Welcome to the Quality and Safety eBulletin

This eBulletin brings you the latest news from key national agencies and initiatives across the UK, under themed headings.

We welcome your feedback on the eBulletin. Please contact us at: qualityandsafety@rcn.org.uk

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All the latest in quality and safety with the RCN's Quality and Safety Bulletin.

News story

Parity of esteem campaign
Parity of esteem describes the need to value mental health equally to physical health. People with complex mental health needs should have the same access to health care services and support as people with physical health needs.

Over the past year we have been raising awareness of the role that nursing staff have in achieving parity of esteem to improve health outcomes for people with complex mental health needs.

Read our publication about lots of small, but impactful changes that our members and their colleagues can make in the workplace to help make parity a reality.

RCN highlights
Discover 100 years of nurse registration. The exhibition, called Wake up Slackers! The Great Nursing Registration Controversy, launched at the RCN Library and Heritage Centre in London, 100 years on from the Nurses Registration Act of 1919. The exhibition explores the heated arguments that took place during the decades-long campaign to secure nursing registration.

RCN demands government action for safer staffing in Wales. The Welsh government must take action to address the shortage of registered nurses in the NHS and independent sector in Wales. This includes increasing opportunities for nurses to work more flexibly and providing access to continuous professional development and strong career frameworks.


CQC report backs RCN calls for nursing workforce investment. The Care Quality Commission’s annual report on the state of health and social care services, released today, highlights how staffing shortages are threatening the quality of patient care. The report backs up the RCN’s calls for urgent investment in the nursing workforce.


RCN reps meet to improve workplace support for nursing staff. RCN trade union reps from across the UK are coming together to discuss how they can work with employers to support and retain nursing staff. RCN research shows that this is a problem when workplaces are understaffed, with members’ ability to provide high quality care compromised because they don’t have time to take care of themselves.


Northern Ireland strike ballot begins. For the first time in its 103-year history, the RCN is balloting members on industrial action up to and including strike action regarding the nurse staffing and pay crisis in Northern Ireland. Members working in Health and Social Care (HSC) services in Northern Ireland will be sent voting papers by post and have until 6 November to return these.


Legal limbo puts patient care at risk as nurse vacancies hit record high. The RCN has published a report outlining the evidence behind its calls for specific legal responsibilities for workforce planning and supply across the health and care system. The RCN is clear that to address the number of vacancies and tackle the workforce crisis, there must be clarity on workforce roles and responsibilities and that these must be set out clearly in law.


Campaign promotes equal treatment of mental and physical health. New parity of esteem initiative encourages members to take holistic approach to patient care. We want every patient’s mental and physical health to be given equal attention, across all health care settings, and you can help make it happen.


Standing up for patient and public safety. This report describes the lack of clear roles, responsibilities and accountability for workforce planning and supply in England. In reality, this means that the health and care workforce is not growing in line with increasing population need for health and care services, and there are large numbers of vacant posts throughout the system. This impacts upon patient safety and outcomes, and leads to a challenging working environment for staff. To resolve this, we make the case for this to be resolved through legislation, alongside additional investment in the nursing workforce and a national health and care workforce strategy for England. The RCN is
clear, it is no longer the time to be discussing whether legislation is needed, instead, we should also be focussed on how we go about securing these necessary changes in law. 
https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/007-743

Complex conversations and decisions. We have created a four webinars for leaders and managers of care home to support complex and sensitive conversations in nursing practice. The webinars can be viewed as a series or as standalone sessions. They are open to all senior staff and will signpost you to helpful resources. We hope you enjoy viewing them.
https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/older-people/professional-resources/complex-conversations-and-decisions

RCN Peer Support: Removing Disabling Barriers at Work. This guidance provides tools and approaches to remove barriers at work for health care professionals for with long-term conditions, physical impairments, mental ill health and neurodiversity. It has been created based on the lived experience of the RCN Peer Support Group.
https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/pub-007-788

