

Community Nursing Healthcare Policy Update

Week ending May 5th 2017

General Election

A future Labour Government will freeze and review all STPs

The Labour Party has [pledged](#) to freeze proposed closures of hospitals and other services, devised under Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs). A new body (NHS Excellence) will be established to review all STPs to ensure they are designed with the provision of quality care at the core. Local communities and patients will be involved at every stage of the process.

[Responses](#) to the pledge:

- Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt (The Conservative Party) has called the pledge "*another nonsensical Jeremy Corbyn idea*".
- Health spokesman, Norman Lamb MP (Liberal Democrats) said "*The purpose of the STP process was a good thing – to bring fragmented parts of the system together ... But it is based on the fantasy that there is enough money to deliver this vision ... The real question is: which party is prepared to take the tough action to increase investment? Only the Lib Dems will make the case for increasing tax to guarantee the future of the NHS*".

Election manifestos

NHS Confederation [published](#) ten asks of all political parties in order for a sustainable health and care service to be secured:

- Commit to an NHS funding target
- Establish an office for financial responsibility for health
- Create a transformation fund of £2 billion per year
- Produce a white paper on social care reform
- Introduce a cap on the cost of social care
- Extend and deliver mental health commitments
- Create a Department of Health and Care
- Safeguard EU NHS employees
- Conserve the UK's place in health research and innovation
- Develop an NHS Homes fund.

QNI Community Nursing Healthcare Policy Update.

By Louise Clanfield, QNI Research Officer.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) published their [manifesto](#), calling for all political parties to guarantee support to improve patient care, value nurses and invest in health and social care:

- *“The party leaders must put patients before politics this election by either committing the hard cash and numbers of staff the NHS needs or being honest with patients about what can be done. They deserve more than sticking plasters and warm words”.*

The Mental Health Network produced their [manifesto](#) for ‘Better Mental Health’. They want all parties to commit to implementing the ‘Five Year Forward View for Mental Health’ and ensure funding beyond 2020 to permit increased investment in mental health services:

- Ensure fair funding for mental health services
- Give children a good start
- Improve health services
- Ensure better lives for those with mental health problems.

Over 62,000 cancer patients die in hospitals, despite wanting to die at home

A [report](#) by Macmillan has found that 64% of people with cancer want to die in their home. Whilst 1% would like to die in a hospital, 38% (over 62,000) of people who die from cancer do so in hospital.

The report also found that one in four people with cancer thought about death ‘often’, but more than a third of patients had not confided with anyone about their feelings. Macmillan has called for the future government to commit to end of life care and for more opportunities for honest conversations about death to be created.

The provision of community care

The Health Foundation produced a [paper](#) looking at the providers of community care. In 2016/15, the NHS spent approximately £10 billion on community care including services like community nursing, occupational therapy and health visiting. A freedom of information request generated details from 78% of all Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) on 7,494 contracts:

The number of contracts held by providers:

- Private providers held 39%
- NHS providers held 21%
- GPs held 12%
- The third sector held 11%
- Other providers (including community interest companies, local authorities, social enterprises and those defined as ‘non-NHS’) held 13%.

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In terms of the annual financial value of the contracts for community care:

- NHS providers held 53%
- Private providers held 5%
- The third sector held 2%
- GPs held 1%
- Other providers held 36%.

The data shows that whilst private providers hold more community care contracts, NHS providers hold contracts of a higher value. Average contract values were:

- NHS over £3.5 million
- Third sector £250,000
- Private sector £200,000.

58% of contracts lasted for two years, whilst 45% for less than twelve months.

The importance of leadership in driving innovation

The King’s Fund published a [paper](#) looking into compassion as a core value of the NHS and the ways in leadership embodying such, encourages innovation.

The paper highlights the importance of culture and leadership in ensuring innovation and in turn, secures it as a cultural norm within the NHS. Innovation is critical in the health services ability to meet demand and overcome the difficulties of modern healthcare provision. At the core of this, is leadership, particularly compassionate leadership (see figure 1).



West, Eckert, Collins and Chowla (May 2017)

Resource rating piloted by NHS trusts

NHS Improvement and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) have selected two trusts (Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals Foundation Trust and North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust) to [pilot](#) a new review of how efficiently resources are used, due to be rolled out nationally in the future. The rating involves the analysis of data, alongside interviews and discussions with chief executives of the trusts. NHS improvement will then be able to recommend the rating of a trust, but the ultimate decision will lie with the CQC.

Caring for acutely ill patients

A [report](#) by The King's Fund looked at the care of acutely ill patients and how hospital care can be enhanced. A significant amount of inpatient work in NHS hospitals is accounted to acutely ill patients. Whilst ensuring these patients received high-quality and safe care is challenging, the increase in volume and complexity of work has made it more difficult.

Challenges now arise in unfilled vacancies and workforce shortages. This has led to an increased need for agency staff which in turn, has impacted upon the continuity of patient care and teamwork. When combined with a lack of coordinated communication and ineffective information systems, patients can be placed at risk of harm.

The report cites trust leaders as having an important role in the care of acutely ill patients. They must support frontline staff, demonstrate that patient needs are the priority and develop a culture which reflects such. Junior doctors are also important due to the range of experiences they have in different hospitals. In addition, there is a need for information systems which provide quick access to patients test results and medical records.

The paediatric workforce

A [report](#) by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) has raised concerns about the decreasing number of clinical staff. Numbers in the workforce have failed to keep up with the increasing number of patients which is causing serious pressures.

Non-UK qualified doctors account for two-fifths of the career grade workforce. The potential implications of Brexit present great uncertainty for the non-UK nationals workforce. Changes to the workforce are significantly influenced by government policy, which often overlooks evidence on what children need.

There are concerns that medicine may become a less sought-after profession which may compromise the UK's reputation in the field and impact on patient care.

Professor Neena Modi, President of the RCPCH, [said](#) “... *the situation is serious. There simply aren't enough doctors to meet the needs of infants, children and young people, and advance their healthcare through clinical research*”.

Nurses seek help to cope with cost of living

Between October to December 2016, the Royal College of Nursing's ([RCN](#)) support line received 510 calls from nurses seeking financial assistance. This equates to eight nurses each day. Of those receiving grants, one in four worked full-time.

Trusts to trail new mother and baby units

NHS England has [selected](#) four NHS trusts to trial new mother and baby units, which form part of the £365 million investment in perinatal mental health services. The specialist inpatient unit will ensure that new mothers, with or at risk of serious mental health problems, can stay with their baby.