

Community Nursing Healthcare Policy Update

Week ending 30th June 2017

Nurses

Pay cap

MPs voted against lifting the cap on public sector pay. 309 MPs voted in favour, 323 voted against.

Summer of protests

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) [launched](#) a 'summer of protests', which calls for the 1% pay cap to be abolished.

"This summer, nurses will show the Government how angry they feel over its failure to fund the NHS ... Theresa May must put patient safety before political dogma and scrap this cap".

Training fund cuts reversed

The Department of Health has [reversed](#) plans to cut funding for specialist nurse training in Northern Ireland.

Last week, The Ulster University (UU) faced [cuts](#) of approximately £1 million for specialist nurse training. This served to train qualified nurses to become district nurses, community nurses or health visitors.

Mental Health

All secondary schools offered Mental Health First Aid training by 2020

The Government have [announced](#) a programme offering training to secondary school teachers and staff, in identifying and responding to signs of mental health problems.

The programme will be delivered by Mental Health First Aid, starting with 1,000 staff in its first year and then extending to all secondary schools over its second and third year.

It is estimated that one in ten children have a mental health disorder, whilst the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) report that 98% of teachers have had contact with a pupil experiencing poor mental health, yet only 46% had been trained.

Rise in number of out of area mental health placements

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By Louise Clanfield, QNI Research Officer.

The British Medical Association (BMA) released [figures](#) showing 5,876 adults received mental health treatment out-of-area in 2016/17. This is a rise of almost 40% since 2014/15. The distances patients were travelling for care was considerable, with some as far as 587 miles. Between 2014/15 and 16/17, the amount spent on assigning out-of-area beds to patients increased by 47%.

"The practice of sending patients with severe mental health problems to beds hundreds of miles away from their home and families has become endemic in the NHS ... Being sent long distances for treatment has an impact on patients' care and recovery".

Initiatives

NHS workforce retention

NHS Improvement [launched](#) a programme to enhance staff retention and reduce the number of staff leaving by 2020. Approximately 86% of staff are leaving for reasons that are not related to pay, with around 25% of such leaving for unknown reasons. The programme includes:

- Masterclasses for HR directors and directors of nursing
- Further collaboration with NHS Employers to develop current retention programme
- Support for mental health providers
- Tools to analyse results from staff survey and to help trusts comprehend why staff are leaving
- Webinars on ways to improve retention.

The Nuffield Trust [commented](#) *"The package of measures announced today by NHSI [NHS Improvement] is a very good start. Focusing not only on how trusts can retain staff, but also helping them understand better why staff are leaving is sensible".*

Multi-disciplinary approach to averting hospital admissions

Made up of a range of NHS and social care professionals, the [Norwich Escalation Avoidance Team](#) (NEAT) enables patients to stay in their homes in cases where they may end up in hospital. The initiative provides a single point of contact for GPs, community nurses, paramedics, social workers, mental health workers and therapists. Following a patient's call, the team have a multi-disciplinary discussion and decide upon the best course of action.

Other

Key health and social care issues for next parliament

The King's Fund published a [briefing](#) on the key issues in health and social care.

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- By 2019/20 there will be a funding gap of £2.1 billion in adult social care
- Staff shortages, low morale and the implications of Brexit mean the health and social care workforce are facing considerable pressure
- Healthcare spending, as a proportion of GDP has fallen
- Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) can address the NHS challenges the NHS is facing and deliver the vision presented in the 'NHS Five Year Forward View'
- Parity of esteem with mental health will only be achieved once mental health is provided equal focus in new models of care and funding reaches front line
- Cuts to public health budgets are causing funding to an array of services to be withdrawn.

Public dissatisfied with NHS

A [survey](#) of 1,000 adults by the British Medical Association (BMA) found 43% were displeased with the current state of the health service, up from 21% in 2015. 422 doctors were also surveyed; with 71% feeling access to care had deteriorated over the previous year. Two in three cited concerns regarding the number of vacant positions within their department.

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) [responded](#): *"It's saddening to hear that so many patients are not satisfied with the services they are now getting from the NHS ... We urgently need NHS England's GP Forward view, including promises for £2.4bn extra a year for general practice, 5,000 more GPs and 5,000 more practice team members, to be delivered in full as a priority, so that we can deliver the care our patients need and deserve"*.

Managing winter demand

NHS Providers published a [report](#) on managing demand in health and care services during winter months.

2016/17 was one of the NHS' toughest winters on record, as demand and the number of patients treated peaked. The Chancellors Spring Budget saw an extra £1 billion provided to social care in attempts to relieve pressures.

Undertaking a survey of NHS trusts the following was found:

- 34% felt their local authority had prioritised reducing NHS' delayed transfer of care (DTC) rather than focusing on other social care needs
- Of the 28% of trusts who had a commitment from their local authority, only 18% were confident this will help them reduce DTC levels
- 38% felt extra social care funds would have positive impact
- 57% were confident in delivering high-quality and safe care this winter, whilst 10% are not. 33% of trusts were neither confident nor unconfident.

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- When asked about the level of physical and workforce capacity expected this winter, 76% reported a significant or slight lack of capacity for community services.

From a roundtable containing community, mental health, acute hospital and ambulance trusts actions needed were determined. These include:

- Appropriate levels of funding
- An extensive workforce plan
- Support from national bodies
- A flexible approach to staffing

'Getting it right first time'

The King's Fund [published](#) a report assessing the 'getting it right first time (GIRFT) programme', which purses the provision of higher quality care at a lower cost and to improve productivity. Originally introduced in orthopaedics, GIRFT is being applied across 32 specialisms for £60 million. GIRFT aims to address the variation in procedures, cost and equipment. A hip implant for example was found to have costs ranging from £761 to £3,669.

GIRFT is reported to have saved £60 million to £90 million, with the programme having initial costs of £220,000. Challenges for the programme include; low staff morale, achieving a universal buy-in and generating/maintaining engagement.