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Ask David

David Behan will be holding a webchat on the Caring for our future engagement exercise on Tuesday 18 October July at 3:30pm. Visit the Department of Health's website for more information. You can also send questions in advance to webchat@dh.gsi.gov.uk

David Behan's Voicepiece

Caring for our future

David Behan, Director General of Social Care, on the care and support engagement exercise that launched earlier this month.

Reform of adult social care is high on the agenda of the current Government. The Law Commission and the Commission on Funding and Support have both published their reports and the Government has committed to respond to them with full proposals for reform of adult social care in a white paper and progress report on funding reform next spring. As part of this process, we can all have a say in the way that England provides care and support in the future.

This month, the Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley, launched a nationwide engagement exercise, Caring for our future: shared ambitions for care and support. Over the next 12 weeks, we will be engaging with people who use care and support services, as well as carers, local councils and care providers about the priorities for improving care and support.

Working with key leaders from the care and support community, we will use the reports of the two commissions as a basis from which to discuss and identify the priorities for reform. We have made a start by identifying six key areas of discussion on priority areas ranging from quality to the role of financial services (read more on these priority areas elsewhere in this bulletin).

I encourage all of you to have your say in this process. Please [visit our website](#) for full details of the engagement process, including the different ways you can feedback your comments.

Social care needs reform if it is to meet the demands of the coming years. Caring for our future is your opportunity to tell us what you think the priorities for reform are to make sure we get this right.

Best wishes,

David Behan
Director General of Social Care

Transformation

Priorities for social care reform

The Department of Health has entered an engagement period with people who use care and support services – carers, local councils, care providers and the voluntary sector – to discuss priorities for improving the care and support system.

Caring for our future: shared ambitions for care and support began on 15 September and will last until 2 December.

It will be followed up by a white paper in spring 2012, alongside a progress report on funding reform, with a view to legislating at the earliest opportunity.

The Department of Health has identified six areas it believes contain the biggest potential to make improvements to the care and support system.

These include the quality of care and support; ensuring personalisation; creating a responsive and vibrant care market; prevention and early intervention, and improving integration between the NHS and other care services.

A website has been set up to publish up-to-date information as the engagement process proceeds and provide a facility for members of the public to respond with their comments.

It will also contain discussion materials and a feedback form, so that people can hold their own discussions with their local communities on these crucial issues, and give their feedback to the Department.

- [Visit the website to have your say](#)

Dilnot Commission report

In July, the Commission on Funding of Care and Support – an independent commission chaired by Andrew Dilnot – set out a number of recommendations about how we organise and fund social care. The Department of Health will consider each recommendation carefully to test whether it meets the wider objectives for reform: increased personalisation, choice and quality; closer integration of health and social care; and greater prevention and early intervention.

- [Read the official press release](#)
- [Read about the Commission on Funding of Care and Support](#)

Transformation

Next steps for the NHS Future Forum

The Prime Minister has launched the next phase of the independent NHS Future Forum in which a refreshed and expanded membership will look at four new areas of health policy.

The first listening exercise in April and May this year gave NHS staff, patients and the public the chance to understand and influence the policy-making process.

In its response to the Future Forum's report, the Government committed to continue to listen and engage on the detail of its proposals for modernising the NHS. The four new workstreams are:

- education and training: how to make sure there are the right incentives and accountabilities for developing the NHS workforce to deliver world-class healthcare
- information: how information can be made to improve health, care and wellbeing
- integrated care: how to take advantage of the health and care modernisation programme to ensure services are better integrated around people's needs
- the NHS's contribution to improving the public's health: how to ensure that improving the public's health stays at the heart of the NHS.

Professor Steve Field will continue to chair the forum and leads have been appointed to each workstream. The listening part of the forum's work will last between 8 and 10 weeks, depending on the workstream.

The forum has developed a slide pack to help organisations run their own listening events and feed back the results to staff.

- [Download the slide pack](#)

Transformation

Innovation in action: neuro evidence portal to support improvements in neuro services

The North East Neurological Partnership has launched an online portal designed to offer information and advice for anyone involved with or caring for people with long term neurological conditions.

The evidence portal project was introduced to support users, carers and professionals in the health, social care, voluntary and third sectors to work collaboratively to improve the delivery of neuro services in the region.

It will act as a single access point for local neuro evidence from the north east, including projects carried out since 2005 when the Government set out its requirements for neuro services in its National Service Framework.

Social care workers will have access to examples of local standards, guidelines and audits, reports and working documents on service improvements and innovations, case studies, academic research, publications and articles.