Parity of Esteem factsheet. Download the factsheet which gives tips on how to identify healthy interventions to improve overall health and wellbeing and promote parity of esteem. There are also Parity of esteem pledge cards and a poster available to download.
https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/pub-007889

RCN Blogs. Latest blogs include: Donna Kinnair elected to the Executive Committee of the European Federation of Nurses Associations; Use your RCN ballot vote to protect patients AND nurses; Retired Nurses’ Group marks its first decade; Why I will vote YES in the RCN ballot for industrial action and Kofoworola Abeni Pratt: A nurse, a teacher, a pioneer.
https://www.rcn.org.uk/news-and-events/blogs

RCN magazines. Latest articles include: Discover 100 years of nurse registration; RCN demands government action for safer staffing in Wales; CQC report backs RCN calls for nursing workforce investment; RCN reps meet to improve workplace support for nursing staff and Northern Ireland strike ballot begins.
https://www.rcn.org.uk/magazines

Events

Women’s Health Conference and Exhibition 2019. 13 Nov 2019, Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, Marylebone, London, W1G ORN. We welcome all those who work in women’s nursing from gynaecology ward nurses to practice and specialist nurses. We also welcome students and those newly practicing. The conference will be an invaluable platform for you to network with your fellow colleagues and to be a part of the discussion. You will leave the conference feeling informed, enlightened and with a new energy to engage with the challenges you face within your profession.
https://www.rcn.org.uk/news-and-events/events/uk-womens-health-131119

Annual Hawking MND Lecture 2019. 20 Nov 2019, Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, Marylebone, London, W1G ORN. Join us online or in person for the Hawking MND lecture where leading research is presented on different aspects of MND/ALS. This year’s focus is nutrition. This free lecture is a collaboration between the MND Association and the RCN to further understanding and knowledge of the long-term and progressive neurological condition, MND/ALS.
More RCN Events. The RCN runs seminars, workshops and conferences throughout the year. Hear about professional nursing issues from expert speakers, exchange ideas with colleagues, and learn about the latest research and innovation in your area of practice.

https://www.rcn.org.uk/news-and-events/events

Quality improvement
Audit, reviews, legislation, inspections, regulation

General Pharmaceutical Council. Analysis of inspection reports. The analysis identified seven emergent themes that were associated with good and/or poor performance: governance; a proactive approach; efficient processes; responsiveness; customer and patient focus; added value; and a lack of key knowledge and a failure to learn.

https://inspections.pharmacyregulation.org/inspection-reports/learning-from-inspections

National Audit Office. Departmental overview: Department of Health and Social Care 2019. This report is designed to provide a quick and accessible overview of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and its performance over the past year. It focuses on DHSC's responsibilities and how it spends its money, key developments in its areas of work and findings from our recent reports.


Guidance, innovation, tools

BBC News. Microphone could diagnose 'noisy' arthritic knees. Technology used by engineers to listen for faults in bridges could be used to diagnose 'noisy' arthritic knees. It involved a tiny microphone being attached to participants' knees to pick up high-frequency sounds.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-50071602

Public Health England. Every Mind Matters. This online tool provides expert advice, tips and the opportunity to create a personalised action plan to help improve a person's mental health. It also offers more information about helplines, charity services and other resources which can help.

https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/

Practice examples and case studies

NHS Providers. Providers deliver: better care for patients. This report considers both the leadership approaches and frontline initiatives that underpin improvements in quality. Through 11 case study conversations, it considers some of the frontline work that has contributed to trusts’ improvements in Care Quality Commission ratings.


Reports, commentary, statistics

BMJ. How to improve healthcare improvement—an essay by Mary Dixon-Woods. Improving care is a vital and continuing activity but it needs, as Mary Dixon-Woods sets out in this piece, an evidence base and sound evaluation. Improvement (and implementation) need to be studied to improve the evidence and to explore ‘questions beyond effectiveness alone, and in particular showing the need to establish improvement as a collective endeavour that can benefit from professional leadership.
Care Quality Commission. The state of health care and adult social care in England 2018/19. This report looks at the trends, shares examples of good and outstanding care, and highlights where care needs to improve. Most of the care seen across England is good quality and, overall, the quality is improving slightly. But people do not always have good experiences of care and they have spoken about the difficulties they face in trying to get care and support.


