

## News

### At-a-glance

- tackling inequalities is key priority
- public health nurses with specialist skills are valued.

### Modernising Nursing Careers consultations: add your voice

#### • Pre-registration training

From the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the *Review of pre-registration nursing education* asks whether pre-registration training is suitable for future healthcare needs. Closing date: 8 February 2008. [www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org)

#### • Post-registration training

Nurses' views are sought for contributions to *Towards a framework for post-registration nursing careers: a national consultation*, which proposes a set of clinical pathways for post-registration training. Closing date: 15 February 2008. [www.dh.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dh.gov.uk/consultations)

### At-a-glance

- new programme to transform NHS commissioning
- aim is to achieve better health, better care and better value for all
- nurses are key to success by identifying local needs.

## Health visiting for the future

**Health visitors will increasingly focus on disadvantaged families and communities in order to tackle inequalities, as outlined in a recent review of the profession.**

The report, *Facing the Future: a review of the role of health visitors*, which has recently been welcomed and supported by Government, sets out two primary roles for health visitors: leading and delivering universal child health promotion and intensive early intervention for at-risk families.

Lindsey Hayes, Public Health Adviser at the Royal College of Nursing, said: "The report highlights the pivotal work done by health visitors. The long-term benefits of health visiting are often not recognised so we need to see a renewed investment



in training and workforce development."

The priorities in *Facing the Future* reflect some of the urgent issues facing society today such as obesity prevention, mental health, parenting and social exclusion.

**How vulnerable first-time parents are benefiting from a nurse-led pilot project – turn to page 3**

*Continued on page 3*

## Nurses to help drive world class commissioning

**Nurses will have a key role to play in a programme which will transform the way health and care services in the NHS are commissioned, driving unprecedented improvements locally for patients.**

As well as providing better value, and improving the health of the local community, world class commissioning will reduce inequalities between the areas with the worst health

and deprivation and the population as a whole.

The Department of Health has outlined its vision for world class commissioning and included a set of 11 organisational competencies

that PCTs will need to achieve.

The world class commissioning vision will be turned into reality by the local NHS.

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The electronic version lets you click on web links for direct access to more detail about each of the articles.

## 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 [CNO-Bulletin@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CNO-Bulletin@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

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## Links and info

- Read more about world class commissioning

## Voicepiece



**Christine Beasley, Chief Nursing Officer, discusses the vital public health role of health visitors and outlines the importance of a strong commissioning body for the profession.**

In October Ann Keen MP announced the Government's response to *Facing the Future*, the review of health visiting many of you will have contributed to. The review gives the profession a clear direction that is in keeping with the changes taking place in society and Government policy.

Our response is clear. The Government sees public health nursing and health visiting as a priority and wishes to see an increase in health visitors in deprived areas. The report includes a message to PCTs that they need to "ensure that there are sufficient public health nurses with the competencies to deliver the new PSAs (Public Service Agreements), work with high-risk families, deprived communities and

lead the universal service". This does not mean more health visitors doing the same things. The workforce profile in children's services and public health is changing and this is having a significant impact on the role of the health visitor. It has become more important than ever to say what the unique contribution of the health visitor is, in particular within integrated children's services and children's centres.

The key role of Government is to set priorities for the service that drive local spending decisions, through the PSAs. In the new PSAs, there are several priorities in which health visitors, school nurses and other community practitioners have a key role to play. These include: increasing the levels of breastfeeding; reducing obesity among children; improving the emotional and mental health of

children and young people; improving the experience of parents with disabled children; and reducing inequalities.

There is, of course, more to do and the speed of change is unlikely to slow down over the next few years. There is a great deal that the Government can and will do to support the profession, but in a devolved system local commissioners and providers are key decision makers. I want to see local leaders for children's services and nursing taking forward *Facing the Future* in partnership with their practitioners, recognising the important contribution that health visitors, and their teams, make.

I believe that *Facing the Future* and the Government's response provide the profession and the service with much needed clarity about the way forward and a positive view of the future.

