

## Community Nursing Healthcare Policy Update

Week ending 11<sup>th</sup> August 2017

### Nurses

#### Funding cuts place uncertainty around post-registration training

Health Education England (HEE) has [confirmed](#) the budget for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) will decrease from £104.3 million to £83.49 million in 2017/18. The budget largely supports post-registration training for nurses, allied health professionals and midwives.

#### Workforce crisis

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has [reported](#) that nine in ten of the fifty largest NHS trusts do not have enough nurses. Over half of trusts were placing unregistered support staff and healthcare assistants onto shifts, with this reliance worse at night.

The RCN commented: *"Patients can pay the very highest price when the Government encourages 'nursing on the cheap'. It is unfair on the healthcare assistant too – they should not be left in a situation they have not been trained to handle"*.

### Primary Care

#### Clinical Commissioning Groups underspending on primary care

An article by Health Service Journal (HSJ) [reported](#) that Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) across England underspent on primary care services by approximately £200 million. The money is instead being utilised to reduce hospital deficits.

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) commented: *"If hospitals are reliant on general practice shoring up their finances, it is a completely unsustainable situation. GPs and our teams – who make the vast majority of NHS patient contacts – are dealing with a workload that has risen 16% over the last seven years, with a decline in resource over the last decade and a workforce that has not risen at the same pace. To channel resources elsewhere just exacerbates the problem"*.

### Other

#### NHS England performance statistics

NHS England [published](#) its performance statistics for June and July 2017.

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*QNI Community Nursing Healthcare Policy Update.*

*By Louise Clanfield, QNI Research Officer.*

- A&E attendance increased by 1.3%
- Emergency admissions increased by 2.4%
- Ambulance calls which required a face-to-face response increased by 3.7%
- June 2017 saw 178,441 delayed discharge days, up from 173,122 in June 2016.

The Nuffield Trust [commented](#): *"The figures show that the NHS continues to be systematically unable to meet its main targets ... The troubling high rate of patients being held up leaving hospital is showing little sign of coming back under control, with delayed days at their highest ever level for the month of June. This puts the NHS on the back foot as we approach winter, with problems both at the 'front door' of A&E departments and at the 'back door' as hospitals struggle to send people home or onto further care".*

NHS Providers [commented](#): *"These figures show even at the height of summer, the NHS is working at full stretch ... The lesson here is that there is simply not enough capacity in the system to assure patient safety in the coming winter. We need an immediate decision of whether trusts will be funded to cover the current capacity gap".*

#### Temporary closure of maternity units to new mothers

A Freedom of Information request by the Labour Party has [found](#) that almost half of the maternity units in England had temporarily closed their wards to new mothers in 2016. The 382 occasions in which units closed is a 70% increase from 2014. Whilst some closures lasted over 24 hours, more than ten trusts reported that their services had closed to new mothers on over ten separate occasions throughout the year. Staffing issues and capacity were cited as the most common reason for service closures.

Shadow Secretary of State for Health, Jonathan Ashworth MP, commented: *"It is staggering that almost half of maternity units in England had to close to new mothers at some point in 2016. The uncertainty for so many women just when they need the NHS most is unthinkable".*

#### Health inequalities

A [study](#) by the University of Manchester has found that more young adults in the north of England are dying prematurely in comparison to their counterparts in the south. Since 1965, approximately 1.2 million more people in the north have died before the age of 75.