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## Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 21 / 21 May 2010

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### Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Information

**Date of next HOSC meeting:** 10 am, 11 June 2010

**Location:** Council Chamber, Sessions House

**Main Agenda Items:** Accessing Mental Health Services: Adult and Older People's Inpatient Services.

Internal meetings:

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

### Health in Kent

#### 24 hour heart care unit at William Harvey hospital

A new 24 hour heart care unit at the William Harvey hospital, Ashford has put the hospital at the forefront of a new frontline method of treating patients with a pioneering primary angioplasty method to widen blocked arteries, now regarded as the best form of treatment.

East Kent Hospitals trust believes about 500 people in Kent will be treated at the hospital every year, which was chosen because it is no more than 75 minutes away from all Kent postcodes.

See:

[Hospital becomes heart-attack treatment centre for Kent](#)

## Department of Health

### Interim Chief Medical Officer

Professor Dame Sally Davies will take up the role of Chief Medical Officer following the departure of Sir Liam Donaldson at the end of May until a substantive appointment is made, the Department of Health has today announced.

Dame Sally remains Director General of Research and Development and Chief Scientific Adviser for the Department of Health and NHS.

See:

[Interim Chief Medical Officer Appointed](#)

### Chief Medical Officer's Public Health Awards, 2010

The winners of the Chief Medical Officer's Public Health Awards to celebrate the dedication, innovation and passion shown by those working in the public health arena, have been announced by Sir Liam Donaldson, the outgoing Chief Medical Officer. The Gold, Silver and Bronze award medals feature portraits of previous Chief Medical Officers.

'Food Dudes', a Wolverhampton-based project, won the Gold medal which features the first Chief Medical Officer Sir John Simon. The Silver medal, featuring Sir George Godber, went to the Isle of Wight initiative 'Pharmacy Fix'. The Bronze medal, with the portrait of wartime CMO Sir Wilson Jameson, was awarded to national charity 'StreetGames'.

See:

[Food Dudes' wins Gold at Chief Medical Officer's Public Health Awards 2010](#)

### Vital signs monitoring statistics

The Department of Health has released vital signs monitoring statistics report on Primary Care Trust and NHS Trust performance against plans to address selected health priorities relating to the NHS Operating Framework, for the quarter ending 31 March 2010.

See:

[Vital Signs Monitoring](#)

[Vital Signs Monitoring Return - quarterly update](#)

### Department of Health statistical indicators on breastfeeding, smoking and obesity.

The Department of Health (DOH) has released statistics for the quarter ending March 2010 and revised data for quarters ending June 2009, September 2009 and December 2009

The key points from the latest release are:

- The breastfeeding initiation rate in England was 72.7% in 2009/10, which is slightly higher than 2008/09 (71.7%) and 2007/08 (69.9%).
- The prevalence of breastfeeding in England at 6-8 weeks at 2009/10 Quarter 4 was 45.2% of infants due a 6-8 week check; and 48.2% of those infants whose breastfeeding status was known.
- The percentage of mothers smoking at delivery in England was 14.1% in 2009/10, which is slightly lower than 2008/09 (14.4%) and 2007/08 (14.4%).

See:

[Statistical release. Smoking at delivery, GP recorded smoking and GP recorded obesity \(BMI\), quarter 4, 2009/10](#)

[Statistical release. Breastfeeding initiation and prevalence at 6 to 8 weeks, Quarter 4, 2009/10](#)

[Statistical Press Release: Indicators on breastfeeding, smoking and obesity](#)

## **Statistics indicating how many new mothers initiate breastfeeding and how many do not**

The Department of Health (DOH) has published statistics from the primary care trusts showing how many mothers initiate breastfeeding and how many do not.

The data is submitted to the DOH through the web-based data collection, and the indicator is included in tier 2 of the NHS Vital Signs performance framework.

See:

[Breastfeeding initiation and prevalence at 6 to 8 weeks, Quarter 4, 2009/10](#)

## **Department of Health response to the WHO report on the link between mobile phone use and cancer**

Responding to a report by the World Health Organisation on the link between mobile phone use and brain cancer, a Department of Health (DOH) spokesperson said: 'The Department welcomes Interphone's findings that there is no association between mobile phone use (up to 12 years) and cancers of the brain and nervous system and that the overall study supports the UK's 2006 findings.

See:

[Response to a report by the World Health Organisation on the link between mobile phone use and brain cancer](#)  
[Electromagnetic fields and public health: mobile phones](#)

## **Government**

### **NHS cuts**

The BBC reports that The NHS is bracing itself for a 'brutal' round of cuts - and staff fear they are in the firing line. The BBC has learned a £2bn pot is being set aside in England to pay for one-off costs, such as redundancies and redeployments, to help fund the cuts, when managers were told by the Department of Health before the election to hold the money back.