Department of Health and Social Care. Time to solve childhood obesity: CMO special report. Professor Dame Sally Davies calls for action across industry and the public sector to help the government reach its target of halving childhood obesity by 2030. The report sets out a range of recommendations for the government, which are supported by 10 principles.


Department of Health, Northern Ireland. Mental Health Matters. The annual report of the Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland 2018/19. This report focusses on positive mental health, with an emphasis on children and young people. It looks at a number of initiatives that currently help families, children and young people address the challenges they face on a daily basis.


Health Foundation. A healthy foundation for the future. This report summarises the work of a two-year inquiry into young people’s future health. It urges the government to overhaul policies across housing, transport and education and adopt a whole government approach to secure the future health of today’s young people.

[https://www.health.org.uk/publications/a-healthy-foundation-for-the-future](https://www.health.org.uk/publications/a-healthy-foundation-for-the-future)

House of Commons Library. EU reciprocal healthcare arrangements: Brexit guidance. This briefing provides an overview of some of the guidance that the UK government has published on reciprocal health care after Brexit.

[https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CPB-8683](https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CPB-8683)

NHS England. NHS bids to cut up to 100 million plastic straws, cups and cutlery from hospitals. Major high street names and suppliers including Marks & Spencer and WH Smith are backing the call by NHS chief executive Simon Stevens to dramatically cut the amount of single-use plastics in hospitals, as part of a package of measures in the NHS Long Term Plan to reduce the environmental impact of the health service.


NHS Screening. Report of the independent review of adult screening programmes in England. This report says that the NHS has the opportunity to upgrade cancer screening to save thousands more lives each year. It calls for people to be given much greater choice over when and where they are screened, and recommends that local screening services should put on extra evening and weekend appointments for breast, cervical and other cancer checks.


Public Health England. A consensus on healthy ageing. This statement by Public Health England and the Centre for Ageing Better sets out a shared vision for making England the best place in the world
to grow old. Signatories span the areas of health, employment, housing and communities, and are from academia, local government, the NHS, and the public and voluntary sectors

Royal College of Physicians. Integrated care: what physicians need to know about implementing the NHS long term plan. This guide outlines how doctors can best influence their local integrated care system. It highlights some best practice and case studies, which will provide food for thought as to how clinicians may approach delivering more integrated health and care.

Skills for Care. This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the adult social care workforce in England and the characteristics of the 1.49 million people working in it. Topics covered include: employment information, recruitment and retention, demographics, pay, qualification rates and future workforce forecasts.

**Patient safety**

Academic Health Science Network. Improving safety in care homes. This report shines a light on ways to do more to improve safety for residents of care homes. The publication showcases over 30 examples of projects delivered by England’s 15 Patient Safety Collaboratives (PSCs) and the Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) which host them. They include case studies in medicines safety, dementia, monitoring and screening, and workforce development.

BMJ Quality and Safety. Is there a ‘best measure’ of patient safety? “Despite consensus that preventing patient safety events is important, measurement of safety events remains challenging. This is, in part, because they occur relatively infrequently and are not always preventable. There is also no consensus on the ‘best way’ or the ‘best measure’ of patient safety.”
https://qualitysafety.bmj.com/content/early/2019/10/08/bmjqs-2019-009730

BMJ Quality and Safety. The harms of promoting ‘Zero Harm’. “We should be clear about what types of harms can or cannot be prevented and anticipated, work to eliminate those where there is good evidence for preventability by adopting evidence-based practices, improve the ability of everyone responsible for safety to identify risks, conduct better risk analyses to anticipate and reduce unintended harms, measure and celebrate the routine adaptations that prevent harm, and reward organisational learning and improvement.”
https://qualitysafety.bmj.com/content/early/2019/10/08/bmjqs-2019-009703

Digital Health. Diversity in digital health ‘is a matter of patient safety’. Encouraging diversity in the NHS isn’t simply a matter of inclusion, it’s a matter of patient safety, delegates at the Healthcare Excellence Through Technology (HETT) conference have heard. Without a diverse and inclusive team, “unconscious bias” can be built into technology, ultimately putting patients at risk.

