NICE guidance that are written for them.

See:

[NICE guidance for patients and the public](#)

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