

Community Nursing Healthcare Policy Update

Monthly Summary September 2017

Nurses

Pay cap

Following a 3,000 strong [rally](#), organised as part of the Royal College of Nursing's (RCN) 'Scrap the Cap' campaign, the RCN officially [called](#) for the Government to raise nurses' wages to match inflation and for all staff to receive £800 compensation for pay lost as a result of the 1% cap.

Workforce Crisis

□ A [survey](#) of 450 UK nurses by the recruitment company Hays, for their What Nurses Want Report 2017, found that 45% of those in permanent positions are actively seeking new jobs. The report identified the following: Key determinants which negatively impacted on the workforce were cited as pay (53%), lack of development or training opportunities (44%) and a dissatisfying workplace 'cultural fit' (35%). Those who had left their nursing post cited a lack of organisational and cultural values (29%) and issues with senior colleagues and leadership (22%). 90% of respondents felt that that colleagues are a significant determinant of workplace happiness, with 84% saying the same of managers. □ 71% of respondents were satisfied with their work-life balance □ 20% of respondents did not feel valued by their employer.

RCN [research](#), conducted via YouGov, revealed that 70% of participants believe that the NHS lacks adequate nursing staff, that nurses are underpaid and that they would welcome an income tax increase in order to improve NHS safety.

Apprenticeships

[Only](#) two universities in England currently hold Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) approval to administer registered nurse apprenticeship programmes. These will be delayed from September 2017 until 2018. Difficulties included:

- Trouble establishing training routes which would ease workforce shortages.
- Insufficient time to recruit apprentices.
- The financial cost of paying apprentices.
- Uncertainty over how to use the levy funding system for apprenticeships.
- The new pre-registration education standards have yet to be finalised.

Safe staffing levels

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) surveyed 30,000 members on the experience of their last shift. The following was identified:

- 55% reported a shortfall of one or more registered nurses.

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- 41% of shift workers had a shortfall of one or more health care support workers. □ 36% were forced to leave patient care incomplete due to time pressures.
- 53% felt care was compromised and equal numbers were “upset/sad” by the inability to provide the standard of care they wanted to.
- 44% reported that no action had taken place in response to concerns raised about staffing levels.
- 65% worked overtime and 93% of nursing staff were not paid for additional hours for NHS providers. An estimated £396 million worth of unpaid-time is undertaken by nurses every year.

On community nurses, the survey found:

- 69% were not taking sufficient breaks and 50% of respondents’ shifts were over 12 hours.
- 68% reported a shortfall of one or more registered nurses.
- Community teams were less likely to fill staffing gaps with temporary staff - with 15% of nurses being agency or bank staff.

General Practice

Integrated Care

Reform, a liberal-leaning public sector reform educational charity, published a [report](#) which concluded that the workforce in the NHS is not, in its current form, designed to deliver integrated care. ‘*Getting into shape: Delivering a workforce for integrated care*’ made the following points:

- Increased emphasis has been placed on community-based care, yet the workforce does not reflect this. Almost three times as many doctors and four times as many nurses work in the acute sector as in the community.
- The number of hospital consultants has increased by almost a third since 2009, whereas GP numbers have declined.
- A FOI request revealed that just 6% of consultants (across 61 acute trusts), worked in the community, for a minimum of one session each week.
- Challenges include a current funding model which drives resources and activity toward the acute sector and training embedded in specialisation, giving little acknowledgement to inter-speciality transferable skills. Training places are largely provided in the acute sector.
- Compared to secondary care, primary care is often overlooked when resources are allocated for training provision.

CQC Inspections

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) published a [report](#) on the quality and safety of general practice in England.

- GP practices are consistently the highest ranking care sector.
- 79% of GP practices received ratings of good and 4% outstanding overall on first inspection.

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- Of those practices which received ratings of outstanding or good, nursing teams, generally, had been invested in and were valued.
- Following re-inspections, the number of GP practices rated good had increased to 86%.
- 8% of practices required improvement and 2% were inadequate: one in ten practices must improve the quality of care.
- 27% of practices initially rated as requiring improvement and 6% rated inadequate; all needed to improve safety.
- 80% of practices initially rated as inadequate improved their overall rating following reinspection.

Mental Health

Young People

The National Children's Bureau, UCL and the University of Liverpool published a [report](#) on mental ill-health among children and young people.

The research involved children who participated in the Millennium Cohort Study (19,517 children born in 2000-01, across the UK) and surveyed parents when their children were aged three, five, seven and fourteen. The research identified the following points:

- 24% of girls and 9% of boys suffer from depression at the age of 14.
- More serious emotional symptoms (anxiety, depression etc.) were reported in 14 year olds from poorer socio-economic backgrounds.
- Between the ages of three to eleven, similar numbers of boys and girls suffer from emotional problems.
- Disruptive behaviour increased from mid-childhood to adolescence, but was more prevalent in boys than girls across all ages.

Mental Health Workforce

The NHS Confederation's Mental Health Network published a [report](#) assessing what the future mental health workforce should look like.

Current mental health policy centres on '*The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health*' and '*The Future Mind Strategy for Children and Young People*'. The former also refers to a workforce development strategy, which advises how a further 19,000 positions will be developed by 2020/21. However, wider policy factors will influence the mental health workforce. This includes Brexit, sustainability and transformation partnerships, changes in education funding and the development of new roles, such as nursing associates.

There are [currently](#) around 200,000 full-time equivalent mental health workers. Factors impacting on the workforce include a fall in the number of nurses, a static number of psychiatrists, the impact of austerity on local authority budgets and the growing number of voluntary sector organisations providing mental health support.