Guardian. Hospitals too often unsafe for Parkinson’s patients. Many patients with Parkinson’s disease say they are not always given their drugs on time when in hospital, leaving some unable to walk or talk. Parkinson’s UK said hospitals were too often unsafe for people with the disease, leaving them scared of ending up there.
NHS England. NHS whistle-blower support scheme to roll out across the country. The NHS in England is to roll out dedicated support for members of staff who raise the alarm on unsafe practice. The move to ramp up support for whistle-blowers is part of a package of measures to put a renewed focus on the wellbeing of patients under NHS care and follows publication earlier this year of a world-first patient safety strategy, which included a requirement for every local health service to have a dedicated patient safety specialist.

RCN. Standing up for patient and public safety. This report describes the lack of clear roles, responsibilities and accountability for workforce planning and supply in England. In reality, this means that the health and care workforce is not growing in line with increasing population need for health and care services, and there are large numbers of vacant posts throughout the system. The RCN is clear, it is no longer the time to be discussing whether legislation is needed, instead, we should also be focussed on how we go about securing these necessary changes in law.

WHO Europe. From cooks to counsellors: keeping patients safe from harm. With people living longer and with multiple chronic conditions, medical care has become more complex and is being offered in diverse settings. Over the last decades, health-care workers have had to adapt to this changing landscape and continuously learn to improve patient safety.

Evidence-based practice

NHS England. Cannabis-based products for medicinal use: FAQs. NHS England has produced a set of clinical frequently asked questions to provide further support to prescribers, that cover synthetic cannabinoids, scheduling, prescribing restrictions, BPNA, RCP and ABN guidance, Epidyolex, and training for doctors.

NHS UK. Would people at low risk of heart disease benefit from statin treatment? In a new study, researchers looked at the evidence for statins in people who do not already have cardiovascular disease. Most studies showed statins reduced the risk of having or dying from a heart attack or stroke, compared to people who did not take statins. But the absolute benefit or risk depends on each person's own health and risk factors.

NHS UK. Even a few cigarettes a day worsens lung health. The study found that lung function declined faster for smokers compared with people who had never smoked. Lung function was poorer the more cigarettes people smoked, but even "light" smokers were not far behind heavy smokers.
NICE. Diabetic foot problems: prevention and management. This guideline covers preventing and managing foot problems in children, young people and adults with diabetes. It aims to reduce variation in practice, including antibiotic prescribing for diabetic foot infections. https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng19

NIHR. High-flow nasal oxygen reduces reintubation after major surgery compared with conventional oxygen therapy. In adults after major surgery, high-flow nasal oxygen decreases by about two-thirds the need for reintubation compared with conventional oxygen therapy. In this study, only about four in every 100 patients needed reintubation with high-flow nasal oxygen, compared with about 11 in every 100 patients receiving conventional oxygen therapy. https://discover.dc.nihr.ac.uk/content/signal-000827/oxygen-therapy-after-major-surgery

NIHR. Short-term dual antiplatelet treatment may be best for most patients after receiving a drug-eluting stent. For patients who have had a drug-eluting stent inserted into the coronary arteries, there is no difference in mortality or cardiovascular outcomes between the standard 12-month dual antiplatelet therapy and shorter six-month courses. Longer courses above 12 months increased risk of bleeding and non-cardiac death compared with short courses. https://discover.dc.nihr.ac.uk/content/signal-000828/short-term-dual-antiplatelet-treatment-after-receiving-a-drug-eluting-stent

