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Improving maternity and neonatal services

Maternity and neonatal services have been put in the spotlight with a range of measures announced to improve services across the country.

Maternity services

Maternity services will receive extra funding to ensure mothers get the best possible care and are guaranteed a full range of birthing choices. The funding, announced in January, will total more than £330 million over the

next three years.

The extra cash will support implementation of the Government's maternity strategy, *Maternity Matters*. It will help:

- modernise options for the place of birth – ensuring the NHS can



offer women a choice of homebirth, birth in a midwifery facility or in a hospital-based maternity unit.

- improve flexibility of maternity services' opening hours – making services more convenient

for mothers. PCTs will also be able to open more community midwife centres, such as children's centres, which provide care and support during and after pregnancy.

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Nurses to help stem childhood obesity trends



In his speech on the NHS in January at King's College London and the Florence Nightingale School of Nursing, the Prime Minister Gordon Brown emphasised the key role all nurses have as health-promoting practitioners.

He highlighted how health professionals can build on evidence-based practice to prevent illness and improve well-being, working with patients as partners in improving

their own health and managing their own conditions.

Against this background, the new £372 million national obesity strategy was launched in January.

Healthy weight, healthy lives: A cross-Government strategy for England supports the creation of a healthy lifestyle from an early age incorporating school life, sport and physical activity, food, planning, transport and the health service.

Continued on page 4

At-a-glance

- extra funds for trusts will improve maternity services
- new report says neonatal care services are improving
- global midwifery conference to be held in Glasgow in June.

New midwifery recruitment drive

- See news in brief page 8

New look *CNO Bulletin*

Going forwards, the *CNO Bulletin* is being published in an easier-to-read landscape format. The bulletin is tailor-made for nurses and midwives across the NHS, covering the main news and developments every month. We're keen to hear your feedback on the content, style and especially the new design so drop us an email at CNO-Bulletin@dh.gs.gov.uk

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VOICEPIECE



Christine Beasley, Chief Nursing Officer, outlines the next phase of the post-registration training consultation and introduces the new *CNO Bulletin* design.

the Development of Healthcare Policy and Practice, University of Leeds, who will collate and analyse all of the responses. Over the next few weeks they

of issues are important to them, and the breadth of opinion on some of the key issues. We will then consider what some of the main recommendations

foundation for all nurses and our review of post-registration careers will take into account proposals for pre-registration education.

the months ahead. I will keep you informed of progress on the consultation through the *CNO Bulletin*.

Nursing careers grow and change over many years in response to individual ambitions and circumstances, and through changing patient and service needs. We are working closely with the Nursing and Midwifery Council which consulted on this. We ran our consultations at the same time in order that people could comment on both aspects simultaneously. The recommendations will be implemented over

Those of you who are familiar with the *CNO Bulletin* will have noticed the new format of this month's edition. These changes have been made in response to suggestions for a more 'computer-friendly' layout and this edition of the bulletin has been redesigned with a view to improving online access to content. I welcome your feedback and will continue to look at how we can incorporate any further improvements you may suggest.

The response period for contributions to *Towards a framework for post-registration nursing careers: a national consultation* has now closed. I would like to thank all of you who responded to the questionnaire to share your perspective and provide your points of view.

The next phase of the process involves the team at the Centre for

will look at all the data and they will soon be able to provide further details on who responded, what sort

should be and how best to take forward the next steps.

The pre-registration period is an important

'The pre-registration period is an important foundation for all nurses and our review of post-registration careers will take into account proposals for pre-registration education.'

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Improving maternity and neonatal services

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- increase workforce capacity within maternity and neonatal services – identified locally to meet the needs of individual populations. Trusts will also be able to invest in additional training for maternity and other support workers.

- promote the provision of local, easily accessible antenatal care and postnatal services.

Midwifery Adviser at the Department of Health, Suzanne Truttero, said: "Additional investment in maternity services will assist in

addressing the challenges of increased clinical activity and achieving the commitments of *Maternity Matters*."

