

GP and Practice Team Bulletin July 2010

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Gateway number: 14505

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What the White Paper means for GPs

GPs, working with other health and care professionals, will be crucial to delivering the vision laid out in the White Paper, *Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS*. In future, people will have the confidence of knowing their GP is not only their advocate in the healthcare system, but also part of a wider group of health and care professionals – a commissioning consortium – whose job it is to ensure that empowered patients have access to the right care, in the right place, at the right time. The vision is consistent with the drive for efficiency by proposing to remove unnecessary bureaucracy and cut waste in the NHS.

The White Paper sets out new opportunities and responsibilities for GPs.

- Responsibility for commissioning most healthcare services will be given to consortia of GP practices, so they can shape services for their patients and decide how best to use NHS resources.
- Commissioning by GP consortia will mean that the redesign of patient pathways and local services is always clinically led, and based on more effective dialogue and partnerships with other health and care professionals.
- To support GP consortia in their commissioning role, an independent NHS Commissioning Board will be set up to lead on quality improvement, to promote patient choice and patient involvement and to allocate and account for NHS resources.
- Patients will have more control and choice over their care and treatment, including the right to choose to register with any GP practice with an open list, without being restricted by where they live.
- GP consortia will work with local authorities to ensure services across the NHS, social care and public health are joined up and meet the needs of local people.

A variety of engagement and consultation documents have been launched to seek views on more detailed aspects of some of the proposals. Comments by 11 October are welcome on the following:

- *Commissioning for patients* sets out proposals for putting local consortia of GP practices in charge of commissioning services to best meet the needs of local people, supported by an independent NHS Commissioning Board. ([View the consultation.](#))
- *Transparency in outcomes: a framework for the NHS* seeks views on the proposed NHS Outcomes Framework, which will support the delivery of better health outcomes, for which the NHS Commissioning Board will be accountable.
- *Increasing democratic legitimacy in health* seeks views on how we can increase local democratic participation in health and how the NHS can work more closely with local government to make sure local services are joined up.
- *Regulating healthcare providers* will set out proposals for more autonomous healthcare providers and for the role of the proposed economic regulator.

Draft legislation on the White Paper will enter Parliament in the autumn. Subject to parliamentary approval, the Bill could receive Royal Assent by summer 2011.

- [Download the White Paper and related documents – including transition details from David Nicholson and the Report of the arm's-length bodies review – from the DH website](#)

New health and work resources for GPs

To support the introduction of the 'fit note', a dedicated telephone advice line is available for GPs in England, giving them occupational health advice on how best to facilitate an individual patient's return to work. A new website for GPs and other primary healthcare professionals has also been developed to provide advice and guidance on the new 'fit note' and on dealing with health and work during consultations.

- [Call the helpline 0800 022 4233](#)
- [Visit the website](#)

Reminder: guidance on changes to infectious disease notification

GPs are urged to take note of revised guidance that supports legislation covering the recently amended Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984. This sets new rules – that are now in force – on when doctors must notify cases of infectious disease. These also include new provisions for cases that may have been caused by contamination, such as with chemicals or radiation. From 1 October, diagnostic laboratories will have to notify the Health Protection Agency if they find specific micro-organisms in human samples. This new requirement is also covered in the guidance.

- [Download the guidance from the DH website](#)

Launch of new NHS website for young people with cancer

A new NHS website offers 19-24 year-olds recently diagnosed with cancer an informed choice in their place of care. It was commissioned by the National Cancer Action Team and aims to highlight the availability of choice between treatment in an adult cancer unit, or in one of 13 principal treatment centres in England that provide age-appropriate cancer services. GPs are encouraged to raise awareness of this service for young people with cancer.

- [Visit the website on NHS Choices](#)

MMR vaccine for travellers to France

French authorities have reported an increased number of measles cases in France this year. GPs are encouraged to provide parents who are planning a holiday in France with advice on ensuring their children have the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine. GPs can also direct parents to more information on the NHS Choices and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) websites.

