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## Health Overview and Scrutiny Community Bulletin No. 07 / 12 February 2010

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### **Proposed statutory breaks for parents / carers of young disabled people.**

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) have issued a '[Consultation on Draft Regulations, and Associated Statutory Guidance, for Local Authorities to Provide Short Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children and Young People](#)' which aims to require local authorities in England to provide provision for parents or carers of disabled children and young people to have respite breaks.

For all the consultation documents:-

See:

[Consultation on Draft Regulations, and Associated Statutory Guidance, for Local Authorities to Provide Short Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children and Young People.](#)

**Launch Date:** Monday 1 February 2010

**Closing Date:** Monday 26 April 2010

### **The report *Hospital care at home* suggests that providers and commissioners can use home-based hospital care to achieve care objectives.**

A report from Healthcare at Home '*Hospital care at home*' argues that the NHS is struggling to cope with increased hospital demand in the face of dwindling public spending and the NHS could potentially both save money and improve the quality of care by treating more people outside hospital and in their own homes.

For access to the report 'Hospital Care at Home' see the [Healthcare](#) website.

See also:

[NHS told push on home care could save £1bn](#)

## **Draft guidance from NICE denies people with advanced liver cancer a new drug on the NHS.**

Under draft guidance to be published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) a new drug which would potentially help people with advanced liver cancer prolong the life of patients for whom other treatments no longer work, will not be available on the NHS because of the expense.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (Nice) argue that the £31,000-a-year medication, called everolimus, or afinitor, is not cost effective.

But campaigners said that the decision discriminates against patients with rarer cancers, for whom it is more costly to develop treatments.

See:

[Terminally ill patients 'being penalised by Nice for having rare conditions'](#)  
[Cancer patients denied life-extending drug](#)

## **Childcare cost survey 2009.**

The Daycare Trust has published the eighth annual childcare cost survey '[Childcare costs survey 2009](#)' which indicates that nursery costs, out of school childcare costs and childminder costs continue to rise generally in the UK.

The report also indicates that parents also continue to report a lack of affordable childcare in their area, and in addition, Family Information Services report that there is still a lack of sufficient childcare to meet demand in many areas, particularly childcare for disabled children and children aged 12 and over.

See also:

[Childcare costs surveys](#)

## **Internet safety**

A new Ofsted report '[The safe use of technologies](#)' argues that students are safest using the internet when they are trusted to manage their own risk as they have a better knowledge and understanding of how to stay safe when using new technologies.

Ofsted argue that "managed" systems are systems that have fewer inaccessible sites than 'locked' systems and so require pupils to take more responsibility for their own safety. In addition 'locked' systems make many websites inaccessible and although this ensures pupils' safety in school it does not encourage the pupils to take responsibility for their actions or prepare them for dealing with systems that are not locked.

See:

[Students safest using the internet when they are trusted to manage their own risk](#)  
[New internet safety campaign: 'Click Clever, Click Safe' launched](#)  
[EU Safer Internet Day 2010](#)

## **New National Diet and Nutrition Survey, 2008/2009.**

The report from the first year of the new [National Diet Nutrition Survey \(NDNS\): headline results from year 1 \(2008/2009\)](#) suggest that the overall picture of the diet and nutrition of the UK population is broadly similar to previous surveys in the NDNS series carried out between 1992 and 2001, although there are suggestions of positive changes. But, the findings do not identify any new or emerging nutritional problems in the general population.

The NDNS is commissioned by the FSA and the Department of Health to provide robust, nationally representative data on the dietary habits and nutritional status the UK population.

The NDNS rolling programme is a continuous cross-sectional survey of the food consumption, nutrient intakes and nutritional status of people aged 1.5 years and older, living in private households in the UK. It is carried out in all four countries of the UK and is designed to be representative of the UK population.

See:

[National Diet and Nutrition Survey](#)  
[An insight into the nation's diet](#)

## **A career in social care**

A new Department of Health (DOH) campaign focuses on the difference a career in social care can make, and aims to show how rewarding a career in social care can be, to encourage individuals to consider social care as a career option.

Over 1.5 million people are employed across the adult social care sector in England, and as many as 200,000 jobs in the sector are expected to be advertised in the coming year, based on existing trends.

Care Services Minister Phil Hope argues that 'Social care has a huge variety of roles that are challenging and rewarding. Jobs range from home care assistants, to work within residential care homes and there is a wide range of positions working with older people, children, families and people with disabilities'.

