

News

At-a-glance

- working group is examining the future role of the health visitor
- 1,000 health visitors are taking part in workshops
- the Modernising Nursing Careers programme is also addressing career pathways and education.

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The future of health visiting

Chief Nursing Officer Chris Beasley is leading work that will have an important impact on the future of health visiting.

A review of health visiting was announced last year by the Secretary of State for Health. For details of the review, see below. To find out how to input your views, see 'Have your say', right.

Health visitor working group

A new working group has been set up to examine the future role of the health visitor and to make recommendations for developing the role.

Ros Lowe, Chair of the Queen's Nursing Institute and also a health visitor, is chairing the group, which was set up as part of the Modernising Nursing Careers (MNC) programme.

Members include representatives from children's and parenting groups, practitioners, NHS commissioners, and colleagues from professional bodies, public health and higher education.

The group will receive evidence from regional workshops (see right), and will also seek the views of commissioners and health visitors. The group is due to report in April.

Have your say

If you would like to contribute to the debate on the role of health visitors please email CNOandHealthVisiting@dh.gsi.gov.uk.

It would be particularly useful to hear your views on the following questions.

- 1 What should be the focus of the health visitor's role in the future?
- 2 What skills and

knowledge will health visitors need for this role?

3 How should the service be organised in the future?

Please send your responses by Wednesday 28 February, so that views can be collated and fed into the review.

Please provide details of your role when you reply, as this will help us analyse responses.

Regional workshops

A series of regional workshops, named 'Let's talk about health visiting', is now underway in each of the ten SHA areas. The workshops, which are running until March, involve practitioners, local leaders and commissioners in a debate about the future of health visiting. Each workshop is designed to:

- develop a vision of the future in the context of policy, changes in the provision of services, and

public expectations

- provide information about the intensive home-visiting pilot sites, part of the Government's health-led parenting project (see page 4)

- gather views and examples of innovative health visiting practice.

At the end of the ten workshops, more than 1,000 health visitors will have had an opportunity to participate in the debate on the future

Continued on page 2

News	Infection control update 4	Mary Seacole award winners 5	Voicepiece 2
The future of health visiting 1-2	Intensive home-visiting pilot project 4	Dignity champions network 6	Diary 6
Minister shadows nursing staff 3		Supporting homeless people 6	Publications 8
			News in brief 7-8

Have your say

This bulletin is tailor-made for nurses and midwives across the NHS. It aims to cover the main news and developments every month. Please send your views on the content and design to Susan Frade at CNO-Bulletin@dh.gsi.gov.uk

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Voicepiece

In the busy world of 18 week waits, reconfigurations and financial constraints, it's all too easy to forget about the important role of preventive services. In fact, the long term sustainability of the NHS depends on us tackling the modern day causes of ill health such as obesity.

For prevention to be most effective we need to start young, which is why health visitors play such an important role in today's health service.

The world in which health visitors work is changing rapidly. We know more than ever about the impact of external factors on the neurological development of infants, and we also know what interventions can make a difference. At the same time children's services are changing, with health visitors working as part of integrated teams in Sure Start children's centres, and a wider range of practitioners contributing to the health and well-being of children.

There is a clear message from both practitioners and commissioners that the role of health visitors needs to be clarified to ensure that their public health nursing skills are used where they can bring most benefit.

Chief Nursing Officer Chris Beasley explains the work taking place to secure a sustainable role for health visiting in the future.

In this month's bulletin I am pleased to tell you about three important pieces of work that I hope will provide health visiting with a sustainable role for the future. These are:

- the review of health visiting, announced by the Secretary of State for Health at last year's conference of the Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association (see page 1 for details)

- the intensive home-visiting demonstration sites taking place as part of the health-led parenting project (see page 4)
- the regional 'Let's talk about health visiting' workshops (see page 1).

This work on health visiting forms part of the Modernising Nursing Careers programme, which means the outcomes will be firmly embedded in the wider nursing workforce changes.

We are gathering the views of commissioners and practitioners in the regional workshops



and we have also set up an email address (CNOandHealthVisiting@dh.gsi.gov.uk) to give more people an opportunity to feed their views into the review. I look forward to hearing the thoughts of health visitors, other nurses, midwives and nurse leaders on the future of the profession.