Furthermore, conference presentations, posters and reports will also be available at the click of a button.

The new site boasts 70 live articles already, with social care teams being encouraged to submit their own projects to share with others.

All evidence has been approved by employing organisations, research institutions or through peer review. New projects can be registered on the site and will be reviewed by an evidence working group of the North East Neurosciences Network before they are added to the website.

- [Visit the portal](#)

Case study: Sunderland Carers' Centre

Although Sunderland Carers' Centre does not have a specific neurological carer support project, it does provide a range of services to carers of people with neurological conditions.

These include access to information and advice, support at meetings, courses on a range of carer-related subjects including the nationally endorsed Caring with Confidence course and social activities to provide well-earned breaks for carers. It also produces a regular newsletter every two months with opportunities to influence local, regional and national policy and service developments.

In addition, Sunderland Carers' Centre is currently running a short break demonstration project on behalf of Sunderland City Council. This aims to improve the choice and flexibility of breaks for carers while ensuring quality breaks and care for the cared-for person. These are provided from the Carers' Centre and include telephone support and home visits.

The centre places particular emphasis on enabling carers to use their knowledge and experience to improve services. It works in collaboration with local branches of specialist groups including the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Transformation

National Learning Network launches

The Department of Health, together with Local Government Group and early implementer health and wellbeing boards, has set up a National Learning Network. This brings together emerging health and wellbeing boards to build and share an understanding of how they can improve outcomes and increase accountability to local communities. The National Learning Network will link closely to clinical commissioning group pathfinders and HealthWatch pathfinders.

- [Visit the online Community of Practice and join the National Learning Network](#)
- [Read about The Health and Wellbeing Board National Learning Network](#)

Care homes

Guidance issued to help doctors protect vulnerable adults

Doctors have an obligation to take action if they believe vulnerable adults are being badly treated in care homes, according to the British Medical Association (BMA).

While the guidance is principally aimed at GPs, any professional working in care settings with vulnerable adults will find it useful.

Recent shocking events at some Castlebeck homes show how care can sometimes be far from the high standard it should be. This guidance sets out how GPs can help avoid that happening, as well as looking at ways in which GPs can improve and protect wellbeing more generally.

The Department of Health commissioned the BMA to produce 'Safeguarding vulnerable adults – a toolkit for general practitioners' because of a lack of clarity in this increasingly complex area.

The guidance highlights the obligation doctors have to protect vulnerable adults and that legislation is in place to protect doctors who wish to speak out. This includes identifying abusers, identifying systemic healthcare failures and reporting poor performance by health professionals.

According to the BMA guidance, it is essential that doctors support the independence and the quality of life of vulnerable adults. Doctors should also involve this group of individuals in decisions about their treatment and care as far as possible.

Chairman of the BMA's Medical Ethics Committee (MEC), Dr Tony Calland, said: "The way doctors deal with these possible situations demonstrates how complex caring for vulnerable adults can be. There is no 'one size fits all' solution and each case needs to be judged individually. This toolkit will help to guide and support doctors in their decision-making.

"Our guidance also helps doctors identify which adults have the capacity to protect and promote their own interests, and which adults may need decisions made on their behalf."

- [View the guidance](#)

Care homes

Practical tips on how to deal with care home closures

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has launched a new online tool to support commissioners and providers who have to deal with the consequences of short notice care home closures.

The new guide – launched on 8 September 2011 – aims to help commissioners, particularly local authority staff, to manage sudden care home closures. It should also be useful to care home staff, residents and relatives.

The tool follows the news that Southern Cross – the country's biggest care home company – is winding down its operations and relinquishing management of its homes, amid criticism of the care residents receive.

The new guide covers implications for practice, examples of what others are doing and a summary of relevant policy and research. It also includes examples of procedures, checklists and templates from various organisations around the UK.

SCIE, who wrote the guide in conjunction with the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), says that people who live in care homes need continuity in their care and support, regardless

of who provides it and where it's provided. They add that residents' voices need to be heard and that they actively need to be involved in decisions that affect them.

ADASS has also released a comprehensive guide to changes in home ownership in England as Southern Cross begins to pass on management of its sites to new owners.

- [Read SCIE's home closures guide](#)
- [Read the ADASS guide to changes in Southern Cross management](#)

Funding

Personal health budgets in Nottingham

A Nottingham-based health and social care team has starred in a film being produced as part of the personal health budgets pilot programme.