See:

[Get more out of life with a career in social care](#)

## **There was a statement on 9 February 2010 from Health Minister Mike O'Brien on medicine supply.**

[Minister for Health](#), Mike O'Brien said: 'For months I have been concerned about the potential impact on patients' health of a small number of medicines being sold abroad by speculators. It is unacceptable that people have had to wait longer than they should have to get their medication.'

'I have made it very clear that it is a very few unscrupulous people that are putting profits before patients. Rather than selling drugs to NHS patients as they should, they are selling them abroad for greater profit.

"I am pleased that the different parts of the supply chain have come together to work with the Government to tackle this and the joint guidance we have already developed makes clear the legal and ethical duties on the supply chain as well as their consequences.

"The Government believes that this spirit of collaboration is the best way to further minimise the risks to patients. That is why the Secretary of State and I have called a summit in early March 2010 with all those organisations involved in the supply of medicines to better understand the issues involved and what might be done to address them.'

## **NHS' progress in tackling the waiting times for diagnostic tests like scans.**

The Department for Health (DOH) has published data which shows the [NHS' progress in tackling the waiting times for diagnostic tests](#) like scans. The monthly data published today gives the waiting times for 15 key diagnostic tests carried out in the NHS, and will help the NHS in delivering the 18 week maximum wait from GP to treatment, including all diagnostic tests, by end 2008.

Main findings this month are:

- The number of patients waiting over 6 weeks for any one of the 15 key diagnostics tests at the end of December 2009 was 5,400, an increase of 2,300 (77.3%) from November 2009, but a decrease of 400 (7.2%) from December 2008.
- The number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for any one of the 15 key diagnostics tests at the end of December 2009 was 200, compared to 147 in November 2009, but a fall of 880 (81.5%) from December 2008.

## **Dental Commissioning statistics for the quarter ending December 2009.**

The [Dental Commissioning](#) data shows the number of Units of Dental Activity (UDAs) commissioned as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009.

Key findings this quarter:

- All 152 Commissioners (PCTs and Care Trusts) returned data.
- 88.3 million UDAs have been commissioned as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010.
- This represents an increase of 1.4 million (1.6 %) on the UDAs commissioned as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

See also:

[Dental Contracts statistics](#)

## **Response to the consultation '*The Health and Social Care Act 2008 code of practice for health and adult social care on the prevention and control of infection and related guidance, and prevention and control of infection in care homes*'.**

The Department of Health (DOH) has published the response to the consultation '*The Health and Social Care Act 2008 code of practice for health and adult social care on the prevention and control of infection and related guidance, and prevention and control of infection in care homes*'.

The public consultation on The Health and Social Care Act Code of Practice for health and social care on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance and a supporting document on prevention and control of infection in care homes ran between 13 August 2009 and 6 November 2009.

These responses provide an overview of the consultation process; the responses received, and the Department's reply and actions taken

### **The CQC calls for more joined-up and person-centred care.**

The Commission has published its first [State of Care report](#) in which it finds that, whilst services have improved, reform is essential due to rising demand and increased financial pressures. The Commission's chair has said that there needs to be a care service which puts the needs of individuals and carers at the centre rather than a one-size fits all approach.

There were concerns raised about staff training and keeping people safe falling behind the other areas of the service.

An [Executive Summary](#) and a [Summary Booklet](#) are also available.

Also see:

[‘CQC reports Pockets of Poor Performance’](#)

### **People living in the richest neighbourhoods in England can expect to live seven years longer than the poorest neighbourhoods.**

The Marmot Review on health inequalities, [Fair Society Healthy Lives](#), has been published today and it also highlights the fact that poorer people are also more likely to suffer from a disability.

The main recommendations include:-

- Focusing public spending on early years – what happens in these times can have a lifelong effect on health, education and economic status.
- Building closer links between families, schools and the local community – the former is found to have the most influence on educational attainment
- Insuring that everyone has a high enough income to enable them to live a healthy life

It also calls for councils to have a greater role in tackling the inequalities and that the problem had to be tackled from a long-term view. Sir Michael Marmot has been impressed by council efforts, but says that monitoring is essential to show that these are working.

A range of [overview documents](#) are also available from the UCL website.

Also see:

[‘Poorest in England live 7 Years less on average’](#)

[‘Councils pivotal in reducing Inequalities’](#)

[Government response](#)

[‘Healthy Living is cut by 17 years for Poorest in Britain’](#)

### **The National Pandemic Flu service has been closed down.**

Fewer than 5,000 people per week now use the service which was set up so that patients could get hold of the antiviral drugs without needing to see a doctor. Health officials have said that the service could be re-started within seven days if the need changes, but only 5 million doses of the drugs available (around 5%) have actually been dispensed.