## Nurses to help drive world class commissioning

*Continued from page 1*

The vision articulates the importance of having a clear understanding of the needs of the local community in order to make best use of resources and improve health and well-being outcomes.

World class commissioning will involve specifying and procuring services that deliver the best possible health and care provision and outcomes within available resources.

Nurses will have an important role to play in assessing local needs and deciding priorities. This will be done in partnership with PCTs, the public and other partners

such as local authorities.

The first phase was the launch of a vision document followed by an assurance system that will reward commissioners for delivering world class commissioning as well as hold them to account.

A support and development framework will be available in early 2008 to provide PCTs with the tools they need to drive improvements.

### World class commissioning competencies

- locally lead the NHS
- work with community partners
- engage with public and patients
- collaborate with clinicians
- manage knowledge and assess needs
- prioritise investment
- stimulate the market
- promote improvement and innovation
- secure procurement skills
- manage the system
- manage finances

# Health visiting for the future

*Continued from page 1*

It also emphasises the value of public health nurses with specialist skills in working with children and families, linked to both general practice and children's centres.

Maggie Fisher, a health visitor from Hampshire PCT, said: "To implement fully the report's proposals will require more health visitors where

there have been workforce cuts. This will ensure that we are able to play our rightful part in promoting the emotional, social and physical health of children and families."

Turning *Facing the Future* into reality will rely on good local leadership, a confident and innovative profession,

and national support.

The Government has allocated £21 billion for children's services and it's hoped that local commissioners and providers will use the report to develop a skilled and valued workforce with a key role in improving health, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

## Nurses' home visits helping young first-time parents

"This isn't traditional health visiting or midwifery – it's a different way of working," said health visitor, Anne Lynch, who is the supervisor of the Tower Hamlets Family Nurse Partnership Programme in east London.

The project is one of 10 sites piloting the joint Department of Health/ Department for Children, Schools and Families programme which is testing a model of intensive nurse-led home visiting for vulnerable young first-time parents.

The Tower Hamlets team of eight includes four family nurses – a mix of midwives and health visitors – who each manage a caseload of 25 families. The clients are first-time mothers under 20 who are 14 to 28 weeks pregnant when they join the programme.

"This is an extremely positive way of working with vulnerable, needy clients – many of whom have poor family relationships or simply no structure to their lives. This model, which has been

rigorously tested and proven to work, focuses on the strengths that clients have, rather than focusing on the negatives – and clients respond to that approach," said Anne.

It is early days for the project which began in March 2007, but Anne is hopeful about its prospects for success. "Vulnerable young people, who in the past may have been written off, are now getting the support they need to help them onto the right road," she said.

### Links and info

- [Read the report](#)

### At-a-glance

- new *Health and Social Care Bill* launched
- four key areas: public health; pregnancy grant; Care Quality Commission; professional regulation
- will take effect from September 2008.

## Obesity and health regulations scrutinised in new bill

**Improving public health and enhancing patient safety are the key aims of the new *Health and Social Care Bill* published in November.**

The bill contains four key policy areas.

### Public health

Helping parents tackle childhood obesity is an important aspect of the bill. New plans will ensure that parents receive the results of their children's participation in the National Child Measurement Programme with advice on healthy living and lifestyle choice.

### Health in Pregnancy Grant

All expectant mothers will receive a one-off £190 grant to help with the costs of a healthy lifestyle in the last few weeks of pregnancy.

### Care Quality Commission

The Commission will be the new health and adult social care regulator with strong powers to inspect, investigate and intervene where hospitals are failing to meet required safety and hygiene standards.

### Professional regulation

Reforming professional regulation will ensure that the bill works to restore public confidence in the help they receive from health professionals. A new independent adjudicator to make decisions on whether individual health professionals should remain in practice will also be established.

Subject to parliamentary timetable, the changes are expected to take effect from September 2008.

### Links and info

- [View the Health and Social Care Bill](#)

### At-a-glance

- new tool assesses patient needs and dependency based on care level indicators
- helps with nursing staff allocation on wards
- NHS Institute developing database for national benchmarking.

