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Consultation on options for improving information on the labels of alcoholic drinks to support consumers to make healthier choices in the UK.

The Department of Health (DOH) has launched '[Consultation on options for improving information on the labels of alcoholic drinks to support consumers to make healthier choices in the UK](#)' to consider how best to improve unit and health information for consumers on alcohol labels, whether through a renewed and strengthened voluntary agreement or a mandatory requirement through legislation under the Food Safety Act. The consultation seeks the views of alcohol producers and other stakeholders.

In May 2007 the Government announced its voluntary agreement with the alcohol industry to introduce, by the end of 2008, labels on the majority of alcoholic drinks containers showing unit and other health information, including advice to women on alcohol and pregnancy.

A report was published, following the first stage of an independent market survey conducted by CCFRA (Campden & Chorleywood Food Research Association) in March 2008, which showed the extent to which the elements of the labelling regime had been implemented.

In April 2009 a second stage monitoring survey was conducted. This survey found that the Government's expectation that a majority of labels should be covered by the end of 2008 was a long way from being achieved.

See:

[Monitoring Implementation of Alcohol Labelling Regime](#)

[Stage 2 \(including advice to women on alcohol and pregnancy\)](#)

[Drinks industry must do better on labelling](#)

Launch date 15 February 2010.

Closing date for responses 9 May 2010.

Consultation on guidance of looked-after children.

The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) has launched a consultation [‘The physical and emotional health and wellbeing of looked-after children’](#) which sets out preliminary guidance for all those who have a direct or indirect role in, and responsibility for, promoting the quality of life of looked-after children and young people.

See:

[Looked after children: consultation on the draft guidance](#)

The consultation began on 15 February and ends 14 April 2010

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has opened a consultation to produce new guidelines to improve care for pregnant women with complex social factors.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is developing guidance to help the NHS provide better and more effective antenatal services for pregnant women faced with difficult social circumstances.

The guidelines will aim to focus on helping teenagers, recent immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, those who misuse drugs, and those who experience domestic abuse as these factors have been consistently linked to poor births.

As part of the consultation process, the draft version of the guideline, which contains recommendations for healthcare professionals, has been published on the NICE website, so that stakeholders such as professional and government organisations, patient and carer groups and companies can comment.

The documents for this consultation are available on the [Pregnancy and complex social factors](#) webpage.

See also:

[NICE opens consultation to improve care for pregnant women with complex social factors](#)

Comments must be received by 12 April 2010.

Extraordinary Scientists, Extraordinary Careers, Extraordinary You.

Health Minister Ann Keen has announced that the unique work of healthcare scientists will be recognised in a new book, ‘Extraordinary You – Science in Healthcare’ which profiles the pioneering work of healthcare scientists within the NHS and details their reasons for choosing a career in science to encourage more people to join the profession.

See:

[New book celebrates the extraordinary work of healthcare scientists](#)

The Diabetes National Service Framework (NSF)

A report from the Department of Health (DOH) [‘Six Years On Delivering the Diabetes National Service Framework’](#) reviews the development and delivery of the diabetes service over the six

years since the publication of the Diabetes National Service Framework (NSF), the first ever set of national standards for the treatment and care of people with diabetes.

Change4Life on year on

The Department for Health (DOH) has published [‘Change4Life: one year on: in support of healthy weight, healthy lives’](#) which reports on the first twelve months of the Change4Life campaign which launched to the public in January 2009, and is the social marketing part of the Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives cross-governmental strategy for England.

For the first year, Change4Life focused on those families with children aged 5-11, who were at greatest risk of becoming overweight or obese, and now reports back on performance against the targets set out in the Change4Life marketing strategy, together with what had been learned about using marketing to influence behaviour one year on.

Wireless device allows access to patient records

A new handheld computer, which could improve patient safety, has been developed with the help of nurses, who are now running trials across the NHS in England.

The Panasonic device allows medical staff to access patient records on the ward without having to refer to paper notes, and it could also improve patient safety because it can read barcodes on drugs to ensure the right medication is administered at the right time, so reducing mistakes.