The announcement about the extra funding was made by Health Secretary Alan Johnson in response to the Healthcare Commission's (HCC) review of maternity services. The review, which was the most comprehensive assessment ever of maternity services in England, ranked one in four NHS maternity services in England as 'best performing'.

The HCC has published individual trust reports,

highlighting their scores and areas for improvement. Every trust that was 'least well performing' will have to produce an action plan, which the HCC will check.

Neonatal services

The reorganisation of neonatal services in England has helped improve care for premature and low birth weight babies with fewer babies travelling long distances for suitable treatment.

The findings are from the report *Caring for Vulnerable Babies: The reorganisation of neonatal services in England*, published last December by the National Audit Office (NAO).

The report assesses the progress made since the

expert group review of neonatal services and subsequent consultation paper published in 2003. The expert group proposed that neonatal services should be reorganised into managed clinical networks, providing virtually all care to mothers and babies within the network, without the need for long distance transfers. Most networks have reduced the number of long distance transfers but only about half provide the necessary specialist transport services.

The report also states that further improvement is limited by shortages in nursing staff, a lack of cots in the right place at the right level of care and a lack of widespread specialist 24-hour transport.

Several recommendations are made to the NHS in response to these findings and the Department of Health is currently working in partnership with the NHS to address the issues raised.

International Confederation of Midwives Conference: 1-5 June

The 28th Triennial International Confederation of Midwives takes place in Glasgow from 1-5 June, hosted by the Royal College of Midwives. The conference theme is *Midwifery: A Worldwide Commitment to Women and the Newborn* and more than 2500 midwives and healthcare professionals from around the world are expected. Visit the conference website at www.midwives2008.org or email info@midwives2008.org for further details.

Virtual support for pregnancy and childbirth

Mums to be can now access all the NHS Direct information on pregnancy and childbirth from one place following the launch of the new pregnancy and childbirth zone. The zone includes a wide range of information on all stages of pregnancy and includes a childbirth video and its own Facebook page.

- [Visit the website](#)

Links and info

- View the maternity survey trust ratings
- Read *Maternity Matters*
- More on NAO's neonatal services report

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The strategy sets out immediate plans to promote breastfeeding, providing better information to parents and children about their weight and making healthy food choices.

Additionally, the Government will be investing in schools to ensure they are promoting healthy lifestyles. Cooking lessons will be a compulsory part of the curriculum by 2011 for 11-14 years olds and the amount of physical exercise in schools will be increased.

Public Health and

Primary Care Professional Nursing Officer at the Department of Health, Liz Plastow, commented: "The strategy's focus on children will mean that early years intervention by nurses, midwives and health visitors will help realise the Government's ambition to reduce the proportion of overweight and obese children to 2000 levels.

"To halt the increase in obesity it is essential that nurses develop a culture of partnership and early prevention. As this becomes the norm, the negative impact and stigmas of obesity will be reduced."

Guidance on setting goals for local prevalence of child obesity

New guidance provides advice to PCTs and local authorities on how to set goals for local prevalence of child obesity as part of *Vital Signs*. The national indicator set guidance on developing local obesity action plans will be published shortly.

'The strategy sets out immediate plans to promote breastfeeding, providing better information to parents and children about their weight and making healthy food choices.'



At-a-glance

- cross-Government strategy calls for integrated, multidisciplinary approach
- strategy promotes healthcare professionals as 'health-promoting' practitioners
- special focus on reversing childhood obesity trends.

Links and info

- Read Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives
- Access the child obesity guidance
- Read the Prime Minister's speech

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Setting the standard for children with palliative care needs and life-limiting conditions

Nurses working with children with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions will benefit from the development of a new strategy launched in February.

Better Care: Better Lives – Achieving better outcomes and experiences for children and young people with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions was developed in response to the Independent Review of Children's Palliative Care Services (May 2007). Supported by the cross-Government programme *Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families*, the strategy is backed by a significant financial commitment incorporated in PCT baseline budgets.

The strategy sets out eight goals:

- improved data collection to enable evidence-based decision-making and commissioning
- equality of access to universal services
- responsible and accountable leadership
- choice in preferred place of care
- better end of life care
- stronger commissioning and value for money
- successful transition between child and adult services
- planning and developing an effective and responsive workforce.