Several major hospitals have already said posts will go and more announcements are expected soon.

See:

[Fears jobs may go as NHS sets aside £2bn 'change' fund](#)

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### **Financial incentives could be used to encourage healthier lifestyles**

The possibility of using financial incentives to encourage healthier lifestyles is being explored by the NHS, with several areas already piloting their own schemes, with encouraging results.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) which advises the NHS in England and Wales, believes that such initiatives may help tackle obesity, smoking and drinking, and described rewarding lifestyle changes as an "idea whose time has come". However, NICE also wants to gather more evidence before a formal recommendation.

See:

[NHS explores paying people to become healthier](#)

## **Parliament**

### **Coalition Government promise to re-vamp the NHS**

In terms of the NHS, the coalition Government policy document reflects a merging of policies in the promise to revamp the health service and 'drive up standards'.

Key issues in the policy document which covers this Parliament, is the decision to set up an independent board to run the health service, elect patients onto trusts and give people choice over

which GP they want. In addition, a special fund will also be set aside to pay for cancer drugs patients are struggling to get prescribed.

See:

[NHS revamp to 'push up standards'](#)

## Care Quality Commission

### Care Quality Commission appoints national advisors

The Care Quality Commission has announced that two experienced advisors, Bill Hodson and Barbara Laing have been appointed to add experience and expertise in adult social care and to help develop the Commission's relationship with the health sector.

Bill Hodson has been appointed as national advisor on adult social care, working at both policy and operational levels. He will provide advice on best practice, contribute to policy decisions and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders and other organisations.

Barbara Laing is helping the commission in the run-up to the registration of adult social care providers under the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

See:

[Care Quality Commission brings in extra advice on adult social care](#)

### Care Quality Commission survey on the views of adult inpatients

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) national survey of the views of adult inpatients looks at the experiences of people who have been admitted to hospital and had at least one overnight stay.

The questions in the survey cover the issues that patients consider important in their care, and as the survey offers an insight into their experiences, this information is used in the assessment of NHS trusts.

For the complete data see the CQC webpage:

[Inpatient services](#)

See also:

[Big improvements in hospital cleanliness and mixed-sex accommodation, finds major NHS survey](#)

[Overall patient experience measure updated to include results from the 2009 Inpatient Survey](#)

### Changes to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment of adult social care services

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has announced important changes to their assessment of adult social care services and are working closely with the adult social care sector in developing a new system to replace quality ratings (star ratings) for registered social care services.

See:

[Important changes to CQC's assessment of adult social care services](#)

## Other Health Information

### US researchers indicate that overweight adults could be at risk of dementia

A US clinical trial of adults indicates that people who carry a lot of weight around their middle and have high levels of visceral fat surrounding vital organs, are at increased risk of developing dementia, because they also present a small brain volume, an associated factor that has been linked with dementia.

The researchers from Boston University School of Medicine conducted a trial of adults with an average age of 60, including 70% of women. They measured body mass index, waist circumference and used scans to look at the amount of abdominal fat. The results showed that as BMI increased, brain volume decreased - a finding that has been reported in other studies.

See:

['Beer belly' linked to Alzheimer's disease](#)

### **First synthetic living cell**

Scientists in the US have succeeded in developing the first synthetic living cell by constructing a bacterium's 'genetic software' and transplanting it into a host cell. The resulting microbe then looked and behaved like the species 'dictated' by the synthetic DNA.

The advance, published in Science, has been hailed as a scientific landmark, and the researchers hope eventually to design bacterial cells that will produce medicines and fuels and even absorb greenhouse gases, but critics argue that there are dangers posed by synthetic organisms.

See:

['Artificial life' breakthrough announced by scientists](#)

### **Post natal depression in men**

Researchers in America, looking at medical literature, argue that as many as 1 in 10 new fathers experience post-natal depression, triggered by lack of sleep, new responsibilities or supporting a wife with post natal depression, yet most cases go undetected and untreated

### **Born HIV Free campaign**

The Global Fund has launched a campaign 'The Born HIV free' campaign to try to enlist public support to ensure no more children are born with HIV by 2015. HIV can be passed from mother to child during pregnancy, labour or breast-feeding

The Born HIV Free campaign is argued to come at a critical time, as the fund seeks donations of up to \$20bn over the next three years, and recognises this will be a battle, as governments deal with the aftermath of the Greek financial crisis.

See:

[Pledge to stop mother-to-baby HIV spread](#)

### **New Government policies and the elderly**

Age UK looks at what the new Government's proposed new policies will mean for the elderly as David Cameron and Nick Clegg's new coalition government begins its historic new term.

See:

[What the new Government means for us](#)

### **Trend to defer retirement**

A poll by Wriglesworth Research found that more than two-thirds of respondents thought they would keep working when they were old enough to draw a pension, while 10% said they thought they would never retire fully.