See:

[New handheld computer for nurses could improve NHS patient safety](#)

Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet: statistics, England, 2010

The statistical report [‘Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet: England, 2010’](#) presents a range of information on obesity, physical activity and diet, drawn together from a variety of sources.

The topics covered in the report include:

- Overweight and obesity prevalence among adults and children.
- Physical activity levels among adults and children.
- Trends in purchases and consumption of food and drink and energy intake.
- Health outcomes of being overweight or obese.

For all the reports:-

See:

[Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet: England, 2010](#)

[NHS weight-loss stomach surgery on obese people doubles in two years](#)

Technical Steering Committee (TSC) reports

The Technical Steering Committee, which includes representatives from the four UK health departments, NHS Employers and the BMA, undertakes an agreed programme of work

associated with technical aspects of GP contracts, and has produced a series of reports for the negotiators.

The reports and associated literature are available on the NHS Information Centre web-pages.
See:

[Technical Steering Committee \(TSC\)](#)

Headline figures for episodes, patient admissions, and outpatient appointments, April 2009 – September 2009.

Hospital Episodes Statistics (HES) is a data warehouse containing records of all patients admitted to NHS hospitals in England, and contains details of more than 16 million episodes of inpatient care (finished consultant episodes) and over 76 million outpatient appointments per year. The [‘Provisional Monthly Hospital Episode Statistics for Admitted patient care and outpatient data, April 2009 - September 2009’](#) is published on a monthly basis, but should be regarded as an estimate until the final National Statistics annual publication.

See:

[Statistics for provisional monthly hospital episodes for admitted patient care and outpatient data, April 2009 - September 2009.](#)

[Outpatient coverage and data quality \(DQ\) tables](#)

[Accident and Emergency Attendances in England \(Experimental Statistics\), 2008-09](#)

Access to NHS dental services

A new group has been set up to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Review of NHS Dental Services to improve dental services for patients. The final report of the Review, provided recommendations on improving oral health, increasing access and ensuring high quality dental care for patients. The implementation board, which includes Professor Jimmy Steele who led the review, is now inviting dentists and Primary Care Trusts to trial innovative ways of delivering services to improve treatment for patients by creating a system focussed on outcomes, and will look at a range of issues, including:

- increasing access to NHS dentists.
- introducing patient registration.
- measuring quality as well as quantity of treatment.
- encouraging dentists to carry out more preventative work.

See:

[Dental board taking forward Steele Review recommendations](#)

[Dentistry review](#)

Health Secretary Andy Burnham has called for a cross-party conference to discuss the [funding of care for the elderly](#) in England.

However, Conservative spokesman Andrew Lansley as said his party would only attend if Labour plans for a £20,000 "death tax" were scrapped.

Teenage attitudes to violence and abuse in relationships.

The Home Secretary Alan Johnson has launched a powerful new advertising campaign which aims to challenge the attitudes of teenagers towards abusive relationships, and violence and abuse in relationships, and tackle such attitudes towards abuse at an early age, before patterns

of violence can occur. The adverts send a strong message to 13 to 18 year olds, highlighting the signs and consequences of abuse, and challenging them to stop abusive behaviour or seek help

The campaign, funded by the Home Office and Department of Health, is the first part of a long-term communications plan announced in the '[Together we can end violence against women and girls strategy](#)', launched in November 2009. It is part of the strategy's wider work which aims to prevent violence occurring and is just one example of the government's action to tackle violence and challenge attitudes that this kind of abuse is acceptable.

See:

[Abuse in teenage relationships tackled with new campaign](#)

Quality Accounts toolkit

The Department of Health has published '[Quality Accounts Toolkit: Advisory guidance for providers of NHS Services producing Quality Accounts for the year 2009 / 2010](#)' which is an interactive document, intended to be used on-line for NHS providers to assist with the production and publication of their Quality Accounts in 2010. The toolkit features best practice guidance and useful tools based on the findings from the Quality Reporting process in 2009 and discussions with stakeholders.