Following on from the success of personal budgets in social care, they are currently being piloted in the health care sector.

A number of films are being produced in order share pilot participants' experiences of personal health budgets, and also include viewpoints from clinicians, care coordinators and frontline staff.

The films will be made into a DVD, released in October, and also appear on the Department of Health's Learning Network website.

The community neurology service in Nottingham, part of Nottingham City Primary Care Trust, is one of 61 sites in the personal health budgets pilot.

The 30-strong integrated health and social care team from Nottingham CityCare Partnership and Nottingham City Council is made up of social workers, occupational therapists, nurses and physiotherapists who work with people who have complex long-term neurological conditions.

They have starting introducing patients to personal health budgets and meet weekly to discuss the approval of care plans.

Community neurology nurse Becky Gorringer explains how they work: "As a team, we don't all see it the same way, which is good because this is what generates discussion and problem-solving in the personal health budget pilot. It has also proved that we can, as a team, come up with different responses which we wouldn't have reached by working on our own."

One of the films on the Learning Network site shows how David, a paraplegic from Nottingham, uses his personal health budget for personal assistance that helps improve his day-to-day living standards.

David's tissue viability nurse trained his personal assistants to change his leg dressings which gave him the freedom to go to work when he needs to, instead of having to wait for the district nurse every day.

- [Read more on the personal health budgets programme](#)
- [See the Nottingham Community Neurology Service team's story from the personal health budgets pilot](#)

Funding

Results of Personal Budget Survey released

A new social care survey of over 2,000 people has revealed that for the majority of people, personal budgets have had a positive impact on their lives, meaning they are supported with dignity and respect, stay independent, in control of their support and get that support when they need it. However the National Personal Budget Survey, released in June, also found that councils need to provide better quality systems and processes if they are to continue to help transform the lives of older and disabled adults.

- [Read more about the National Personal Budget Survey](#)

Funding

Funding boost for research

In August 2011, the Government announced £800 million in funding to boost translational research in new biomedical research centres and units. This investment will help develop medicines, treatments and care for patients with diseases such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease. The 31 awards include funding for four new biomedical research units which specialise in dementia research. The Government is investing the sum over five years to develop NHS and university partnerships through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to help develop the country's science and research base and secure the UK as a world leader in health research.

- [Read more about the NIHR](#)

Children and families

Supporting families in the foundation years

The Government has published its vision for the services that should be on offer for parents, children and families in the foundation years. The publication, which places parents and families at the heart of services, describes the system needed to make this vision a reality and explains the roles for commissioners, providers, professionals and practitioners across the range of services for children and families. The Department of Health (DH) has also launched a new national Health Visitor Taskforce, which will provide support and leadership to ensure that the new health visiting service model is universally adopted by 2015. The taskforce will be chaired by Dame Elizabeth Fadd. Look out for more information about this soon on the DH website.

- [Download the vision document](#)

Children and families

Consultation: Early Years Foundation Stage

The Department for Education (DfE) has launched a consultation, asking for views on proposed changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), due to take effect from September 2012. The reforms include reducing the early learning goals for newborns to five year-olds from 69 to 17 and will focus on three prime areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language.

- [Find out more about the revised EYFS framework and take part in the consultation](#)

Children and families

The Family Nurse Partnership programme

Nearly 7,500 vulnerable children and families have benefited since the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) programme started in 2007. This evidence based, licensed preventive programme for vulnerable young first time mothers is jointly led by local authorities and the NHS. It starts in early pregnancy and ends when the child is two. The programme improves antenatal health, children's health and development, parent's economic self-sufficiency. The first three years formative evaluation looks promising and the Government has committed to double the number of places on the FNP to 13,000 by 2015.

- [Read about the FNP](#)
- [Email the FNP mailbox](#)

Children and families

Ending gang violence action plan

The Prime Minister has asked the Home Secretary and Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to lead the development of a cross-government Action Plan on Ending Gang Violence. A report will be presented to the Prime Minister at the end of October. The Department of Health is contributing to this work in a number of ways, especially through programmes such as Multi-systemic Therapy, Family Nurse Partnership and Intensive Family Interventions. The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister have also announced a related social policy review to examine the implementation of the key social policy priorities of the Government.

Mental health

Offender health: national network announced

A national network of 101 local liaison and diversion services at police stations and courts was set up in June 2011.

Members of the National Liaison and Diversion Development Network work in schemes which assess those with mental health or substance misuse problems who come in contact with the criminal justice system and help them into treatment where appropriate.