The range of services involved and the overlap between health and social care points to the value of developing palliative care networks and a planning/strategy framework incorporating PCTs, local authorities, and children's trusts. Nurse Advisor for Children and Young People at the Department of Health, Liz Morgan, said: "Children's community

nursing teams remain the bedrock of local service provision for children and young people with palliative care needs."

The extra NHS funding announced through the comprehensive spending review, supported by the NHS operating framework, allows for local areas to support these teams and to explore how best to move towards a multidisciplinary and holistic approach to care.

There will also be £20 million national funding over two years for children's hospices when current funding ends in 2009. The funding, £10 million a year, will support hospices and hospice-at-home care services until 2011.

Commissioners will also need to consider how this new funding can enable the development of an all-round children's community nursing services package.

At-a-glance

- new strategy launched last month
- sets out eight strategic goals
- nurses viewed as service bedrock for children needing this care.

Links and info

- Access the Better Care: Better Values strategy
- Read the Independent Review of Children's Palliative Care Services



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Hepatitis C in the spotlight

Nurses are being encouraged to help increase testing and diagnosis of the Hepatitis C virus.

Hepatitis C poses a particular challenge to healthcare professionals as many patients with chronic infection experience no symptoms for many years. Therefore, it is important to identify

patients who may have been at risk of infection so that they can be offered testing.

Early diagnosis is important as effective drug therapy can prevent progression to serious

liver disease.

The Department of Health (DH) Hepatitis C awareness campaign, 'FaCE It', is being run in conjunction with the Royal College of Nursing and a number of resources are now available to help nurses in their work.

The free tools include

a briefing pack, a quick reference guide, waiting room posters and patient leaflets.

To order any of the resources, contact the DH's publication line on 08701 555 455 or email dh@prolog.uk.com. The Hepatitis C information line is 0800 451 451.

At-a-glance

- FaCe It campaign raises awareness of Hepatitis C
- nurses encouraged to help increase testing and diagnosis
- free resources can be ordered from DH publication line.

Links and info

- View the Hepatitis C website

New online stroke resource will improve patient care

Nurses can access a new Stroke Specialist Library (SSL) which is playing an important part in the national drive to improve stroke prevention and care.

The National Library for Health (NLH) launched the new SSL in December to support implementation of the National Stroke Strategy. One of the key objectives is to provide a searchable collection of documents, appraised evidence, and evaluated information in the field of stroke, for health professionals and patients.

The library was developed by a team led by Professor Tom Quinn, Professor of Cardiac Nursing at Coventry University, and NLH clinical lead for cardiovascular diseases. He said: "Nurses are key to improving prevention and care of stroke patients. The SSL is intended to play a major part in improving knowledge through providing free online access to a comprehensive

range of high quality evidence."

The library is aimed at the whole team involved in improving stroke prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and support. This includes managers and those responsible for commissioning stroke services, and students in relevant disciplines. The library team has initially identified around 40 categories of NHS and social care staff who are involved in stroke care, together with a range of professional, voluntary and patient organisations.

The library was developed with input from a wide range of stakeholders including the UK Stroke Nurses' Forum, British Association of Stroke Physicians, Stroke Association, and the Department of Health Vascular Team. A stroke steering group, chaired by Professor Quinn, ensures that the content is driven by users' needs.

At-a-glance

- new Stroke Specialist Library
- development team led by nurse
- aims to improve stroke prevention and care.

Links and info

- Visit library

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NEWS IN BRIEF

The way ahead for payment by results

Nurses were among healthcare professionals who contributed to a consultation on payment by results (PbR). The *Options for the Future of Payment by Results: 2008/09 – 2010/11* consultation put forward proposals for future developments in PbR including tariff setting, coding and classification, expanding the scope of PbR, and supporting health policies through financial reform. Priorities for PbR development work include supporting the findings from Lord Darzi's *Our NHS our future* review.

● [Access the results and read more](#)

Updates on health research

A progress report on health research in the NHS revealed that the UK now has the highest national per capita rate of cancer trial participation in the world. The National Institute for Health Research report was published in January. A new section of the NHS Choices website is designed to give patients and the public more information about how to get involved in clinical trials.