Institute of Fiscal Studies paper which develops a model for the study of treatment response with social interactions

The Institute of Fiscal Studies has published a paper '[Identification of treatment response with social interactions](#)' which aims to study identification of treatment response in settings with social interactions, where personal outcomes may vary with the treatment of others. Social interactions are common within households, schools, workplaces, and communities and the paper develops a formal language for study of treatment response with social interactions, and uses it to obtain new findings on identification of potential outcome distributions.

NHS cancelled operations, quarter ending 31 December 2009.

The Department of Health (DOH) has published 'NHS cancelled operations, quarter ending 31 December 2009' which indicates the number of last minute cancelled operations for non clinical reasons and, of those, the number subsequently re-admitted within 28 days.

See:

[Cancelled Operations](#)

Mary Seacole Scholarship Awards Review.

The Department of Health (DOH) has published '[Review of the Mary Seacole Scholarship, February 2010](#)' which demonstrates that the Mary Seacole Scholarship Awards remain fit for purpose and are achieving the intended goal to enhance the development of future leaders in the NHS and improve black and minority ethnic patient experience.

A letter from David Nicholson announces the publication of Regulations on the framework for Quality Accounts.

The Department for Health (DOH) has published the [‘Framework for Quality Accounts in 2010’](#) offering NHS providers a challenge and an opportunity to drive forward local quality improvement plans and to be accountable to the public for this improvement.

Second Millennium Cohort Study

The Centre For Longitudinal Studies (CLS) has published the second volume of Millennium Cohort Study *‘Children of the 21st century (Volume 2): The first five years’* which documents the first five years of life of the children of the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) looks at the their lives and development of the children as they begin formal education and the implications for family policy, and service planning in health and social services.

See:

[Millennium Cohort study](#)

[Guide to Millennium Cohort Study ort Study](#)

[CLS Briefings](#)

[Results \(overview of main findings\)](#)

[Children can fall behind as early as nine months](#)

House of Lords Joint Committee on Human Rights report.

The House of Lords Joint Committee on Human Rights has published [‘Legislative Scrutiny: Children, Schools and Families Bill; Other Bills’](#) which looks at the compatibility of the Bill with the European Convention on Human Rights

There is an inconsistent approach to the provision of mental health services for looked-after young people.

[Ofsted’s new report](#) looking at young people over the age of 16 found that some authorities are providing a good service, but there is no provision in others. It also highlighted an inadequate assessment system on admission to children’s homes which leads to delays in receiving support.

Also see:

[‘Mental Health Services for Looked-After Kids Patchy’](#)

The Institute of Public Policy Research (ippr) has published a paper looking at the idea of integrating health and social care budgets.

Public services have faced growing demands from more assertive users, and public expenditure cuts make this challenge even more complicated. The report, [Integrating Health and Social Care Budgets](#), recommends combining an individual-centred and a system-centred approach.

The Audit Commission warns that the cost of providing social care could double by 2026.

The Commission's new report [*Under Pressure: tackling the financial challenge for councils of an ageing population*](#) says that councils need to look at new ways of providing services for the ageing population as they would be unlikely to afford to continue with the current methods of service provision.

The report gives examples of how telecare can save £1m per year, and gives the following recommendations to councils.

- Update sustainable community strategy, medium-term financial plans and service strategies to prepare for the impact of an ageing population
- Build older people's opinions and experiences into plans for services that deliver what older people need and value, and also deliver better value for money.
- Update commissioning strategies to reflect future roles in preventing, reducing, or delaying, health and social care costs.
- Use unit cost data and benchmarks to identify priorities for short-term change; and aim to reduce residential care costs below the Department of Health's suggested target of 40 per cent of the budget for older people's care services.
- Develop an action plan for medium-term change to meet the financial challenge.
- Work with partners, and older people, to develop an area-wide approach to later life that delivers value for money by integrating prevention, early intervention and care services.
- Use delivery chain analysis to overcome obstacles to joint working in reducing needs for hospital admissions and high-level residential care support.

An [executive summary](#) is also available.