The network was established following the Government's commitment in the 2010 Spending Review to make liaison and diversion services for adult and young offenders available on a national basis by 2014, subject to business case approval.

Some network members will help the Government understand and evaluate the best model for commissioning these services and implementing them across the country in the future. It follows an announcement in March to invest £5 million in these services in the current year.

Case study

One of the cases dealt with by a Youth Justice and Liaison Diversion (YJLD) member of the National Liaison and Diversion Development Network is James, a 16-year-old male who came into contact with the police while attending a professional football match.

James is a third generation Greek immigrant and proud of his heritage. When a goal was scored, he took off his Greek international football shirt and waved it in the air. Stewards removed him from the ground and police became involved when James responded in an angry and threatening manner. He was banned from entering the football club for three years. Following the incident, a YJLD worker was asked to assess James' mental health and emotional well being.

The YJLD worker was asked to assess James' health needs and emotional well being. James initially agreed to attend one session with the YJLD worker in order to talk through any issues that arose but was

not keen to attend any more. The YJLD worker contacted the football club and agreed with them that they would overturn James' exclusion if he agreed to a minimum period of six sessions with the YJLD worker to positively explore his emotions. James was informed of the decision and agreed to six sessions of drama therapy, which was designed to assist him with his issues around anger.

Although James is only a third of the way through his course of therapy he has confessed to wanting to address issues that he finds emotionally painful and is keen to attend all six. The YJLD worker is in contact with James' parents who are fully supporting James attendance and are also keen for him to succeed. The football club now have formally written to James and have withdrawn their initial exclusion with immediate effect.

- [See a list of the members of the National Liaison and Diversion Development Network](#)
- [Find out about the Prison Reform Trust's Care not Custody campaign and hear Andrew Lansley's speech last March](#)
- [Find out more about Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion on the Chimat website](#)

Plus: guidance on procedure for the transfer from custody of children and young people

On 1 August 2011, best practice guidance was published for mental health professionals, social care and health professionals who work with children and young people in custodial settings. It comes under the Mental Health Act 1983 in England and supports more timely hospital transfers for children and young people in custody with severe mental health problems.

- [Read the best practice guidance](#)

Mental health

Survey of people who use community mental health services

The results of a survey of people who use community mental health services, published in August 2011 by the Care Quality Commission, are set to play an important role in the Government's new mental health outcomes strategy.

The findings of the 2011 Community Mental Health Survey suggest there is scope for involving patients more in aspects of their care, such as care planning and medication. More than 17,000 service users across the 65 NHS mental health trusts in England were involved in the research, which asked them questions about their care during the past 12 months.

- [Read the full national results and a briefing note](#)

Mental health

National innovation challenge: Living well with dementia

The Design Council is challenging people to come up with new and innovative design-led ideas to make life easier for those with dementia, and for their carers. Launched in partnership with the Department of Health, the challenge is aimed to develop products and services to make people with dementia and their carers lives simpler and more enjoyable. Entrants could win a share of £360,000 plus professional support to make their idea happen.

- [Read the full story on the Department of Health website](#)

Mental health

Common core principles for supporting people with dementia

Skills for Care and Skills for Health have launched a new framework to provide training for carers of dementia sufferers. The core principles within the framework were developed alongside the Department of Health and are designed to build a workforce that will respond confidently to dementia sufferers and support the life they want to lead. The principles provide the basis of training and development for individual workers, teams and for wider corporate training programmes.

- [Read more on the Skills for Health website](#)

News in brief

Seasonal flu immunisation programme 2011/12

David Behan, Director General, Social Care at the Department of Health has urged frontline healthcare staff to support the seasonal flu vaccination programme this winter. In a letter to care workers, Behan said that risk groups who should be offered the seasonal flu vaccine this winter include those who are in receipt of a carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an older or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill. He also said employers of frontline social care workers in all sectors should consider making the vaccination available to their staff.

- [Read the letter](#)

Consultation on new suicide prevention strategy

The Department of Health has launched a consultation on a draft cross-government suicide prevention strategy for England, to reduce the suicide rate and improve support for those bereaved or affected by suicide. The draft strategy brings together knowledge about groups at higher risk of suicide, effective interventions and resources available. The suicide strategy will place a new emphasis on family members. This means working with relatives to prevent a vulnerable person from taking their own life and better supporting those who have been bereaved following a suicide. Healthcare professionals are invited to share their views on how best to take families into their confidence in helping a suicidal patient while respecting patient confidentiality. The consultation closes on 11 October 2011.

