

Community Nursing Healthcare Policy Update

Week ending April 21st 2017

Snap General Election

Theresa May has called a snap General Election to be held on June 8th.

Party manifestos are yet to be published but [NCVO](#) expect these to draw on 2015 policies and to focus on Brexit.

Healthcare looks set to be a main focus during the campaign period. A [survey](#) by Ipsos MORI in January revealed 49% viewed the state of the NHS to be one of the biggest issues facing Britain, slightly above the 41% citing the EU and Brexit. Responses from health sector organisations have focused on the need for health and care services to be a central focus for all parties.

- [The Royal College of Nursing \(RCN\)](#); “will challenge all parties to give health and care services the funding and staff they need for safe patient care.”
- [The Royal College of Midwives \(RCM\)](#); “want to see the next government invest in the NHS, invest in maternity services and invest in the welfare and pay of NHS staff so that they can provide safe and high quality services for the people they care for.”
- [British Medical Association \(BMA\)](#); “(health) must be a central issue in the upcoming election. The NHS must not be pushed to the margins in the focus of Brexit ... We call on politicians of all parties not to duck this crisis any longer, and instead to outline credible and sustainable plans that will safeguard the future of the fully funded and supported NHS that staff want and patients deserve.”
- [Royal College of GPs \(RCGP\)](#); “It is vital that patient care is kept at the forefront of debate over the coming weeks. Once the new government is formed, we will continue to press for the urgent delivery of all the pledges made in NHS England’s GP Forward view – and for equivalent investment in GP services in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.”
- The Nuffield Trust; NHS funding and staffing issues should be top priorities for the next government

It is [advised](#) that charities familiarise themselves with charity commission election campaigning guidance to ensure they comply with charity laws regarding the Lobbying Act and campaigning during an election.

Nurse strike

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has asked its 270,000 members if they want industrial action in protest at cuts to their pay. As of April 1st, doctors, dentists and all NHS staff on Agenda for Change contracts have received a 1% pay rise. However, with inflation at 2.3% this equates, in real terms, to a pay cut. The poll closes on 7th May after which the RCN will decide whether to issue a formal ballot.

GPs

The University of Exeter have [surveyed](#) over 2,000 GPs in the south-west of England and found that 40% are planning to quit in the next 5 years. 54% reported low morale, whilst 7 in 10 intended to change their work pattern to involve less patient contact (taking a career break, reducing hours or leaving patient care etc.).

Direct link between low nurse staffing and risk of patient mortality

A [study](#) by the University of Southampton has provided the first England specific evidence of the importance of the number of nurses. The study found that over the first 5 days of hospitalisation, for every day a patient was on a surgical or general medicine ward with nurse staffing below that typically required, the risk of death increased by 3%.

The study also found a correlation between higher levels of temporary nurse staffing and patient death – when 1.5 or more hours of nurse care were provided by temporary nurses to a patient in a 24-hour period, the risk of death increased by 12%.

Progress on race quality standards for all NHS trusts in England

The Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) 2016 [report](#) shows positive change;

- The number of BME nurses and midwives progressing from lower grades into senior positions has increased
- Progress has been made in BME representation at very senior management and executive board level
- There is a reduction in the reported experience of discrimination of BME staff from colleagues and managers