'There is a clear message from both practitioners and commissioners that the role of health visitors needs to be clarified'

The future of health visiting

Continued from page 1

of their profession. The workshops are being jointly led by Deputy Chief Nursing Officer Kate Billingham and the SHA nurse directors. For further information, ask your PCT's Director of Nursing.

Modernising Nursing Careers

Views from the workshops

and the report of the working group will feed into the work underway on the community aspects of the Modernising Nursing Careers strategy.

This work includes reviewing the career pathways and education of health visitors, district nurses and other specialist practitioners working in the

community.

It will also take into account the commitments in the *Our health, our care, our say* White Paper, and will examine opportunities for health visitors and nurses who would like to move forward as social entrepreneurs or work within other new business models.

Links and info

- [More about Modernising Nursing Careers](#)

At-a-glance

- health minister shadowed seven jobs across NHS
- staff included a bed manager, A&E sister, and community psychiatric nurse.

Minister shadows nursing staff

Three nurses with very different roles were among seven people from across the NHS who were shadowed at work for a day by Andy Burnham, Minister for Delivery and Reform.



Andy Burnham (centre) with members of the assertive outreach team in County Durham during “the most revealing and uplifting” of his days spent with NHS staff.

A&E sister, south London

Andy joined an overnight shift in the A&E department of a hospital that had been experiencing financial difficulties. He found that “people believed in what they were doing and were doing a good job”, and that the instability had dented morale “not as much as might have been expected”.

Reception staff, ambulance staff, nurses and doctors all spoke of the relentless pressure on the unit. Despite this, Andy found nurses agreeing that the four-hour target “had brought a focus that was good for the public”.

However, all staff were frustrated at the number of patients with minor problems demanding emergency treatment. Andy concluded that “creating a patient-centred NHS needs to be balanced by calls for responsible use of its valuable services”.

Community psychiatric nurse, County Durham

Spending time with members of an assertive outreach team was “the most revealing and uplifting of my days out”, said Andy. The service had recently received a “substantial increase in resources” following historic under-funding. Before the last NHS funding round, the PCT was 22 per cent beneath its target funding allocation.

Andy described the team’s work to help people cope at home as “preventative health care at its very best”. He noted that the role of community psychiatric nurse is a largely unnoticed job that requires “a combination of medical and nursing expertise with finely-tuned social skills and a real resourcefulness”.

Bed manager, Cambridgeshire

“Received wisdom in some quarters has it that all NHS managers just sit behind a

desk and only exist to make the job of doctors and nurses more difficult”, said Andy. But when he shadowed Nicky, a bed manager, he found a qualified and experienced nurse, whose “whole working life seemed to be focused on making the working lives of her ward friends and colleagues easier by relieving pressure in the hospital system”.

Andy found Nicky’s views on NHS reform “typical of what I heard many people say”. Deeply committed to the NHS, she was “not sure where the NHS was heading in the long term or what the full implications were of the reform programme”.

Looking to the future

To accompany his report, Andy has written to Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt, suggesting responses to some of the challenges he identified. See www.dh.gov.uk for details.

Links and info

- The full report and letter to Patricia Hewitt

At-a-glance

- nursing staff urged to understand how they can contribute to infection prevention and control
- online community provides tools, techniques and discussion forums to support infection control
- specialist guidance is available for critical care and renal units.

Links and info

- [More about the Saving Lives programme](#)
- [The online community](#)
- [Going Further Faster](#)
- [The Safer practice in renal medicine tool](#)
- [Details of the colour code](#)

Taking responsibility for infection control

It's the duty of all nursing staff to increase patients' confidence about healthcare associated infections (HCAIs), and to ensure the right clinical interventions are used correctly every time, says Janice Stevens, MRSA Programme Director at the Department of Health.

"We have made small scale improvements across the service, which is really promising," explains Janice. "But we are still a step away from the level of change required to ensure the right things are done to patients every time to minimise the risk of infection. The high impact interventions of the Saving Lives programme (see www.dh.gov.uk/reducingmrsa) provide tools for staff to measure compliance and improve."