- [Find out more and submit your views](#)

Government response to value-based pricing consultation

A public consultation on a value-based pricing system for new, innovative medicines took place from December 2010 to March 2011 and the Government's response has now been published. The document provides a summary of the responses received, highlights the key themes from the consultation and sets out the actions the Government will take to introduce the new system in 2014. The response also confirms that there will be continued engagement with patients, clinicians, the NHS, taxpayers, industry and other interested parties as work to reform the pricing of medicines progresses.

- [Read the Government's response to the public consultation](#)

Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework handbook

The first Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) handbook was launched in March 2011, following the Transparency in Outcomes consultation. The handbook is designed to have a dual purpose. It is intended to help people using social care services and their carers to understand the outcomes framework itself, so they use it to effectively hold their local council to account for performance. It will also help local authorities save time and money by understanding how ASCOF indicators will be defined and measured, therefore cutting down on confusion and incorrect returns.

- [Read more on the DH website](#)

Route map for end of life care

Route to success: the key contribution of nursing to end of life care outlines the actions nurses need to take at each stage of the six-step end of life care pathway. These range from early discussions with the individual and family about end of life care, through to advance care planning and assessment, co-

ordination of care, care during the final days of life and care after death. The practical advice in this document will also help nurses work with colleagues and other services – such as social care – to ensure people’s wishes are met, avoid unnecessary hospital admissions or medical procedures and reduce stress and anxiety for the individual and family.

- [Download the document](#)

Great British Care Awards: regional events

The regional events of the Great British Care Awards, which pay tribute to people who have demonstrated outstanding excellence within their field of work, will launch in the autumn. There are nine regional awards leading to two national finals for both the home care and care home sectors. The finals will be held in London in spring 2012. The 22 awards categories represent all areas of the social care sector, including older people, specialist services and residential and home care. The awards bring together the statutory, independent and voluntary sectors, as well as unpaid carers.

- [Nominate your staff, company and colleagues and find out the closing dates for each region](#)

Skills for Care: improved bulk upload tool

Skills for Care has launched an improved bulk upload tool to make it easier for employers to add large amounts of their data to the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC). Aimed at local authorities and large employers, the Bulk Uploading Data Items (BUDI) allows employers to quickly and efficiently provide large amounts of workforce information to the NMDS-SC Online without the need for manual data entry. Improvements to the BUDI facility include the introduction of a Unique Worker ID, meaning the system won’t automatically replace all worker records when an upload takes place. The data can be downloaded from their HR systems, recoded into CSV and easily imported onto NMDS-SC. The old version of the Bulk Upload tool will continue to be accepted for six months to ensure users have time to change any systems or processes they may have in place.

- [Users can contact the NMDS-SC Helpdesk on 0845 873 0129.](#)

An app a day

Health Secretary Andrew Lansley has launched a call for new ideas for health apps that could help patients make informed decisions about their care. An example of an app that benefits patients is Choosing Well, developed by NHS Yorkshire & Humber for their local community, allowing people to search for their nearest NHS health services.

- [Submit a health app or online map](#)

Managing COPD as a long term condition

Since July 2010, a lung improvement programme as part of NHS Improvement has worked with a number of clinical teams across England as part of the Department of Health respiratory programme. Its aim has been to reduce variation in care and improve the quality and experience of patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The national improvement projects have tested approaches at key stages of the clinical pathways including:

- improving home oxygen services
- early accurate diagnosis
- transforming acute care
- managing COPD as a long term condition
- improving end of life care.
- [Access the latest publications](#)

At a glance

Key dates from this edition

June 2011

Offender health national network launched

July 2011

New guidance on protecting vulnerable adults in care homes published

15 September 2011

Launch of the Caring for our future engagement exercise

30 September 2011

Deadline for receipt of Living well with dementia ideas

30 September 2011

Consultation on EYFS closed

11 October 2011

Consultation on new suicide prevention strategy closes

18 October 2011

David Behan webchat

2 December 2011

Deadline for providing comments to Caring for our future engagement

9 December 2011

Next issue of Social Care bulletin published

April 2012 (TBC)

White paper on care and support reform published

April 2012 (TBC)

Progress report on funding reform

Unless otherwise stated, guidance referred to in the bulletin has not been commissioned or endorsed by the Department of Health – it is evidence that organisations and professionals may find helpful in improving practice. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence is the Department's provider of accredited evidence and guidance. This information can be found on the Institute's website at www.nice.org.uk