See:

[‘Swine Flu drugs ordering service is closed down’](#)

**Andrew Lansley has said that the Conservative Party would bypass local authorities and continue to channel funding through Primary Care Trusts.**

The Conservative health spokesman was speaking to the LGC and he said that councils would still have more control over the spending of the public health budget as the team managing the money would be appointed jointly by the PCTs and the Councils. This budget would be at least 4% of the total NHS spending.

See:

[‘Tories: No Council Control of Public Health Budgets’](#)

### **Health and social care reform**

The Prime Minister delivered a speech on health and social care reform at the health think tank the King’s Fund on Monday, February 8 2010

See:

[Transcript of speech on health and social care](#)

[Towards a national care service](#)

[The King's Fund response to Gordon Brown's speech on cancer and social care guarantees](#)

**See also:**

**Talks to come up with a cross-party agreement over funding social care have collapsed.**

Andrew Lansley, Norman Lamb and Andy Burnham had been having private talks, but these have fallen away after accusations of political point-scoring.

See:

[‘Acrimony after Collapse of Secret Talks’](#)

**See also:**

**In a letter to The Times, more than 70 leading councillors, across all three political parties, who are involved in the delivery of social care policies have warned that Government plans to provide free home care for the elderly are flawed.**

The letter [describes this key electoral pledge as ill conceived](#) and likely to put considerable pressure on the social services system and intensifies the criticism of the Personal Care at Home Bill. Local authorities, already facing multimillion-pound annual efficiency savings, say that the Bill will require each social care provider to find a further £3 million to £10 million.

Cllr Graham Gibbens, Kent County Council Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, is among those who have signed the [letter](#)

See also,

[Councils' concern at free home care plans](#)

## **Inequality and poor social mobility**

The think tank Demos has published a report [‘Wealth of opportunity’](#). The report argues that we live in one of the most unequal societies in the developed world, and in the last two decades inequality appears to have worsened and social mobility has stalled.

The report argues that such striking levels of inequality are a huge barrier, and also highlights the clear link between inequality and poor social mobility, where access to resources affects equality of opportunity. The report argues that where such inequality is reflected in the education system, where a poor child is only half as likely as a better-off classmate to leave school with five good GCSEs, the extent of inequality of outcomes and opportunities is only too evident.

## **Cycles of recurrent poverty**

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has produced a paper *‘Cycles of poverty, unemployment and low pay’* which argues that families can move in and out of poverty, with some of them becoming trapped in a cycle.

The report summarises the findings of four projects about recurrent poverty and the low-pay/no-pay cycle examines relevant current UK policy and practice and suggests ways to create longer-lasting routes out of poverty.

See:

[Cycles of poverty, unemployment and low pay](#)

[Cycles of poverty, unemployment and low pay: summary](#)

## **House of Commons report on the benefits system.**

The House of Commons Work and Pension select Committee have published a report [‘Decision making and appeals in the benefits system’](#) which concludes that the vast majority of decisions DWP makes are accepted by claimants and lead to the right benefits being paid on time to those who are eligible. However, whilst the 1998 reforms can be measured as successful in as far as the Department has met all but one of its targets for payment accuracy and clearance rates, the report notes that the level of official error in the benefits system has increased substantially since 2000–01.

See also:

[MPs call for a Welfare Commission to create a fairer benefits system](#)

## **National Quality Board Annual Report**

The Department of Health (DOH) has published [‘National Quality Board annual report’](#) which sets out the many ways in which the Board has worked over the last year to support frontline staff to improve quality and to ensure the health system is aligned around quality.

## **Without real reform child poverty will only continue to rise**

The think tank the Centre for Social Reform has underlined the Save the Children's latest report on child poverty which revealed that the number of children living in severe poverty in the UK actually increased between 2004/05 and 2007/08, and argue that and this figure is only likely to have got worse with the recession.

See:

[Child Poverty in Context](#)

[Making Poverty History: A Short History](#)

## **Variation on trauma care in England**

The National Audit Office (NAO) has published a report on '*Major trauma care in England*' arguing that there is unacceptable variation in major trauma care in England depending upon where and when people are treated.

For the report and summary

See:

[Major trauma care in England](#)

See also:

[NHS Confederation statement on National Audit Office major trauma care report](#)

## **Statistics for cancelled operations**

The Department of Health (DOH) has published statistics for *NHS cancelled operations, quarter ending 31 December 2009* which includes data for England, Strategic Health Authorities, and NHS Trusts.

See:

[Cancelled Operations](#)

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