University College London. Structurally unsound: exploring inequalities: igniting research to better inform UK policy. This report argues that the UK government’s current approach to tackling inequality needs to address the multiple levels of disadvantage that some people face. The report gives many examples where inequalities remain, including within health and life expectancy. The report recommends five cross cutting themes for the research and policy-making community. https://www.ucl.ac.uk/grand-challenges/ucls-six-grand-challenges/justice-and-equality/exploring-inequalities/structurally-unsound

Patient focus

Healthwatch. There and back: what people tell us about their experiences of travelling to and from NHS services. This briefing highlights what the public are saying about issues they face when it comes to travelling to and from NHS services, including issues with public transport, parking and non-emergency patient transport services. https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/report/2019-10-02/there-and-back-what-people-tell-us-about-their-experiences-travelling-and-nhs

Independent Age. Reviewing the case: the right to appeal in adult social care. This report looks into how people can challenge decisions about the care and support they receive. It reveals that as few as one in five local authorities have put in place a separate appeals process, with the majority instead relying on a complaints process that can be unfit for purpose. https://www.independentage.org/reviewing-case-right-to-appeal-adult-social-care

NHS England. Rough sleepers in homeless hotspots to benefit from NHS mental health outreach. Towns with high rates of homelessness are set for investment in specialist mental health care, as part of NHS services for rough sleepers across the country. The NHS-funded services in seven parts of the country will bring in new psychiatrists, psychologists and other experts to offer homeless people advice and treatment to tackle underlying mental ill health.
NHS England. Modern screening can be more personalised and convenient to save lives. The NHS has the opportunity to upgrade cancer screening to save thousands more lives each year. In his report, Sir Mike Richards, who was the NHS’ first cancer director as well as the CQC’s chief inspector of hospitals, called for people to be given much greater choice over when and where they are screened.

Nursing in Practice. Over 50% increase in patients attending Health Checks since 2012. The number of patients attending NHS Health Checks has risen by over 50% since 2012. Figures show that the number of patients attending a Health Check have increased over the last six years, with the 65-69 age bracket having the highest rate of attendance in 2017/18.

PCC. We could learn a lot from patients about integrated care - podcast. The experience of patients tells us almost everything we need to know about healthcare services. We’re good at collecting data, but less good at putting it to work. Lesley Goodburn is working with NHS trusts to help them understand how experience can drive quality improvement - a principle that she argues should also shape integrated care.

SCIE. Assessment and diagnosis of autism: what to expect. A quick guide for young people and their families. More than 1 in 100 people have autism. Being autistic affects people in different ways and getting the right diagnosis and support is important. This guide is for young people who are of secondary age and their families or adults with parental responsibility.

eHealth

Academy of Medical Royal Colleges. Principles for the implementation of genomic medicine. Genomics is a rapidly advancing field and these overarching principles set out the basis on which the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges believes genomic medicine in patient care and population health should be implemented and delivered.

Digit. New AI Tool to be Used by NHS Quickly Detects Heart Disease. Using artificial intelligence (AI) the technology is able to virtually model a patient’s heart and blood vessels from CT scans on an iPad or iPhone. The tool called ‘Planner’ could have a key role in the early detection and tackling of coronary heart disease in the UK, which accounts for more than a quarter of deaths and impacts 7.4 million people.

Digital Health. Chelsea and Westminster’s Mum and Baby app to be adopted across NHS. A pregnancy app designed by a team from Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is to be adopted across the NHS. The app was created by Sunita Sharma, consultant obstetrician at the

Digital Health. Salford Royal signs £25m deal with Hitachi to improve care through data. Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust has struck a £25 million partnership deal with Japanese technology company Hitachi Consulting to improve care using data and digital technologies. The result will be an “intelligent system” that reduces staffing cost and frees up beds, operating theatres and equipment. https://www.digitalhealth.net/2019/10/salford-royal-25m-deal-hitachi-data/

Digital Health. New online platform promotes mental health self-care. Every Mind Matters, which offers advice on a range of mental health conditions including anxiety, depression and stress. The platform offers expert advice and practical tips as well as a quiz which provides a free personalised action plan recommending a set of self-care actions to deal with stress, boost mood, improve sleep and feel in control. https://www.digitalhealth.net/2019/10/online-platform-mental-health-self-care/