- [NHS Choices information about the measles](#)
- [NHS Choices information about MMR](#)
- [FCO travel advice on obtaining treatment abroad](#)

Safeguarding vulnerable adults: awareness campaign

The DH and the Police National Fraud Intelligence Bureau are working together on safeguarding vulnerable adults. This includes a campaign to raise awareness of financial abuse of vulnerable people. Posters are being sent to GP practices, to increase awareness of both health staff and the public.

- [Find out more and download the posters](#)

Tool to fight infant mortality

The Health Inequalities Intervention Toolkit has been developed by the DH and the Association of Public Health Observatories to help address inequalities in infant mortality and life expectancy. The infant mortality tool illustrates recent trends for SHAs and identifies factors – such as smoking in pregnancy, poverty and maternal obesity – that are contributing to higher death rates in the Routine and Manual group. The life expectancy tool shows what is driving low life expectancy in the spearhead areas – those considered to have the worst health and deprivation. Both tools allow users to identify actions which will reduce inequalities.

- [Access the tool](#)

Improvements in chlamydia screening by GPs

The Health Protection Agency has reported that, in 2009/10, over 1.5 million chlamydia tests were undertaken outside of genito-urinary clinics in England, with 14 per cent of them done in general practice. The national cumulative coverage was 22.1 percent of the population aged 15-24, which is a 43 per cent increase on the previous year. The Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is encouraging GPs and PCTs to improve further the uptake of screening because embedding it in core health services has been shown to be sustainable and provides the opportunity for GPs to give patients wider sexual health advice.

- [Find out more about the Chlamydia Screening Programme](#)
- [Access GP guidance on maximising screening](#)

CMACE Perinatal Mortality Report 2008

The Centre for Maternal and Child Enquiries (CMACE) published its 2008 perinatal mortality report on 21 July 2010. The report highlights continued improvement in the UK rates for stillbirths and neonatal deaths, gives details of the causes of stillbirth and neonatal deaths, and presents data on the rates of perinatal mortality in PCTs, SHAs and trusts, which could help inform women when choosing where to have birth.

- [Download the report from CMACE website](#)

Tools to raise awareness of malnutrition

The British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (BAPEN) has developed the *Malnutrition Matters – Meeting Quality Standards in Nutritional Care Toolkit* to help commissioners and providers deliver high quality nutritional care across all care settings and meet national nutritional quality standards, including those of the Care Quality Commission. GPs and practice managers are also reminded of the resources published by the British Medical Association to raise awareness of the problem of malnutrition in older people and direct healthcare professionals to sources of further information and examples of good practice.

- [Download the toolkit from the BAPEN website](#)
- [Access the BMA resources](#)

NHS Choices pregnancy planners available

The pregnancy planner is a popular feature on NHS Choices, signposting expectant mothers to information to help them plan their pregnancy. Marketing materials, including business cards and posters, are available to promote the planner to your patients.

- [Order pregnancy planner marketing materials](#)
- [Email to order NHS Choices-branded pregnancy wheels](#)

Expert on Call web seminar: Shared decision making and decision aids

Date: Thursday 19 August 2010, 4pm

This free seminar is open to all NHS staff. Dr Steven Laitner, a GP in St Albans, and Emma Walker, NHS Direct, will talk about the future for shared decisions and decision aids. In the opening paragraphs of the *White Paper*, the Government talks about putting patients and the public first: 'Shared Decision making will become the norm – no decision about me without me'. Steven has been working with the NHS Institute to develop a decision-making aid that will empower people with arthritis of the knee and could radically change patient choice across a wide range of services. During the seminar, participants will be able to ask questions, exchange ideas and discuss how they can put these insights into practice.

- [Register via the NHS Institute website](#)
- [Visit the NHS Institute website for details of previous and future Expert on Call seminars](#)