Another resource is the website www.clean-safe-care.nhs.uk, which outlines the tools, techniques and resources available to nurses for reducing HCAIs. It also acts as an online community,

New initiatives

- In December, the Department of Health (DH) issued new infection control guidance for critical care units.
- A new *Safer practice in renal medicine* tool outlines the actions needed for renal units to drive down infections. It includes an additional high impact intervention for renal catheter dialysis care.
- The DH is working

closely with the British Renal Society on a free conference for all renal staff and infection control staff, taking place on 8 March. For details email BRS@britishrenal.org

- The National Patient Safety Agency has launched a national colour code for cleaning materials, designed to reduce the risk of spreading infections.

providing discussion forums for NHS staff. The site also contains the *Going Further Faster* guidance, which

shows how trusts can use local data to drive down infection rates in high risk areas.

At-a-glance

- ten pilot sites to start testing intensive home-visiting programme for at-risk parents
- schemes modelled on successful programmes in the US
- health visitors are now being recruited to work on the pilot schemes.

Links and info

- [More details about the pilot sites](#)

Launch of intensive home-visiting pilots

Health visitors are being recruited to work in ten new pilot sites to test a nurse-led intensive home-visiting programme designed to help disadvantaged first-time parents achieve better outcomes for their children.

The Government is providing £7 million funding for the pilot sites, which were first announced in the Social Exclusion Action Plan launched in September. The plan highlights the importance of early identification and effective prevention to break the cycle of disadvantage.

Health visitors and midwives already have a vital role in supporting at-risk families during pregnancy and the first years of life. The Government recognises this but knows that more needs to be done to help

those families with the most entrenched and complex problems, and to reduce inequalities and infant mortality.

Deputy Chief Nursing Officer Kate Billingham said: "We know from programmes such as the Nurse Family Partnership model in the US that intensive home visiting to the most at-risk families during pregnancy and the first two years of life can radically improve outcomes for both mother and child. For the highest risk families, the saving in health costs

was more than four times the cost of the programme itself.

"We now need to draw on this overseas evidence and test the programme in the English context of universal provision, a skilled workforce, children's centres and best practice."

Individuals involved in the pilots will gain the opportunity to develop their preventive role and to demonstrate to commissioners the importance of health visiting for the future well-being of families and communities.

At-a-glance

- six nurses win Mary Seacole Leadership and Development Awards
- awards provide research funding for black and minority ethnic (BME) nurses, midwives and health visitors
- award winner Reva Stewart describes her winning project to improve access to intermediate care for the BME community.

Mary Seacole award winners use funds to boost patient-centred care

Six exceptional NHS nurses received the prestigious Mary Seacole Leadership and Development Awards at the end of 2006, enabling them to pursue research to promote patient-focused care.

The Mary Seacole awards, funded by the Department of Health and NHS Employers, were set up to support black and minority ethnic (BME) nurses, midwives and health visitors in clinical and professional practice in the NHS.

Improving access to intermediate care

One of the two 2006 Leadership Awards went to **Reva Stewart**, who works as Intermediate Tier Development Coordinator at Bradford and Airedale Teaching PCT and social services. Reva will use the £12,500 bursary to help fund a project designed to improve access to intermediate care services for the local BME community. The project has four main aims:

- to assess how effective existing intermediate care services are in meeting the needs of the diverse community
- to engage the community in consultation, including talking with ethnic elders and organising focus groups to understand the specific needs of different BME groups
- to make recommendations and form a plan for future action
- to implement necessary changes and evaluate any service redesign.

Reva said: "In four years working in intermediate care I have been struck at the comparatively low number of people from minority ethnic groups who access our services.

"I have heard a number of different theories as to

why. One explanation is that there are cultural barriers to accepting care of this type. Another is a lack of awareness by health and social care professionals of what is a relatively new and specialised area of service.

"Through this project I hope to establish the causes, and to use that information to effect change, enabling more people to access the services available to them.

"What is immediately apparent is that the project will require a robust communications strategy, which will include producing leaflets and other resources in several languages."

Child rearing and discipline practices

The other Leadership Award was presented to **Sandra Anto-Awuakye**, a lecturer-practitioner in health visiting at City University,

Newham PCT and Plaistow Hospital, who is using the award to study child-rearing and discipline practices in families from the Pakistani community.

About the awards

The awards were established in recognition of the outstanding contribution to nursing made by Jamaican-born nurse Mary Seacole, who nursed wounded British soldiers during the Crimean war.

