

News

At-a-glance

- new strategy to drive down HCAs
- extra funding for more nurses
- new public education campaign.

cleanyourhands campaign extended

The National Patient Safety Agency's campaign is being trialled for the first time in care settings outside hospitals.

- See news in brief page 8

Nurses at the forefront of improving hospital cleanliness

Nurses play a crucial role in improving cleanliness and infection prevention according to a new strategy to tackle healthcare associated infections (HCAs).

The strategy, *Clean, safe care*, draws together current initiatives to tackle HCAs. Up to £45 million extra funding is available for local organisations to invest in additional specialist staff, such as infection control nurses.

Managing Director of Community Services at Warwickshire PCT, Jill Freer, said: "This strategy, and other initiatives to tackle HCAs, reinforces the importance of the role of matrons and their teams in providing clean safe care to their patients. The matrons in Warwickshire



PCT Community Hospitals provided a report to the PCT board for the first time last month, highlighting areas of activity to prevent and control infections."

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Nurse and patient cleanliness initiative leads to top award – turn to page 3

At-a-glance

- national preventative screening programme announced
- set to reduce cardiovascular disease, diabetes and kidney disease
- new tests to identify those at risk.

New national screening programme to identify at-risk patients

Thousands of lives could be saved as a result of a new national screening programme announced by the Prime Minister last month.

A preventative screening programme for heart problems, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease will begin by offering men aged

over 65 an ultrasound to detect early abdominal aortic aneurysm, which kills more than 3,000 men a year. The long-term aim of the

programme is to provide everyone in England with access to the right preventative health check-up.

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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

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Links and info

- Read more about the screening programme

Voicepiece



Christine Beasley, Chief Nursing Officer, discusses the consultation on post-registration training and urges all nurses and midwives to add their input before the closing date.

There are just a few days left for responses to the consultation on post-registration nursing careers before it closes on 15 February. We want to gather as many views as possible on the options proposed to find out if you think they would work. Responses from individuals, groups and organisations are all welcome.

Many of you will have taken part in the national workshops and contributed to the development of the proposed career framework which is built around pathways, mirroring those most commonly followed by patients and service users.

The proposed pathways are:

- children, family and public health
- first contact, access and urgent care
- supporting long-term care
- acute and critical care
- mental health and psychosocial care.

Through the consultation, we want your views on whether this will enhance the contribution of nursing to contemporary health care, addressing some of the existing weaknesses in nursing careers, and clarify career pathways.

We want to know whether the case for change justifies the introduction of a new framework and whether the framework proposed here is taking us in the right direction. Does it look like it

will support your future career and career development whether you work in acute or community and primary care nursing, have a specialist practitioner role, or work in children's, learning disabilities or mental health nursing? We would also like to hear your alternative suggestions for a way forward.

The consultation document sets out the case for change, the main requirements of a new framework, a detailed explanation of the framework, some frequently asked questions and a summary of the main challenges to implementation. The consultation is currently confined to England but the other UK health departments have been involved at all stages and await the outcomes with interest.

• www.dh.gov.uk/consultations

New national screening programme to identify at-risk patients

Continued from page 1

More diagnostic procedures will be carried out in GP surgeries, and therefore available to people when they want and need them.

The programme will also look to extend screening, for example for colon and breast cancer. The National Screening Committee, an independent clinical body, will look at the evidence and advise on what additional screening procedures would be genuinely useful in detecting other conditions.

In the next few months, Health Secretary Alan Johnson will set out plans



to introduce tests to identify vulnerability to heart and circulation problems and outline dates and timescales

for the programme to be taken forward. We will include an update in a future issue of the *CNO Bulletin*.

Nurses at the forefront of improving hospital cleanliness

Continued from page 1

A key element of the strategy to reduce HCAs is the deep cleaning programme. All trusts were required to submit and agree their plans by December last year and all deep cleans will be completed by March this year. Jill Freer continues: "The deep clean of our hospitals is underway and so far has been

supported well by patients and their relatives. The staff have been enthusiastic and keen to take part in the deep clean and committed to maintaining this high standard of cleanliness in their wards."