## Insight tool to benefit patients and help with nurse staffing

**Nurses will find it easier to assess the needs and care dependency of patients in hospitals with a new tool that was launched at the CNO Annual Summit in November.**

The Acuity/Dependency Tool will also help NHS hospitals feed into evidence-based decision-making on nursing staff and workforce. When allied to Nurse Sensitive Indicators (NSIs), which is a new term given to quality indicators in nursing care, the tool can also aid development of new and existing services.

The tool was developed by the Acuity Project team at the Association of UK University Hospitals (AUKUH). Katherine Fenton, Director of Clinical Standards at South Central SHA who is part of the team, said: "The tool's attraction is its simplicity. Test site feedback shows that nurses like using it and patient care is improved through better awareness of symptoms."

### How does the tool work?

Acuity and dependency are measured by recording patient data (called the 'Care Level' which is explained to the right) at participating wards/units at 1500 hours daily, Monday to Friday, for 20 days, currently twice a year (January and June).

Over time, it is anticipated that this will enable identification of seasonal trends, changing demographics and healthcare needs. This flow of patient information allows workforce review teams to consider issues such as occupancy levels, staffing levels, admissions, discharges, ward attenders, deaths, and transfers.

NSIs and patient flow information allied to acuity and dependency enable agreement of appropriate nursing care for all wards using the tool.

The next stage is being picked up by the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement. The vision is a database of benchmarking indicators similar to the *Better Care, Better Value* statistics which show trust-by-trust performance across a number of key areas, helping the NHS identify and share best practice. Organisations will volunteer their information on staffing and quality measures for the national database, and the NHS Institute will then publish the figures nationally by organisation and SHA.

### Assessing care: understanding the levels

#### The AUKUH Acuity/Dependency Tool is based on critical care patient classifications.

Dependency and care needs are assessed on five 'care levels':

- Care Level 0: patient's needs met in general wards.
- Care Level 1a: acutely ill patient or one likely to deteriorate.
- Care Level 1b: patient is

stable but more dependent on nurses for help and support.

- Care Level 2: patient is unstable, may deteriorate, is unsuitable for general ward care and is likely to transfer to a level 2 unit.
- Care Level 3: patient requires advanced respiratory and therapeutic support for multiple organ problems.

### Links and info

- Read more about the tool on the AUKUH website

### At-a-glance

- new good practice guidelines on learning disability nursing
- updated guidance on people with learning disabilities who also have behaviour that challenges and/or mental health needs
- service commissioners will find the guidance useful.

## Learning disabilities: latest guidance for nurses and commissioners

**Nurses on the front line as well as those who commission services will find two newly-published guidance documents useful and relevant to their day-to-day work.**

*The Good Practices in Learning Disability Nursing Guidance*, launched in December, includes clear benchmarks for good practice supported by examples.

It highlights ways in which the contribution of nurses can be even more effective.

Originally published in 1983 by Professor RJ Mansell and his team, the updated *Services*

*for people with learning disabilities and challenging behaviour/mental health needs* will aid staff working with this group of people.

*Continued on page 5*

### At-a-glance

- clinical pathway groups exploring patient needs in eight key health areas
- nurses inputting clinical good practice and front line experience
- SHAs compiling reports from each group for public consultation.

## Nurses' key role in sharing good practice and shaping the *Our NHS, our future* review

**Nurses working in varied specialities and settings across England have been contributing clinical good practice and front line experience into the second phase of the *Our NHS, our future* review.**

Clinical pathway groups from each of the 10 SHAs are looking at eight specific patient care pathways:

- maternity and newborn
- children's health
- staying healthy
- long-term conditions
- acute care
- planned care
- mental health
- end of life care.

Elizabeth Mitcham, a community matron from South West Essex PCT, was asked to join the long-term conditions and end of life care pathway groups in East of England SHA. Said Elizabeth: "Nurses are often the first port of call for many patients and delivering a truly patient-led NHS requires our patient knowledge as well as our clinical input."