Presenting the awards, Chief Nursing Officer Chris Beasley said: "The standard of the proposed projects was extremely high. I have no doubt the work will have a positive impact on the quality of care given to BME patients in the NHS."

Each awardee will have the support of a mentor and steering group to help develop research projects.

The other winners

Four other outstanding nurses received Development Awards and a bursary of £6,250.

● **Lihua Wu**, a staff nurse at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington, is conducting an exploratory trial to assess the nurse-led structured telephone follow-up of weight management in type 2 diabetes mellitus.

● **Florence Kanikasamy**, a midwife at Queen Charlotte and Chelsea Hospital, is evaluating the strategies adopted by a maternity service to implement care pathways set out in the National Service

Framework. It focuses particularly on how far the needs of BME women are met.

● **Mandakini Amin**, a health visitor/community practice teacher at Hinckley and Bosworth PCT, is looking at how to implement equality and diversity schemes in the workplace, by developing a teaching and assessment tool.

● **Theodora Machingambi**, a mental health practitioner for Dudley Beacon Castle PCT, is using the bursary to undertake a postgraduate psychotherapy diploma.

Links and info

- [More about the awards and winners](#)

At-a-glance

- dignity campaign encourages staff to treat people with respect and consideration
- get involved with the network of dignity champions to improve practice.

Be a champion of dignity

Nursing staff throughout the UK are being encouraged to become dignity champions and help improve services for older people.

In November, Minister for Care Services Ivan Lewis launched the first ever Dignity in Care campaign, which aims to place dignity and respect at the heart of caring for older people.

The campaign challenges frontline workers, practitioners, managers and commissioners to ensure older people are treated with dignity, and to show zero tolerance of abuse.

Staff can sign up as dignity champions either online at www.dignityincare.org.uk or by calling 0207 972 4007. By joining the champions network, you can access practical advice and tips on how to make a difference to people's lives, and can receive support about how to use

your influence to challenge bad practice. Network members can also share good practice, training and support materials and details of forthcoming events.

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) have developed a practice guide about dignity (see www.scie.org.uk/practiceguide09). The guide gives detailed information about the aspects of dignity that matter most to people, such as being treated as an individual, having a right to privacy, and being able to complain without fear of retribution.

Chief Nursing Officer Chris Beasley sees dignity

as a fundamental part of all good quality nursing. She believes that nurse leaders at all levels have responsibility for ensuring older people are treated with respect, and that consideration for dignity is embedded in working practices.

"The contribution of nurses to dignity is particularly important since nurses directly affect an individual's experience of care," said Chris. "All nurses are accountable for the care they provide and are expected to protect the dignity of those in their care."

This year's Health and Social Care Awards will reward staff who have gone the extra mile in ensuring dignity in care.

Links and info

- Register as a dignity champion
- The dignity practice guide
- More about the campaign
- Details of the Health and Social Care Awards

At-a-glance

- guidance to improve admission and discharge protocols affecting homeless people
- includes advice on how to identify people who are at risk
- provides advice on assessment and treatment pathways.

Guidance on supporting homeless people

New guidance is available to help improve the standard of care for patients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The ultimate aim of the new guidance is to help hospitals develop an effective admission and discharge protocol. This means avoiding discharging people straight on to the streets or into inappropriate accommodation.

As well as addressing housing needs, the guide explains how admission to hospital can provide an opportunity to address underlying health issues. The Government's Sustainable

Communities strategy highlights the increased likelihood of poor mental, physical and emotional health among people affected by homelessness.

The new guidance, *Hospital Admission and Discharge: People who are homeless or living in temporary or insecure accommodation*, was developed by the Department of Health and the Department for Communities and Local

Government in conjunction with Homeless Link and the London Network for Nurses and Midwives (LNNM).

LNNM project manager Natalie Warman stresses the importance of understanding homelessness: "We hope these guidelines will begin to improve the quality and standard of care delivered to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness – just as previous strategies have improved care to other vulnerable groups."

Links and info

- The guidance document

Diary

CNO spring business meetings for directors of nursing
20 April, Leeds and 23 April, London. Invitations and further information will be sent to directors of nursing.