The strategy also outlines a new public education campaign on antibiotic

resistance. The campaign launches this month to raise awareness of the fact that antibiotics do not work on most coughs, colds and sore throats. It will also provide a way for doctors and nurses to raise the issue with patients. Posters and leaflets will be supplied to GP surgeries.

Nurses lead award-winning cleanliness initiative

Nurses at Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust have a secret weapon to help them improve hospital cleanliness and prevent infection: patients.

Initiatives such as 'Clutter-Buster', where volunteers do spot checks on ward areas to ensure the hospital is clean and clutter-free, and 'Back to Practice', where senior nurses visit patients to monitor standards of care and to listen to their experiences, has led to

the trust receiving an Involvement to Impact Award (2007) in the Hospital Care Category. The award recognises work to improve the patient experience.

Deputy Director of Nursing, Jo Galloway, said: "Patient involvement is key to sustaining improvement in hospital cleanliness. Senior nurses engage with and enlist the support of patients to contribute to ongoing improvements in

cleanliness and infection prevention.

"Last year we launched a six-month 'Getting Better for Patients Campaign' where we worked closely with our patient representatives to drive improvements. Following on from the success of the campaign we will now continue with an ongoing programme where we focus on a different patient experience priority each month."

Links and info

- Read the strategy
- More about the antibiotics resistance awareness campaign

At-a-glance

- national and local priorities outlined in the operating framework for 2008/09
- list of indicators will help PCTs to measure performance.

Links and info

- Read more on the operating framework
- Read more about Vital Signs

Nurses and the 2008/09 operating framework

The NHS in England: the operating framework for 2008/09, launched last December, sets out the priorities for delivering the best possible care to patients in the coming year.

The framework divides a series of goals into three sections.

National requirements

The most important issues for today's NHS are reflected in five national requirements, namely:

- access to primary care
- improving cleanliness and reducing healthcare associated infections
- keeping adults and children well
- improving experience and engagement

- emergency preparedness.

National priorities with local implementation

The second section explores:

- equality, particularly around accessibility for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups
- mixed sex accommodation
- learning disabilities
- diabetic retinopathy
- crisis resolution and home treatment teams.

Local needs

This section allows PCTs to develop plans, in conjunction with local partners, based on local needs.

To help PCTs and health professionals achieve this series of goals, a list of benchmarking indicators called *Vital Signs* has been launched. The aim is to measure performance against *Vital Signs* and to publish the results annually.

At-a-glance

- RCA helps with learning from safety incidents
- new tool to help improve RCA being developed
- similar work being undertaken by WHO.

New tools to help nurses analyse patient safety incidents

Root Cause Analysis (RCA) is a key tool for ensuring that nurses and other clinicians on the front line learn from patient safety incidents.

One of the key recommendations of the *Safety First* (2006) report was that experts from Patient Safety Action Teams and the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) should help improve the quality and use of RCA investigations.

Donna Forsyth, NPSA patient safety manager and the incident investigation lead, took up the challenge of developing a tools set for RCA investigations. She comments: "The aim of the work is to improve learning from RCA findings and ultimately improve patient safety. Current developments include an investigation report template; guidance on

report-writing and levels of investigation; and an evaluation tool.

"We are also working on proposals to better share findings and to enable access to specialist investigators. The project is still in its early stages but we hope to have roll-out dates and further information in the coming months."

The tools developed are aligned with the World Health Organization's (WHO) 'High 5s' initiative which focuses on four internationally recognised priorities for improving patient safety. These are the prevention of:

- patient care handover errors
- site/procedure/person

surgical errors

- continuity of medication errors
- high concentration drug errors.

A fifth priority looks at effective hand hygiene practices.

Donna's work for the NPSA is recognised by WHO and she is a member of the High 5s event analysis impact evaluation team. This ensures that the NPSA is at the heart of best practice and able to share learning improvements on RCA.

Both projects are in their early days, but progress is encouraging in the ongoing drive to improve patient safety.

Links and info

- More on the RCA tools programme
- More on the WHO's High 5s programme

At-a-glance

- new guidance sets out recommendations for optimal patient nutrition while in hospital
- first three fact sheets to be released in April
- remaining seven will be published by April 2009.

Nutrition patient safety award

The Patient Safety Hydration Best Practice Award has been instituted by the NPSA.