The trend to defer retirement has been labelled "part-tirement" by the group, who said it was driven by a desire for freedom and flexibility, as well as financial security.

The findings indicate that 12% of those surveyed said they thought they would work on past 70, while just under a third planned to stop somewhere between 65 and 70 years old. When asked

what kind of work they would like to do, the majority of people (61%) said they would prefer to be self employed, while 44% opted for retail and 27% for leisure or hospitality.

See:

[Two-thirds to ignore retirement age](#)

### **End of life care discussions**

The General Medical Council (GMC) are to stress in new guidelines, that doctors discuss end-of-life care with the terminally ill well in advance of their final days. The General Medical Council, the profession's regulator, says early discussions can help avoid misunderstandings and conflict, and argues that doctors should start from the assumption that life should be prolonged, although not at any cost. Opportunities should also be sought to discuss organ donation.

See:

[Doctors urged to discuss dying days care](#)

[End of life care - development of the guidance](#)

### **Food and diseases**

A study by Harvard University suggests that eating processed meat such as sausages increases the likelihood of heart disease, while red meat does not seem to be as harmful.

The team looked at studies involving over one million people and found just 50g of processed meat a day also raised the risk of diabetes. But there was no such risk from eating even twice as much unprocessed meat, such as beef, lamb or pork.

See:

['Sausage not steak' increases heart disease risk](#)

### **Causes of urinary tract infections**

Scientists from the University of Hong Kong have found that urinary tract infections are becoming increasingly hard to treat because of emerging resistance to current antibiotic drugs. They argue that the problem is caused by the overuse of antibiotics in the farming industry which enter the food chain.

The researchers, whose findings are published in the *Journal of Microbiology* also found evidence suggesting resistance genes are being passed from animals to humans in this way.

See:

[Urinary tract infections 'resistant to antibiotics'](#)

### **Smallpox vaccine and HIV**

Experts in America argue that the worldwide eradication of smallpox may, inadvertently, have helped spread HIV infection, because their evidence suggests that the vaccine used to against smallpox offered some protection against the Aids virus.

The researchers said trials indicated the smallpox jab interferes with how well HIV multiplies. But also add that it is too early to recommend smallpox vaccine for fighting HIV.

See:

[Smallpox demise linked to spread of HIV infection](#)

[WHO marks 30th anniversary of smallpox eradication](#)

### **Survey reveals parents' worries about their children**

A survey by YouGov for the charity Parentline Plus and Living Streets indicates that parents worry more about their children being murdered than much more widespread health problems such as obesity.

The findings, in the YouGov poll of 1,244 parents, contrast with data showing the risk of a child being killed by a stranger is a million to one. The risk of severe health problems for children due to lack of exercise is one in three, figures have suggested. In addition, data indicates that walk to school rates have fallen to a new low of 48%

See:

[Parents 'more worried about murder than obesity' threat](#)

### **Nano-trechnology**

A team of American and Chinese researchers have revealed the smallest man-made pump ever built - the size of a human red blood cell, which can be powered in the human body using ultra-fast laser pulses to create tunnels in glass rods thinner than a human hair. As the glass walls of these tunnels are capable of conducting electricity, the scientists powered their minuscule fluid pump by 'switching' this conduction on and off.

The initiative is described in the journal *Nature Nanotechnology*, and the developers say the pump could be used to inject tiny amounts of a drug into single cells or to take samples from cells that may be diseased or infected.

See:

[Smallest man-made pump revealed](#)

### **WHO campaign 'Save lives, clean your hands'**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) 'Save lives, clean your hands' campaign invites healthcare workers, hospitals and organizations around the world to actively promote improved hand hygiene to reduce infections. In a podcast, WHO's Director-General Dr Margaret Chan explains how a simple procedure can significantly reduce superbug infections and thus improve the health of patients.

See:

[Clean hands can prevent the spread of disease](#)

[Clean Care is Safer Care](#)

### **World Blood Donor Day 14 June 2010**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) have chosen 14 June as 'World Blood Donor day', the day to recognize the millions of people who save lives and improve the health of others by donating blood. The global event will be hosted by the Spanish and Catalonian Health Care Authorities, the Spanish and Catalonian donor associations and the Spanish Red Cross.

The Day highlights the need to regularly give blood to prevent shortages in hospitals and clinics, particularly in developing countries where quantities are very limited. Out of the 80 countries with low blood donation rates (fewer than 10 donations per thousand people), 79 are developing nations.

See:

[World Blood Donor Day](#)

### **Report 'My name is not dementia'**

The Alzheimer Society has published a new report 'My name is not dementia: people with dementia discuss quality of life indicators' which focuses on quality of life in dementia. The report presents the findings of the first stage of this project.

See also:

[My name is not dementia](#)

[My name is not dementia: people with dementia discuss quality of life indicators](#)

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