Effective health information - the key issues
28 February, London. Contact sarah@healthcare-events.co.uk or call 020 8541 1399. ● Apply online

Improving practice and dignity on the wards
20 March, London. Contact cristina@healthcare-events.co.uk or call 020 8541 1399. ● Apply online

Stroke listening event
22 February, Birmingham. ● Register online

New POPPs sites

Ten more sites are to test new ways to improve outcomes for older people as part of the Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPPs). Backed by £18.5 million in Department of Health funding, the sites will focus on helping people stay independent for longer and avoiding the need for higher intensity care or hospital admission.

● [View details of the sites](#)

Community hospitals funding

The Department of Health is to provide £44.5 million funding for four new community hospitals and health centres. The facilities will provide NHS patients with minor operations, medical tests and follow-up care outside of large hospitals.

● [View more details](#)

Queen's Nursing Institute forum

The Queen's Nursing Institute has launched an online forum to help community nurses, managers and educators discuss issues about community nursing, and feed into national policy.

● [Access the forum](#)

Queen's Nurse title revived

The Queen's Nursing Institute has also announced that the title of Queen's Nurse will be revived. To be awarded the title, a nurse must have completed at least three years' practice in a community setting.

● [View details of the Queen's Nurse title](#)

NHS ranks high for equality

The Department of Health has been ranked 18th in the top 100 employers for gay people in Britain. Stonewall's

annual Workplace Equality Index measures employers' performance, practice and policy. Five NHS organisations are also on the list: West Midlands South SHA; Nottingham PCT; Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust; Oxleas NHS Trust; and Halton PCT.

● [View more details](#)

New bulletin for social care staff

Following a successful pilot edition, the Department of Health's *Social Care Bulletin* will now be published quarterly. The bulletin aims to promote good practice and support social care staff in their everyday roles. Content will include news, case studies, summaries of policies, and updates from David Behan, Director General of Social Care. Email socialcarebulletinsubscription@dh.gsi.gov.uk to subscribe.

● [View the January issue](#)

NHS Direct expands TV service

NHS Direct information and advice is now available on the Freeview digital TV service (channel 108), giving a further 6.4 million homes access to the service through their TV. The Freeview service will initially provide around 150 pages of health information, including answers to common health questions, lifestyle advice, and details of NHS services.

● [View the NHS Direct website](#)

Reform for emergency care

Two new reports outline the need for changes to the way emergency care and heart and stroke services are delivered. Sir George Alberti, National Clinical Director for Emergency Care, and Professor Roger

Boyle, National Clinical Director for Heart Disease and Stroke, both argue that traditional A&E departments are not the only option when dealing with life and death situations.

● [View the emergency access report](#)

● [View the heart and stroke services report](#)

Promoting a smokefree future

The Department of Health (DH) has announced that all enclosed public places and workplaces in England will become smokefree from 1 July 2007. The minimum age for purchasing tobacco will rise from 16 to 18 from 1 October 2007.

A campaign to raise awareness of this change will be launched shortly.

● [View the Smokefree England website](#)

Involving patients and the public

The newly launched NHS Centre for Involvement will work closely with the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement to help NHS staff and organisations to engage with patients and the public more effectively, and to implement changes based on their feedback.

● [View more about the centre](#)

Tool to reduce emergency bed days

A new tool is helping NHS organisations identify those patients with long term conditions who are most at risk of unplanned and unnecessary hospital admissions. The Combined Predictive Model uses A&E, inpatient, outpatient and GP data to identify future frequent users of hospital services. By targeting these people with earlier interventions, the number of emergency bed days can

be reduced.

● [Access the tool](#)

Electronic records trial in spring

Electronic patient records are to be launched in early adopter sites this spring. The summary care record will initially contain a small amount of patient information, such as current medications, allergies and adverse reactions, with access controlled by strict security measures.

● [View more about electronic records](#)

Honours for nurses

The following awards were won by nurses and midwives in the 2007 new year's honours list:

● OBE: **Lisa Dougherty**, nurse consultant, Royal Marsden Hospital, London
 ● CBE: **Roswyn Hakesley-Brown**, former President, Royal College of Nursing
 ● MBE: **Angela Faulding**, specialist health visitor, North East Lincolnshire PCT; **Susan Morgan**, Macmillan nurse specialist for teenagers and young adults, St James's University Hospital, Leeds; **Christine Mullen**, Associate Director, Workforce Strategy, NHS North West; **Gillian Waterhouse**, Head of Patient and Public Involvement, Heartlands Hospital, Birmingham; **Professor Ami David**, Director of Nursing and Professional Development, West Kent PCT.