June Toovey, nursing director for the Yorkshire Cancer Network, co-chairs the end of life pathway group in Yorkshire and the Humber SHA. She commented: "It's been



a good opportunity for nurses to get involved and help shape and influence local and national strategic direction."

Members of the groups recently came together at an international summit with experts from this country and abroad, for discussions about how to deliver the best outcomes for patients and to develop locally-focused plans.

### What happens next?

Each clinical pathway group will set out their proposed models of care

to their SHAs in January 2008, and will seek further views from staff and the public at regional consultative events.

National working groups are being set up to look closely at what the local clinical pathway groups tell them are the enablers and barriers to making the improvements they believe are necessary.

Health minister Lord Darzi's final report of the *Our NHS, our future* review will be published in June 2008.

### Links and info

- View the *Our NHS, our future* review website

## Learning disabilities: latest guidance for nurses and commissioners

*Continued from page 4*

Rob Greig, National Director, Learning Disabilities, said: "The Mansell report provides evidence-based guidance on how to support people with most complex needs in non-institutional settings. I urge both commissioners and providers to follow

its recommendations and become involved in the delivery support programme around the report that the Valuing People Support Team will be leading over the coming months."

Commissioners will also find related good practice guidance, launched in October, useful.

*Commissioning adult learning disability health services* looks at:

- the changing demand for, and supply of, services
- how these services fit into the wider NHS changes
- detailed descriptions of the different component parts of specialist learning disability health services
- resources for further information and support.

### Links and info

- Access the learning disability guidance
- Access the Mansell guidance
- Read Valuing People
- Access the commissioning guidance

**At-a-glance**

- National Stroke Strategy launched
- specialist stroke nursing integral to long-term patient outcomes
- core competencies outlined.

# Stroke specialist nursing key to new National Stroke Strategy

**Nurses have a key role to play in implementing the new National Stroke Strategy, launched at the UK Stroke Forum by Health Secretary, Alan Johnson, in December.**

Caroline Watkins, Professor of Stroke and Older People's Care, Department of Nursing, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, said: "Nurses play a crucial role in effective stroke care, not only by reducing mortality and morbidity, but by emotionally and practically supporting patients and relatives. In the community, nurses are crucial to the

co-ordination of post-discharge care, rehabilitation and support.

"Their duties include: ensuring treatments to prevent recurrent strokes; promoting independence, adjustment and well-being; and preventing further problems, therefore making re-admissions to hospital less likely."

Core competencies for staff have been developed

by Skills for Health with the consultation of key stroke specialists. Further competencies for the safe delivery of thrombolysis in the hyper-acute stage are being developed by a collaborative group with representation from the National Stroke Nursing Forum, stroke physicians, and other relevant health professionals.

## Specialist stroke nursing

### Reducing the impact of the initial event

This involves protecting the ischaemic penumbra and preventing secondary brain injury (stroke progression) by ensuring the safe delivery of time-dependent treatments, such as thrombolysis, acute evaluation, monitoring

of physiological and neurological parameters, and intervention. Intensive monitoring, with or without telemetry, has the potential to prompt a range of nursing and medical interventions, which may enhance survival

and recovery from stroke. Proactive maintenance of the quantity (homeostasis and ensuring cerebral perfusion) and quality (oxygenation and blood glucose levels) of blood reaching the brain, is key.

### Preventing complications

This includes the assessment and management of swallowing problems with correct positioning,

early mobilisation and early rehabilitation; the promotion of continence and avoidance of catheterisation;

and the co-ordination of the multi-disciplinary team.

### Increasing the likelihood of achieving satisfactory lifestyles

Nurses work to ensure a smooth transition into the community, as well as the readiness of community

services to provide ongoing care, support and rehabilitation. The regular review of treatments and

identification of further needs should also be addressed.