- See news in brief page 8

Links and info

- Read more about nutritional care

Setting the standard for optimal nutritional care in hospital

New fact sheets on good nutritional care will help inform nurses and hospital staff.

The fact sheets have been developed by the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) in conjunction with the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), the Hospital Caterers Association, the National Association of Care Caterers and key stakeholders from the private sector.

Due out in April, the first three releases in the *10 Key Characteristics for good nutritional care in hospitals* series will explore the following:

- food service and safe

- delivery of nutritional care
- hospital-wide support for a multidisciplinary approach to nutritional care, drawing on staff groups working in partnership with patients and service users
- implementation of ward protected mealtimes to provide an environment conducive to feeding.

Further fact sheets will be developed to support the remaining seven characteristics and these will be available by April 2009.

The NPSA has been working with key stakeholders in the development of a best practice toolkit to assist NHS organisations in the implementation of the guidance. We will feature more on the toolkit in a future bulletin.

At-a-glance

- strategy to improve end of life care
- nurses involved in major consultation
- to be published in the summer.

End of life care in the spotlight: new strategy will raise profile of care needs



Nurses have made a significant contribution to the development of a new strategy designed to ensure that all adults receive high-quality care at the end of their lives.

The *End of Life Care Strategy* is due to be published in parallel with the *Our NHS, our future* review in the summer. It has been developed after extensive consultation with over 300 stakeholders from a wide range of organisations and individuals including clinicians, senior NHS commissioners, carers and hospices.

Macmillan nurse consultant in supportive and palliative care at South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust, Michael Connolly, said: "Many nurses were involved in writing this strategy. We hope that it will shine a light onto this aspect of life which affects everybody,

yet is overlooked by most. Nurses will welcome the emphasis on training for all and the importance of balancing treatment with robust support."

In the past, the profile of end of life care within the NHS and social care services has been relatively low, and the delivery of the care was variable. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that everyone can get high-quality care irrespective of age, gender and gender identity, ethnicity, religious belief, disability, sexual orientation or diagnosis.

The *End of Life Care Strategy* will support those with advanced, progressive, incurable illness to live and die in the place of their

choice. The strategy will address the needs of the person, their family and carers throughout the last phase of life and into bereavement.

As the work developed, 10 key themes were identified including: the need to raise public awareness of death as a natural process; the importance of care planning; assessing needs, priorities and preferences for place of care and agreeing a care plan for both the person and carer; management of the last days of life and after death; and education, training and continuing professional development.

Funds on offer to improve environment for the dying

New funding is available for nurse-led projects to improve the environment for patients who are dying.

The Department of Health has allocated £1 million to extend the King's Fund's Enhancing the Healing Environment (EHE) programme with the aim of physically improving the

environment for those who are dying and their relatives.

The new fund, known as the Environments for Care at End of Life (ECEL), will consist of two main elements:

- a development programme for a multidisciplinary team
- a capital project allocation

of £30,000 for the team to undertake a project to improve the patient environment.

All NHS organisations in England that provide end of life care to adults may apply for consideration. The closing date is 22 February.

Links and info

- [Read more on End of Life Care Strategy](#)
- [More on ECEL funding](#)

At-a-glance

- new guidance on learning disability nursing published last December
- showcases examples of nursing good practice.



Learning disability nurses making life easier and healthier for patients

Nurses are driving up the standards of care for people with learning disabilities with some of their best practice, now showcased in new guidance.

Good practices in learning disability nursing, published in December, was developed as part of the *Modernising Nursing Careers* strategy (2006). Rob Greig, National Director of Learning Disability, commented: "Learning disability nurses

are an essential part of making the *Valuing People* vision happen. This document is an important contribution to the process of change."

The guidance sets out 15 benchmarks for good practice supported by

examples, two of which are detailed below.

For further information about the guidance contact Gwen Moulster on 07920 283 862 or email gwenmoulsterdh@btinternet.com

Benchmark 7:

Ensuring that commissioning of services responds to the needs of people with learning disabilities

Clinical lead nurse at Knowsley Health and Social Care PCT, Johanna Lee, has helped develop a Local Enhanced Services

(LES) framework for people with learning disabilities.