● [View the full list](#)

Awards for urology research

The British Association of Urological Nurses (BAUN) is offering grants of up to £1,000 to support nurses undertaking research or education in the field of

Continued from page 7

urology. Nurses working in the area of prostate cancer can also apply for financial support from BAUN. To apply, nurses must be members of BAUN. Contact BAUN on 01706 811077 or info@baun.co.uk

● **See details of the awards and membership**

New group for ECT nurses

The National Association of Lead Nurses for ECT (NALNECT) is a new national organisation for mental health nurses involved in electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) clinics. It aims to share best practice, influence policy, and provide advice and training. For details email alison.frow@humber.nhs.uk

GUIDANCE

NICE obesity guidance

NICE has published the first integrated clinical and public health guidance for the prevention and treatment of obesity in adults and children. It states that drug treatments should only be employed if lifestyle interventions are unsuccessful, and also includes recommendations for the NHS, schools and local authorities.

● **View the obesity guidance**

New guidance on dementia

NICE and the Social Care Institute for Excellence have issued joint guidance on the treatment and care of people with dementia. For the first time, healthcare professionals

in the NHS will be following the same guidelines as social workers and care workers in nursing homes.

● **View the dementia guidance**

Updated immunisation guide

Immunisation Against Infectious Disease, the guide for health professionals known as the 'Green Book', has been updated and is being re-published for the first time since 1996. The book will be distributed to professionals in primary care and occupational health departments.

● **View the updated guide**

Framework for cardiology PwSIs

A new skills-based operational framework for practitioners with a special interest (PwSI) in cardiology

has been produced by the NHS Heart Improvement Programme. The framework is aimed at commissioners of cardiac services, current and potential cardiology PwSIs, and training providers. It is endorsed by the Department of Health and professional clinical bodies.

● **View the framework**

Safer management of controlled drugs

Guidance from the Department of Health sets out new governance arrangements for controlled drugs in England. It outlines the arrangements that PCTs, NHS trusts, foundation trusts and the independent sector must put in place to monitor the use and management of controlled drugs.

● **View the controlled drugs guidance**

Latest publications

Make sure you're not missing out on new tools and guidance. Here is a round-up of recent publications from the Department of Health (DH) and beyond. DH publications are available from www.dh.gov.uk/publications

● **A summary of CSIP's social care programme** This leaflet outlines the work of the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) social care programme.

● **WiPP newsletter** New@WiPP is a new regular news bulletin from the Working in Partnership Programme (WiPP) aimed at professionals in primary care.

● **Safety first – a report for patients, clinicians and healthcare managers** This report proposes a number of measures to ensure patient safety is adopted at all levels of the NHS. It recommends that local trusts should have a stronger focus on patient safety, and that procedures for reporting safety incidents should be made easier.

● **High volume care publications** The NHS Institute's Delivering Quality and Value team has launched a series of documents focusing on high volume

care. They demonstrate a range of improvements along the entire patient pathway for a number of healthcare resource groups.

● **NHS operating framework** NHS Chief Executive David Nicholson has published the operating framework for 2007-08, setting out the national rules for the NHS. The framework moves towards a system that allows greater autonomy for local NHS organisations.

● **Improving Stroke Services: a guide for commissioners** The guide provides best practice advice while an accompanying toolkit helps commissioners analyse demand for services and scope for improvement.

● **Many rivers to cross: The history of the Caribbean contribution to the NHS** This new book tells the story of the Caribbean men and women who staffed the NHS during its formative years. It uses archive and contemporary

photographs and oral history. For details email info@sugarmedia.co.uk

● **Better services for people with an autistic spectrum disorder** This new guide clarifies existing Government policy and describes good practice as it relates to adults with an autistic spectrum disorder.

● **Choose and Book – Making it work for you in secondary care** This film, available on DVD and CD, is aimed at provider clinicians and non-clinicians and demonstrates how Choose and Book is being used in secondary care.

● **CHD National Service Framework: Shaping the future** This new report from the Department of Health states that premature deaths from coronary heart disease (CHD) have fallen by 35.9 per cent since 1996. Inequalities between different parts of the country have also been cut.