## Links and info

- The Department of Health stroke pages
- The National Stroke Nursing Forum

**At-a-glance**

- annual report profiles nation's health
- declining mortality rates in targeted killers
- action needed on obesity, diabetes and health inequalities

# Reporting on the state of the nation's health

**Life expectancy is up but so are rates of obesity and diabetes, says the 2007 report on the health of England – a useful tool to compare the local picture with that of other parts of the country.**

*The Health Profile of England* is published by the Department of Health every year and provides a wide-

ranging snapshot of public health in England. It includes both national and regional data which allows

people to compare data from their own Local Health Profile.

*Continued on page 7*

# Reporting on the state of the nation's health

*Continued from page 6*

## Links and info

- [View the report](#)

The report shows improvements in a number of areas including declining mortality rates in prevalent illnesses and a reduction in

infant mortality, now at its lowest ever level.

However, it also identifies areas of concern including rising rates of diabetes and obesity, and an increase in alcohol-related hospital

admissions. The profile also revealed that there is a consistent 'north/south' divide, with poorer health in the north of England in comparison to the south in almost all cases.

## News in brief

### New best practice guide for mental health nurses

Nurses working in mental health can now get further help and support to implement New Ways of Working (NWW) through *New Ways of Working for Everyone: A best practice implementation guide*. Published by the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE), the guide sets out how health and social care organisations can take a strategic approach to implementing NWW.

- [View further information](#)

### Smokefree England three months on

The Department of Health has released a report looking at the impact and effect of the England-wide smoking ban implemented on 1 July. Research found high levels of support for the ban by both the general public and from businesses. Three quarters of adults support the law and 79 percent believe it will have a positive effect on public health. A greater proportion of smokers (47 percent) support the new law than oppose it (37 percent).

- [More information](#)

### Cancer Reform Strategy published

The new Cancer Reform Strategy (CRS) was launched in early December. Backed by £370 million until 2012, the strategy aims to develop a world class service that tackles cancer and improves patient care and long-term outcomes. The strategy will transform existing care from prevention and diagnosis through to treatment and aftercare. Key elements of the CRS will focus on prevention; faster treatment; extended screening programmes; fast-track drug approval; and extended services for the increasing number of people surviving cancer.

- [Read more](#)

### National pandemic flu framework launched

In conjunction with the Cabinet Office, at the end of November the Department of Health published the first national blueprint on responding to a pandemic flu outbreak. The cross-government *Pandemic flu: A national framework for responding to an influenza pandemic* replaces earlier plans and takes in non-health issues for the first time. It sets out the model response for national, regional and local planners. Guidance about

adult social care, acute and primary care, ambulance services, community care and an ethical framework supports the new plan.

- [Access the framework](#)

### Best practice guidance on emergency care of older people

The Department of Health has published guidance on caring for older people in ambulance and A&E environments. *Urgent care pathways for older people with complex needs* provides best practice guidance where falls, confusional states or hip fractures make caring for older people more challenging. The guidance identifies best clinical practice in these three areas and constructs a clear and auditable clinical care pathway.

- [Access the guidance](#)

### Hospital travel costs scheme (HTCS)

Following a consultation on the HTCS, new guidance has been published to provide clear advice about the scheme. Clarification is given for the roles and responsibility of NHS organisations in administering and publicising HTCS to patients and the public. Components of the guidance include:

- appointing a senior manager or board level director to take responsibility for reviewing and monitoring HTCS
- ensuring that the scheme is publicised to patients and the public and that information on the scheme is readily available
- ensuring front line staff are aware of the scheme and how it is administered within the provider unit.
- [Read guidance](#)

### Diabetes care improving

The number of people having all the recommended key tests and measurements needed to keep their diabetes under control is increasing year on year, according to the *2005/06 National Diabetes Audit*. The audit was carried out by the Information Centre for health and social care on behalf of the Healthcare Commission. Clinical recommendations include:

- record the ethnicity of people with diabetes to help understand prevalence and inform service planning
- ensure the key processes of diabetes care are carried out, especially for the young and elderly
- ensure that young people with consistently high HbAa1c levels are offered additional support by their diabetes team.
- [Download report](#)

## Immunisation programme expands to include HPV

From September 2008, 12- and 13-year-old girls will receive a routine vaccination against the human papilloma virus (HPV). The vaccine will also be given to girls up to 18 years as part of a catch up campaign beginning in autumn 2009. HPV is a sexually transmitted virus and is responsible for 99 percent of invasive cervical cancer. It will be up to PCTs to plan how to deliver the vaccination programme locally.