The framework is based on research showing that health checks and Health Action Plans are some of the most effective ways to improve the health of people with learning disabilities.

Across 35 participating GP practices, people with learning disabilities are identified and invited for annual health checks. This enables early identification of those at risk of ill-health or disease, who can then be referred on to appropriate health promotion programmes.

Benchmark 14:

Adopting new ways of working to improve care based on local need

Community nurse manager, Ruth Kirkman, works as a nurse prescriber in learning disabilities for South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

In the area, many people with learning disabilities

had been receiving long-term anti-psychotic medication from their time living in institutions. Studies reveal that many of these individuals have continued to be prescribed these medications once they return to the community.

Working closely with a number of people with learning disabilities, Ruth

has managed to reduce these medications and, in some cases, stop the use of anti-epileptic medication where there was no evidence of symptoms. She has been able to challenge the prescriptions while advising and implementing alternative interventions to manage behavioural and emotional symptoms.

Links and info

- Access the guidance
- More about Modernising Nursing Careers
- Read Valuing People

At-a-glance

- mixed sex accommodation guidance
- commissioned by CNO
- helps nurses to review and adapt current practice.

Care environment award

- See news in brief page 8

Links and info

- Access the guidance

Eliminating mixed sex accommodation

New guidance commissioned by Chief Nursing Officer Christine Beasley will help nurses to reduce mixed sex accommodation.

The NHS Institute guidance *Privacy and Dignity: the elimination of mixed sex accommodation* draws on best practice examples. It helps nurses to review and adapt current accommodation to reduce and, where possible, eliminate mixed sex accommodation. The guidance also explains the definition of

compliance with single sex accommodation.

The CNO said: "This guide will be a valuable asset to nurses in ensuring best practice is followed to ensure patients continue to receive the high quality care they expect from the NHS."

There are 11 key principles set out in the guidance to help to physically separate male and female in-patients.

A self-assessment checklist will help trusts identify issues.

The document builds on the recent Department of Health report *Privacy and Dignity – a report by the Chief Nursing Officer into mixed sex accommodation in hospitals*.

News in brief

Nurses' New Year Honours

Congratulations to the following nurses and midwives:

Commander of the Order of the British Empire

Sarah Waller, King's Fund
Members of the Order of the British Empire

Paul Beard, lately Chair, Health and Social Care Advisory Service and Regional Director, Royal College of Nursing;
Rosalee Butler, Ward Sister, Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust;
Peter Cheng, Clinical Risk Manager, North Essex Mental Health Partnership;
Vivien Crouch, School Nurse, Healthcare, Bath;
Valerie Finigan, Midwife, Royal Oldham and North Manchester Hospital, Pennine Acute NHS Hospitals Trust;
Comfort Momoh, Female Genital Mutilation/ Public Health Specialist, Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Free stop smoking support materials

A free DVD on how to quit smoking with the NHS can be ordered by telephone or online as part of the New Year stop smoking campaign. Call 0800 169 0169.

● [More information](#)

Expanding Choose and Book

The expansion of Choose and Book means primary care nurses are increasingly making their own referrals to both community-based and secondary services.

● [Read more about Choose and Book](#)

Training for bank nurses

Bank nurses working for NHS Professionals can now log on to an online training programme designed for flexible nurses. The Managed Learning Environment (MLE) enables nurses to undertake mandatory training, and give them access to a range of continuous professional and personal development courses.

● [More information](#)

Priority access for military veterans

New guidance will give all military veterans priority access to NHS secondary care for conditions which are likely to be related to their service. It updates and extends existing guidance on priority treatment for war pensioners. Veterans are most likely to suffer from service-related conditions requiring audiology, mental health, and orthopaedic services.

● [More information](#)

New online forum for nurses

Nurses can share practice development expertise through a new online forum. The *Developing Practice Subscribers' Area* was set up by the Foundation of Nursing Studies.

● [Find out more](#)

Transferring prisoners

Nurses should be aware of updated guidance on transferring prisoners to and from hospital. *Procedure for the Transfer of Prisoners to and from Hospital*

under Sections 47 and 48 of the Mental Health Act 1983 aims to reduce unacceptable delays.

● [Access the guidance](#)

New DH corporate website

The Department of Health (DH) website is due to be re-launched with a new design and structure to make it easier to use. It follows wide consultation with clinicians, carers, social workers, DH staff, and local authority managers.

