

Community Nursing Healthcare Policy Update

Week ending 16th June 2017

General Election

The election resulted in a hung parliament, meaning no political party won enough seats to secure a majority government. At the time of writing, it is expected that the Conservative Party will run a minority government with support from the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

Theresa May will remain as Prime Minister.

Jeremy Hunt MP has been reappointed as Secretary of State for Health. Phillip Dunne MP remains Minister of State for Health. Steven Brine MP, Jackie Doyle-Price MP and Lord O'Shaughnessy will serve as Parliamentary under Secretaries of State for Health.

Nurses

Decline in EU nurses

A freedom of information request [submitted](#) by the Health Foundation has revealed a significant decline in the number of EU nurses registering to practice in the UK. In July 2016, 1,304 EU nurses registered however in September this figure dropped to 344 and in April 2017, just 46 EU nurses registered.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) [commented](#): *"These figures should act as a wake-up call to the Government as they enter Brexit negotiations. EU staff should be left in no doubt that their contributions are welcome and valued"*.

Brexit

The Nuffield Trust published a [briefing](#) 'Getting a Brexit deal that works for the NHS'. Brexit and the NHS were [cited](#) as the two biggest public concerns by Ipsos MORI.

- The outcomes of Brexit will impact upon the amount of funding available for the NHS. Additional funds for the NHS could derive from the money retained once the UK stops paying its EU membership fee. However, there is a chance that the economic slowdown deriving from leaving the EU could see a reduction in the amount of funding available for the NHS.

- Brexit will impact upon the workforce. The NHS is already dependent on EU nurses to prevent understaffing from worsening and once the UK leaves the EU, the social care workforce may decline by 70,000 by 2025/26.
- British pensioners currently receiving healthcare in other EU countries would cost the NHS an extra £1 billion each year, should they return to the UK.
- The UK should remain as part of the European market for medicines. This will permit new products to be introduced in Britain early and the NHS to access supplies.

Initiatives

Support for women's health

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) [launched](#) the Women's Health Educational Framework, a library of resources for continuing professional development (CPD) for primary healthcare professionals and GPs.

'Extending the QALY'

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is participating in a [project](#) to assess how quality of life measures used in evaluating healthcare treatments, can be applied to public health and social care. The 'Extending the QALY' project will assess the importance of social and economic wellbeing, alongside mental and physical health.

Healthcare interventions are currently measured by how many quality-adjusted life years (QALYs) such provide. However, it is felt that this measure of health-related quality of life overlooks benefits that go beyond health directly. There are also different measures used across social care, public health and healthcare which present challenges in comparisons.

Other

Reduction in NHS provider sector's deficit

NHS Improvement [published](#) its quarterly performance report of the NHS provider sector. Figures reveal that the deficit for 2016/17 has dropped to £791 million, a significant improvement on the £2.45 billion reported in 2015/16.

NHS Providers [commented](#): "*These figures should be seen in the context of the enormous financial pressures trusts face, but also the solid progress that has been made in controlling the runaway deficits of the last three years*".

NHS performance statistics

QNI Community Nursing Healthcare Policy Update.

By Louise Clanfield, QNI Research Officer.

NHS England [published](#) its performance statistics for April 2017:

- A&E attendance increased by 2.6%
- Emergency admissions increased by 2.9%
- Ambulance calls which required a face-to-face response increased by 5.1%
- Consultant-led treatment increased by 5.2%

Quarterly monitoring of NHS performance

The King's Fund [published](#) its 23rd quarterly monitoring report on NHS performance.

- By and large, the NHS is meeting its target in which 90% of patients are admitted, discharged or transferred within four hours of arrival (although A&E departments are slightly below this at approximately 85.1%). The '*Next steps on the NHS five year forward*' has committed to this 90% standard by September 2017. However, 49% of trust finance directors and 60% of CCG finance leads are concerned that this target will not be met
- Over 50% of CCGs have reportedly cut back or cancelled spending plans
- Under two-thirds of mental health trust finance directors were concerned about the ability of commissioners to meet the 2017/18 funding commitments for mental health
- NHS finance directors are concerned about finances and the ability to generate good performance.

NHS Opinion poll

An [opinion poll](#) has found 66% of the people surveyed would be happy to pay more tax if it meant the quality of the NHS would improve.

The respondents were also prepared to consider other options:

- 62% felt patients who missed NHS appointments should be charged
- 73% felt it should not be possible for someone to pay for their GP appointment, in order to receive a faster service
- 53% felt recruiting more staff should take priority over increasing the pay of existing staff
- 53% felt hospitals should be a funding priority over GP surgeries.