● [More information](#)

## Consultation on MRI examinations

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) has launched a consultation about the protection of patients and volunteers undergoing magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) examinations. The consultation document will form the basis for the HPA's advice to the Department of Health, scheduled for completion in March 2008. The new advice will replace that provided in 1991 by the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB). The consultation closes on 31 January 2008.

● [More information](#)

## Health regulator's summit on the regulation of healthcare support workers

The regulation of healthcare support workers (HCSWs) will be the subject of a national summit to be hosted in spring 2008 by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the regulatory body for the 682,000 nurses and midwives working in the UK. The proposal for the summit emerged from a workshop session at the NMC's October 2007 council meeting at which members advocated greater clarity on the definition, role and functions of HCSWs so that patients will have a much clearer understanding of the differences between these groups and regulated healthcare professionals. Further information will be published in a later bulletin.

● [Read more](#)

## Launch of CATCH IT, BIN IT, KILL IT campaign

The Department of Health has launched the **CATCH IT, BIN IT, KILL IT** awareness campaign to encourage the public to practise correct respiratory and hand hygiene.

The campaign is part of the department's pandemic flu preparedness programme. Correct respiratory and hand hygiene practice will play a major role in slowing the spread of many cold, flu and other viruses and nurses play a key role in raising awareness of healthy habits. Campaign posters can be ordered from the DH Publications Orderline on 0870 155 5455 or email [dh@prolog.uk.com](mailto:dh@prolog.uk.com) quoting code 284556/A4 or 284556/A3.

## Association for Continence Advice – fellowship award

A fellowship award has been launched by the Association for Continence Advice (ACA) and nominations are now required for the 2008 Fellowship. Nurses and midwives who have demonstrated a significant contribution to the field of continence should be nominated. The fellowship will only be awarded to a single candidate – group initiatives are not eligible. Recommendations for the award must be made to a member of the ACA executive committee and their contact details can be found on the ACA website.

● [aca@fitwise.co.uk](mailto:aca@fitwise.co.uk)  
● [www.aca.uk.com](http://www.aca.uk.com)

## Diary

### Releasing Time to Care – The Productive Ward: Starting Your Journey

25 January 2008, ICC Birmingham.  
This free event from the NHS Institute will explain how to get the best out of the Productive Ward methodology which focuses on improving the quality, safety and reliability of key care processes in a sustainable way. The event is open to directors of nursing, lead nurses and change leaders in acute NHS trusts and numbers are limited to three per organisation.

● [productiveward@glasgows.co.uk](mailto:productiveward@glasgows.co.uk)  
● [www.institute.nhs.uk/productiveward](http://www.institute.nhs.uk/productiveward)

### 2008 CNO Business Meeting for Directors of Nursing

Venues to be confirmed.  
Friday 11 April, Leeds.  
Monday 14 April, London.  
Monday 8 September, London.  
Wednesday 10 September, Leeds.

## 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](http://www.dh.gov.uk/publications)

### ● NSF for Children and Maternity Services

A progress report on the National Service Framework (NSF) for Children, Young People and Maternity Services has been published. *Children's health, our future: a review of progress against the National*

*Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services 2004*, written by Dr Sheila Shribman, National Clinical Director for Children, provides an overview of work on the NSF and outlines:

● key policy milestones

● progress to date  
● major challenges and opportunities still ahead. The NSF for Children, Young People and Maternity Services, published in September 2004, is a 10-year programme designed to improve the health of

children and young people by setting standards for all organisations providing services to children and their delivery partners. The NSF forms an integral part of the cross-government initiative Every Child Matters.

● [Read the report](#)