● [View the DH site](#)

Revamp for community hospitals

A new wave of community hospitals and super surgeries will provide NHS patients with better primary care services and follow-up care outside of major hospitals. The £132 million investment will update facilities in eight community hospitals across the country.

● [Read more](#)

NHS Injury Benefit Scheme

The NHS Injury Benefit Review 2007 showed that the wrong eligibility criteria were applied to some applications for Permanent Injury Benefit between November 1985 and April 1998. NHS staff are invited to submit applications for back payment. A helpline has been set up to deal with any queries. Call 0845 610 1111.

● [Access the Injury Benefit Review website](#)

Update on HPV vaccines

PCTs have begun work with local stakeholders to develop plans for the routine vaccination against human papilloma virus (HPV) – which causes cervical cancer – for girls aged 12 to 13 years old. Materials, including a Q&A on HPV vaccines, are available to support PCTs with the programme, which will start from September. A two-year catch-up programme will start from September 2009 for girls up to age 18.

● [Further information](#)

cleanyourhands campaign

The NPSA's cleanyourhands campaign has already been effective in changing many aspects of hand hygiene behaviour among healthcare workers in acute trusts, and is now being extended to other NHS organisations. Nurses are encouraged to raise awareness among staff and patients.

● [Access information on registering for the campaign](#)

Contribute to NHS Review

Nurses are urged to continue giving their input into the *Our NHS, our future* review. Contributions can be made either through the website, by email, or through local events run by SHAs. An online staff questionnaire is another way to add input. Meanwhile, national working groups are being set up to consider emerging issues requiring action at national level. The questionnaire will be live until 15 February.

● [View the Our NHS, our future website](#)
● [View the questionnaires](#)

Care environment award

The Department of Health is working in partnership with the Foundation of Nursing Studies to run a practice programme. The programme gives front line nurses access to expert support and funding, allowing them to undertake projects using the 11th Essence of Care environmental benchmark. The deadline for applications is 7 March.

● [View the website](#)

New Patient Safety Hydration Best Practice Award

The inaugural nutrition patient safety award has been instituted by the NPSA. The Patient Safety Hydration Best Practice Award is supported by the Hospital Caterers Association, the Royal College of Nursing, NHS Supply Chain and Water UK. The award will be presented at the Hospital Caterers Association's Annual Conference in Birmingham on 17 April. Applications close on 14 March.

● caroline.lecko@npsa.nhs.uk

Diary

CNO Business Meetings

11 April, Leeds.

14 April, London.

Directors of Nursing will receive an invitation to attend the spring business meetings.

● [View website](#)

Information Prescriptions national conference

19 March, London.

Registration deadline: 15 February. Free one-day DH conference. Health minister Ann Keen is scheduled to make a presentation.

● www.informationprescription.info/conference.html

● [Registration form](#)

A Practical Guide to Delivering and Sustaining the 18 Week Patient Pathway

26 February, London.

Philippa Robinson, 18 Weeks national implementation director, will be speaking.

● hannah@healthcare-events.co.uk

● [View website](#)

Making a Difference: Next Steps

11 March, London.

The conference examines the latest developments in reducing HCAs. Health minister Ann Keen will be making a speech.

● hannah@healthcare-events.co.uk

● [View website](#)

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

● [Educating students for mental health nursing practice: Has the UK got it right?](#)

January edition of *Policy+* newsletter from the National Nursing Research Unit at King's College London.

● [Access the story](#)

● [Transgendered people](#)

The Department of Health (DH) has published *A Guide to Hormone Therapy for trans people* and a leaflet called *Transgender Experiences – Information and Support*. Copies of both publications can be obtained in PDF format from the DH website at

www.dh.gov.uk/sogi. Hard copies of the publication can be ordered from the DH Publications Orderline on 0870 155 5455 or email: dh@prolog.uk.com

● [Drug Safety Update](#)

Issue 7 of *Drug Safety Update* has now been published.

Articles of potential interest

to nurses include:

● **Statins:** class effects identified

● **Varenicline:** a safety update

● **Midwife prescribing:** public consultation launched.

● [View the publication](#)