Also see:

[‘Councils unprepared for ageing Society’](#)

[‘Councils urged to innovate on Care Services’](#)

[CQC reaction to the Audit Commission's report, Under Pressure](#)

Hospitals are failing to comply with National Patient Safety Agency safety alerts endangering patients' lives.

Following an FOI request the Department of Health has revealed that over 100 hospitals have not implemented an alert around the safe use of injectable medicines and 50 Trusts have not followed the advice on hand hygiene issued two years ago.

See:

[‘NHS Hospitals ignore Patient Safety Orders’](#)

Think tank report which argues for different methods of improving NHS efficiency and standards.

The think tank Centre Forum has published a report [‘NHS: a liberal blueprint’](#) which challenges some of the current methods used in the NHS for improving efficiency and standards. The report argues that the key to reforming the NHS is to transform it from a centralised bureaucratic service to one that emphasises local accountability. This will enable it both to respond to the needs of local communities and control costs.

See:

[The NHS: a liberal blueprint](#)

Plans to shape NHS services around individual patients.

Health Secretary Andy Burnham has set out measures to shape NHS services around individual patients in plans aim to provide more dialysis at home and chemotherapy in the community so patients will benefit from more convenient and efficient services, and better treatment outcomes.

In addition, the Minister argues, transforming how the NHS treats patients with long-term conditions, disability or palliative care needs by providing more support in people's homes and local community settings, means that people are able to better manage their health and avoid unnecessary hospital visits. As a consequence, improvements in the management of long-term conditions have already led to efficiencies and savings of £2.1 billion.

As a next step, the Department of Health (DOH) will soon be publishing the final version of the 'National Framework for Children and Young People's Continuing Care'. This will help with assessing the continuing healthcare needs of children and young people, and with considering the bespoke packages of care that will be required to meet those needs.

See:

[NHS to provide more care at home](#)

[Chemotherapy Services in the Community: a Guide for PCTs](#)

Think tank argues that cancer deaths could be improved.

The think tank Policy Exchange has published a paper ['The Cost of Cancer'](#) which argues that although the UK currently has a cancer death rate 6% higher than the European average, if the survival rates were improved in England to a level commensurate with the best in Europe, on a cumulative basis by 2020, 71,500 lives could be saved and total costs could be reduced by £10 billion.

As the most likely causes behind the UK's comparatively high mortality rate, Policy Exchange argue that late diagnosis, poor survival rates for older people and those in deprived communities, and relatively poor take up of new treatments and technologies are the key. Within this scenario, the paper recommends that the Department of Health identifies and adopts the best practice in cancer services from high-performing European countries, focuses resources where largest reductions in mortality can be achieved and focuses on cancer prevention strategies to achieve success rates.

NHS Costing Manual

The Department of Health (DOH) has published ['NHS Costing Manual 2009-2010'](#) which sets out the principles and practice of costing to be applied in the NHS. The manual supports the production of the National Schedule of Reference Costs, and through this, the national tariff, but can also be used in developing and monitoring service and financial frameworks, as well as developments in and the monitoring and implementation of National Service Frameworks.

Counterfeit medicines

The parliamentary Office of Science and Technology has produced a POSTNOTE ['Counterfeit medicines'](#). The Note argues that counterfeiting of medicines is increasing, and is often linked to other criminal activities and poses risks to public health, and considers the extent of the global counterfeit medicine trade, its impact in the UK and the technologies and policy options available to combat it. The Note also examines the risks and benefits of online pharmacy, one of the main ways in which counterfeits are distributed.

The Government's Play Strategy

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has published guidance 'Embedding the play strategy' which sets out the vision that all children, young people and families should have access to free, high-quality play spaces in every local area.

DCSF argue that the guidance will help local authority senior executives, strategic planners and their partners to improve local play offers by embedding everyday opportunities for healthy, active play within top-level strategies for children, communities and spatial planning, and will also assist Directors of Children's Services and their partners in Children's Trusts to deliver play services locally through multi-agency cooperation.

See:

[Embedding the Play Strategy](#)

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