● [Access NHS Choices](#)

● [More information about health research](#)

Short breaks for disabled children

Disabled children are the focus of a programme of short breaks independent from their parents and carers. The initiative forms part of the strategy *Aiming Higher for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families*, which will deliver more than £470 million in services for disabled children between 2008 and 2011. The scheme will also provide respite for carers. The Department of Health has identified short break services as a local priority for NHS services from 2008.

● [Read more](#)

Organ Donation Taskforce report

A 50 percent increase in organ donation within five years is possible, according to a new report from the Organ Donation Taskforce. The taskforce's recommendations have been backed by the Government and include the recruitment of around 100 extra donor transplant coordinators, and a new network of dedicated organ retrieval teams available 24 hours a day, working closely with critical care teams. The Government has confirmed £11 million to support the report's recommendations in the next year.

● [Read more](#)

NHS Direct's public consultation on becoming an NHS foundation trust

NHS Direct is conducting a public consultation on its plans to become an NHS foundation trust. NHS Direct is a world leader in the delivery of telephone and web-based healthcare, handling over 28 million contacts a year: Eight million through its telephone helpline and 21 million through the website. Visit the website to find out more, give your views and get involved by signing up to become a member. The consultation closes on 31 March.

● [Read more](#)

Help shape the patient safety campaign

The NHS patient safety campaign is being developed and led by a team of NHS clinicians, managers and other patient safety stakeholders. Supported by the National Patient Safety Agency, The Health Foundation and the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, the campaign will initially focus on acute trusts. It launches this summer. A series of events are being held from 1-9 April where NHS staff can hear about the campaign, get involved and learn how to take part. Email campaign@npsa.nhs.uk with any queries.

● [Click here for further information and to register](#)

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Midwifery recruitment drive

New financial incentives will help recruit 4,000 new and former midwives to the NHS over a three-year period. As part of a 'Return to practice' campaign to be launched in the summer, the Department of Health has announced plans to offer up to £3,000 worth of support, including free training and travel costs, to each returning midwife.

- [View further information](#)

More children weighed and measured

Approximately 80 percent of schoolchildren in reception and year six classes have been weighed and measured as part of the Government's strategy to help people lose weight and live healthy lives. Recent findings from the National Child Measurement Programme include:

- 23 percent children aged four to five are overweight or obese
- 32 percent children aged 10 to 11 are overweight or obese
- boys are more likely to be obese than girls in both age groups.
- [Download the full results](#)

Web links

You can access the bulletin online at www.dh.gov.uk/cnobulletin. The electronic version lets you click on web links for direct access to more detail about each of the articles.

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LATEST PUBLICATIONS

Focus on: High Volume Care Programme

The second phase of the *Focus on: high volume care* programme from the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement is based upon 12 months of clinically-led work into eight areas of healthcare. This report focuses on care in psychiatric intensive care units.

- [Access the report](#)

Drug Safety Update

Issue 8 (March) of *Drug Safety Update* has been published. For nurses, articles of interest this month include:

- Ketoconazole: restricted indications
- Tazocin (piperacillin/tazobactam): new formulation
- Telbivudine: risk of peripheral neuropathy when taken with pegylated interferon.
- [Access the bulletin](#)

DIARY

CNO Business Meetings

11 April, Leeds.

14 April, London.

Directors of Nursing should have received their invitation to these events. For further information visit the website.

- www.keystone-group.co.uk/cno

National Conference – *Why Children Die: A pilot study.*

30 April, British Library, London.

Organised by CEMACH (the Confidential Enquiry into Maternal and Child Health), this conference will produce recommendations for children, their carers and the institutions which help them to be healthy and stay safe. The audience will come from a range of disciplines responsible for child safety and health. For conference bookings call 020 7467 3219.

- www.cemach.org.uk

Changes to contact details

Nurse directors should send changes of contact details to bulletin.subscriptions@dh.gsi.gov.uk

All other nurses, midwives and health visitors can send changes to dh_cno_amendments@etdsolutions.com