Recommendations include:

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- Promoting careers in mental health at colleges and schools.
- Enhancing new skills in training courses in order to meet future demand.
- Mental health providers to support staff well-being.
- Ensuring existing staff can access development and training.

Public Health

10% of men over 50 have a heart age 10 years older than expected for their age.

Men make up the majority (64%) of those assessed by Public Health England's '[Heart Age Test](#)' who have a heart age ten years older than they are. Monthly, 7,400 die from stroke or heart disease. 25% of those who die are under 75 and most deaths are preventable.

Initiatives

Out-of-hours GP services

NHS England has [committed](#) £10 million for indemnity costs to help strengthen out-of-hours GP services.

Preventing strokes and heart attacks

Through better detection oversight of atrial fibrillation, high cholesterol and high blood pressure, Public Health England have [estimated](#) that they will prevent at least 14,000 strokes and 9,000 heart attacks in the next three years.

NHS England and Public Health England have contacted all Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs), outlining the opportunities for prevention.

Rise Above for Schools

Public Health England [announced](#) an evidence-based programme, providing teachers with resources to develop life skills for young people and improve their mental health and wellbeing. The Rise Above for Schools programme aims to enable teachers engage with pupils on health and social issues.

NHS England

Public opinion

The King's Fund commissioned a [survey](#) on the public's opinion of the NHS, finding that:

- Public support for the NHS remains high.
- 77% of respondents feel the NHS should be kept in its current form.
- The founding principles of the NHS (tax funded, free at the point of use and available to everyone) remain supported by 90% of the public.
- 66% are prepared to pay more tax so as to increase NHS funding.

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- 65% say that health is the responsibility of an individual, whilst 7% think that the NHS is responsible.
- 31% believe that services and treatment should be determined by local need, whilst 66% believe services and treatments should be available to all, irrespective of location.
- 29% think service and treatment decisions should be the sole responsibility of qualified health professionals, whilst 56% want to be consulted and 14% call for an active involvement.

Complaints

[Data](#) released by NHS Digital revealed the following:

- Written complaints to the NHS have reached 571 each day, a 4.9% increase since 2015/16.
- Hospital and Community Health Services complaints increased 1.4%, of which 36,785 of the 161,720 complaints were about nurses.
- Primary care services (GP and dental) written complaints rose 9.7%, up to 90,759 in 2016/17. 83.2% of these concerned GP surgeries.

Publications

Person-centred care

The charity National Voices published a [report](#) on person-centred care in the health and care systems.

The report found:

- The way in which person-centred care is currently measured is inadequate.
- There is real variation in the degree to which people experience patient-centred care. Some aspects of care are consistently person-centred, others are not.
- Person-centred care has improved. Of those inpatients who had had an operation, 76% had received a full explanation about what would happen during their procedure. 86% of patients felt their GP listened to them.
- 78% of cancer patients felt as involved as they wanted to be in decisions made about their treatment. 33% of people using adult social care services felt they had as much control as they would like over their daily lives, whilst 44% had 'adequate' control.
- Person-centred care in general practice and inpatient care has started to deteriorate.
- 3% of those with a long term condition had a written care plan.
- There is currently no measurement for the degree to which care is coordinated. The number of delayed discharge transfers out of hospital has increased by 64% over the past five years. 46% of inpatients do not feel they have enough support to manage their condition and recover upon leaving hospital.
- Better support is needed for carers and family involvement needs improvement. Just 23% of carers reported having a social care assessment and 63% reported that their GP was aware they were a carer, but did nothing differently as a result.

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NHS beds

The King's Fund published a [report](#) on the number of hospital beds in the NHS. 'NHS hospital bed numbers: past, present, future' found that:

- Whilst the number of patients being treated by the NHS has increased, the number of hospital beds has fallen by over half in the last 30 years (299,000 to 142,000).
- Mental health and learning disability beds account for the largest reduction. This derives from policy having placed greater emphasis on moving these patients to community care.
- Since 1987/8, there has been a 43% decline in the number of general and acute beds, with the majority of these closures falling on long-term care for older people. It is felt that medical innovation, such as day-case surgery, has reduced the time patients are spending in hospital.
- There are opportunities to put the existing bed stock to better use: reducing the variations in the length of stay, averting potentially avoidable admissions, enhancing the discharge of patients and placing greater focus on the small number of patients staying in hospital over longer periods.
- Initiatives seeking to steady the demand for hospital care often face challenges. There is a need for sufficient capacity to provide care outside of hospitals, yet evidence implies there is only the capacity to meet approximately half of the demand, with significant cuts to social care.
- There is currently no national data which provides a full scale overview of NHS bed capacity.

Winter and the health and social care sector

NHS Providers' [briefing](#) '*Winter warning: managing risk in health and care this winter – update*' relates the following about current NHS plans for winter 2017/18:

- Winter 2016/17 was the most difficult winter on record for the NHS, and 2017/18 is predicted to be similar or worse.
- In comparison to last year, emergency care performance and system-level planning have been prioritised. Additional funding for social care should increase NHS capacity and lower the number of delayed care transfers.
- Ongoing risks include: trusts not benefiting from the additional investment in social care, delayed transfers of care at high levels, demand on services increasing by approximately 3% each year, declining workforce numbers, challenges in the capacity of primary and social care and greater overall financial pressures.

The briefing calls for between £200 million and £350 million to be provided immediately to NHS providers to mitigate the risks.