

## Community Nursing Healthcare Policy Update

### Monthly Summary August 2017

#### Nurses

##### Workforce crisis

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) [reported](#) that of the fifty largest NHS trusts; nine in ten do not have enough nurses. Of these trusts, over half were assigning shifts to unregistered support staff and healthcare assistants.

The RCN [called](#) on the government to assign local authorities more funding for fully-staffed school nursing services, following statistics released by NHS Digital show the number of school nurses has decreased by 550 since 2010. In 2017 alone, more than 100 school nurse positions have been lost.

According to UCAS figures, 16,100 students have [accepted](#) places on nursing courses in England, a fall of 8% since 2016. The number of students aged over 25 has also declined by 12%.

##### Funding

Post-registration training is at risk after Health Education England (HEE) [confirmed](#) the budget for continuing professional development (CPD), which is largely used to support training for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals, will decrease from £104.3 million to £83.49 million.

##### Link between nursing numbers and patient mortality

A [study](#) has found that for every 10% of missing or incomplete care, the likelihood of a patient dying following surgical procedures increases by 16%. The study provides evidence that low nursing numbers, and therefore missed care, is linked to higher patient mortality.

#### GPs

##### Workforce crisis

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) commissioned [research](#) among RCGP members and found 39% of GPs feel it is unlikely they will be working in the profession in five years.

A [survey](#) of 178 trainee GPs in the West Midlands by the University of Warwick has found that just two in three are planning on working in NHS general practice, with

many planning to work as locums or salaried GPs rather than entering GP partnerships. The study found the career plans of trainee GPs were influenced by the quality of practice experience during training, especially workload and morale, whilst socio-demographic factors and the negative portrayal of general practice by politicians and the media were also significant factors.

### Initiatives

NHS England [established](#) the GP international recruitment office, which will administer international recruitment plans. By 2017/18 NHS England plans to recruit around 600 overseas doctors into general practice, with over 2,000 recruited by 2020/21.

Health Education England [announced](#) targeted GP training. This will see doctors who did not complete their training able to re-enter the programme alongside doctors from other specialities support to train as GPs, and training time for GPs extended in accordance with other specialities.

## **Mental Health**

### Workforce Plan

[Plans](#) to revamp mental health services have been developed by NHS England, NHS Improvement, Health Education England, the Royal College of Psychiatrists and other mental health experts. The plans include a pledge to treat an additional one million patients by 2020/21, 24/7 services and the integration of mental and physical health services. The government has committed an additional £1.3 billion of funding and the creation of 21,000 new positions in priority areas by 2020/21.

### Action Plan

Health Education England (HEE) has devised the mental health [action plan](#) which advises how courses on both promotion and prevention of mental health can be more accessible to public health staff by 2020/21. Recommendations include the following:

- Develop the current public health curriculum
- Encourage enrolment onto public mental health courses
- Ensure that current courses coordinate with the plan
- Public mental health programmes must be commissioned, accredited and evaluated.

## **Primary Care**

### Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) underspent on primary care

[According](#) to the Health Service Journal (HSJ) primary care services have experienced an underspend of £200 million by CCGs across England. Funding is instead being utilised to reduce the budget deficits of hospitals.

## Initiatives

### NHS Digital Academy

NHS England [announced](#) the 'NHS Digital Academy' which will train over 300 senior health managers and clinicians, providing them with the support and skills needed to drive digital innovation.

### Childhood Obesity Plans

The Department of Health has [committed](#) £5 million towards a new obesity policy research unit, which will support long-term research and provide independent advice to policy-makers and analysts.

Public Health England announced [plans](#) to assess the evidence on how many calories children consume and set a target to reduce excess calories from the foods that children consume most.

## NHS England

### Bullying and Harassment

A [review](#) into bullying and harassment at South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust found that 42% of the 2,000 participants (equating to more than half of all employees) had experienced bullying in the last twelve months.

Whilst many staff were incredibly fearful about speaking out, the review identified the following:

- 50% had been treated in a disrespectful manner
- Over 33% had felt threatened and experienced intimidation
- 25% had been subjected to teasing and/or constant criticism
- 33% had been regularly excluded and/or humiliated
- A number of respondents cited sexual harassment and grooming
- A culture of grievance/counter grievance was rife
- 'Militaristic' leadership based on 'command and control'.

Those participating in the review highlighted that executives in the trust were largely invisible and that bullying and harassment derived from manager's failure to take action

on negative behaviour. Employees felt discouraged about reporting bullying and harassment as complaints failed to be taken seriously.

### Whistleblowers Support Scheme

NHS England [announced](#) a pilot support service to assist employees who have suffered as a result of raising concerns about practice and whistleblowing. The scheme will provide a range of support including career coaching, financial advice and mediation. The NHS staff [survey](#) showed that 30% of staff did not feel safe in raising concerns, with [reports](#) citing that whistleblowers can be subject to disciplinary action, bullying, counter allegations and victimisation.

### Staff Friends and Family Test

NHS England [published](#) its quarterly 'staff friends and family test' in which staff are asked whether they would recommend their organisation as a place for care and as a workplace.

Overall 81% of staff recommended their organisation as a place to receive care. However, just 64% recommended it as an employer.

Responses from community services specifically found that 83% would recommend the care to family and friends (5% would not), but only 61% would recommend it as a place to work (19% would not recommend).

### Performance Statistics

NHS England [released](#) performance statistics for June and July 2017. These showed the following:

- Emergency admissions had increased by 2.4%
- A&E attendance had increased by 1.3%
- Ambulance calls requiring an in-person response increased by 37%
- The number of delayed discharge days in June 2017 was 178,441, an increase from the 173,122 in June 2016.

### NHS spent £21 million on consultancy advice

Following a Freedom of Information request by Pulse magazine, sent to all sustainability and transformation partnership regions, it was [found](#) that approximately £21 million was being spent on management consultants to assist in designing services under the plans, of which many involved cuts to frontline services.