

Community Nursing Healthcare Policy Update

June 2017 Summary

General Election

The General Election resulted in a hung parliament as no party secured enough seats to command a majority in the House of Commons.

The Conservative Party will run a minority Government, with support from the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). Theresa May will remain as the Prime Minister.

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

Nurses

Pay cap

Parliament voted on whether the 1% pay cap public service workers, including nurses, currently imposed should be lifted. 309 MPs voted in favour and 323 voted against meaning the pay cap will remain in place.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) [began](#) a 'summer of protests' in response to the pay cap. Chief Executive and General Secretary of the RCN, Janet Davies, commented: "*This summer, nurses will show the Government how angry they feel over its failure to fund the NHS*".

Fall in number of EU nurses

The Health Foundation [reported](#) a considerable decline in the number of EU nurses registering to practice in the UK. July 2016 saw 1,304 EU nurses registered, in September 2016 this decreased to 344 and in April 2017 this number dropped further to just 46.

Specialist training

This month [saw](#) The Ulster University (UU) facing funding cuts of £1 million to their specialist nurse training, which trains qualified nurses in Northern Ireland to become community nurses, health visitors and district nurses. However, the Department of Health have since [announced](#) funding cuts will no longer go ahead.

GPs

Work-related stress

The British Medical Association (BMA) [surveyed](#) 2,000 GPs and found over half suffered from work-related stress. One in ten GPs had taken time off work as a result and 76% had seen their workload increase.

Mental Health

Government announce mental health first aid training in all secondary schools by 2020

All secondary school teachers and staff are to be offered training in how to identify and respond to signs of mental health problems in pupils. At present, 98% of teachers are reported to have contact with a pupil experiencing a mental health problem but just 48% have received appropriate levels of training to address such.

The Government [programme](#) will see 1,000 teachers and staff trained within the first year of implementation and will then extend to cover all secondary school teachers and staff over the course of its second and third year.

Postnatal mental illness

NCT launched the #hiddenhalf campaign to ensure new mothers at risk of poor mental health are given the support and treatment needed.

A [report](#) 'The Hidden Half: Bringing postnatal mental illness out of hiding' was also published. A survey asking women about their six week postnatal check found that half of all new mothers' mental health problems were not picked up by health professionals. Whilst 22% had not been asked about their mental or emotional wellbeing, 60% of new mothers felt the six week check focused predominately on their baby, with 31% estimating the maternal check lasted just three minutes. Of those mothers suffering from poor mental health or an emotional problem, 50% felt unable to discuss it with their health professional, with 60% feeling ashamed and concerned they would be seen as being incapable to look after their baby.

Increase in out-of-area placements

The British Medical Association (BMA) [reported](#) that in 2016/17 5,876 adults received treatment for mental health problems out-of-area, a 40% increase since 2014/15. There had also been an increase of 47% between 2014/15 and 16/17 in the amount spent on out-of-area care.

Initiatives

Workforce retention

NHS Improvement [announced](#) a programme to address staff retention and cut the number of staff leaving the NHS by 2020. Statistics released by NHS Improvement showed that just 14% of staff are leaving as a result of pay. Of the 86% leaving for non-pay related reasons, approximately 25% left for reasons unknown to the NHS.

The retention programme, led by NHS Improvement, will include the following:

- Collaboration with NHS Employers to enhance current retention programmes
- A tool to enable trusts to comprehend why staff are leaving
- A tool to assist in analysing the results from staff surveys
- Masterclasses on retention for directors of nursing and HR directors.

Rural medicine and general practice

The University of Dundee and St Andrews University [announced](#) a four-year graduate-only medical degree, focusing on rural medicine and general practice in Scotland. The course seeks to ease the recruitment and retention challenges in general practice and to encourage people to work in rural areas.

Mental health services

NHS England is trialling new [approaches](#) in delivering mental healthcare. The initiatives will see the independent, not-for-profit sector and NHS mental health trusts collaborate and utilise local services. It is hoped that the initiative will save money, reduce the number of patients travelling significant distances for care and lessen hospital inpatient care.

Women's health

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

Other

Performance statistics

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

- Emergency admissions rose by 2.9%
- Attendance at A&E rose by 2.6%
- Consultant-led treatment rose by 5.2%

QNI Community Nursing Healthcare Policy Update.

By Louise Clanfield, QNI Research Officer.

- Ambulance calls required an in-person response rose by 5.1%.

NHS provider's deficit reduced

NHS Improvement's quarterly performance report [showed](#) the deficit of the NHS provider sector has reduced. In 2016/17 the figure was £791 million, a considerable improvement on the £2.45 billion in 2015/16.

Opinion polls

A [poll](#) commissioned by PwC found 66% of respondents are happy to have a tax increase if it resulted in improved quality of the NHS. 62% felt that those who missed NHS appointments should be charged, whilst 53% felt hospitals should take priority over GP surgeries when it comes to funding. Approximately half (53%) of respondents felt recruitment should take precedence over pay.

The British Medical Association (BMA) [surveyed](#) 1,000 adults and found 43% were dissatisfied with the state of the health service, having increased from 21% in 2015. 71% of 422 doctor's surveyed also felt access to care had deteriorated over the year.