NHS Forth Valley. World’s First 5G Tele-Examination of an Eye. Consultant ophthalmologist and director of digital innovation at Moorfields Eye Hospital, Peter Thomas, and Iain Livingstone, consultant ophthalmologist and the acute tele ophthalmology system lead from NHS Forth Valley, delivered the world’s first tele-examination of an eye in 4K resolution using 5G broadband. https://nhsforthvalley.com/worlds-first-5g-tele-examination-of-an-eye

World Health Organisation. WHO launches app to improve care for the elderly. The digital app provides health and social workers with an easy-to-use tool to deliver better care for older people. The interactive app provides guidance on priority conditions including mobility limitations, malnutrition, vision and hearing loss, cognitive decline, depressive symptoms and social care and support. https://www.digitalhealth.net/2019/10/world-health-organisation-elderly-care-app/

**Staff focus**

BBC News. Royal College of Nursing begins strike action ballot in NI. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is to start balloting members on industrial and strike action over staffing and pay in Northern Ireland. Voting papers are being posted to RCN members working in health and social care services, with the ballot due to last for four weeks. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-49980417

Institute of Health Visiting. Health Visiting in England: A Vision for the Future. Taking into account the worrying loss of health visitors over the past 4 years, this publication sets out a new model of health visiting advising eight universal contacts and a particular focus on fifteen areas where health visiting can have a high impact on health outcomes. https://ihv.org.uk/news-and-views/news/ihv-launches-health-visiting-in-england-a-vision-for-the-future/

NHS Employers. Volume recruitment in the NHS: themes and recommendations. This report outlines recommendations to help modernise recruitment practices in NHS organisations. The report focuses on volume recruitment of nurses and health care assistants (HCAs) as the largest staff groups at all NHS trusts. It includes tips on encouraging equality and diversity through recruitment processes,
advice on how to run assessment centres, and recommendations on how to advertise job roles and attract the right staff.

NHS Improvement. Making the NHS the best place to work: support for engagement to improve our people’s experience at work. This resource, developed in partnership with NHS Employers, provides extra support and examples of good practice to those organisations seeking further help with staff engagement.

NHS Improvement. Developing allied health professional leaders: an interactive guide for clinicians and trust boards. This is a guide is for allied health professionals (AHPs) lead at all levels. It describes the common features of the AHP leadership journey, by combining insights and evidence from trust executives and chief AHPs. Its primary audience is aspiring AHP leaders and those with responsibility for developing the AHP workforce.
https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/developing-allied-health-professional-leaders-guide/

NMC. New emotional and practical support service launched for nursing and midwifery professionals involved in fitness to practise. Nurses, midwives and nursing associates involved in fitness to practise can now benefit from a new, free and confidential support service. Emotional and practical support will be available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for nurses and midwives across the UK, and nursing associates in England, who are involved in fitness to practise processes.

Nursing in Practice. NMC pilots fitness to practise emotional support service. A new confidential support service for nurses and midwives facing a complaint around their fitness to practise has been announced. The 12-month pilot offers advice on any aspect of the fitness to practise process – such as the investigation, public hearing or events leading up to the referral.
https://www.nursinginpractice.com/professional/NMC-support-fitness-to-practise

Nursing Notes. A lack of proper breaks is leaving tired nurses driving dangerously. Tired and overworked nurses feel they are putting their lives in danger just to ensure patients get the care they need, according to a survey by NursingNotes. A survey of 2,660 healthcare workers prompted by the recent deaths of two nurses, sought to examine how safe staff felt driving home from their place of work after a night shift.
https://nursingnotes.co.uk/lack-proper-breaks-leaving-tired-nurses-driving-dangerously/

Social Care Institute for Excellence. New: Leadership in strengths-based social care. This Insights briefing aims to develop understanding and provide practical advice about leading strengths-based approaches and practice. It draws on interviews with leaders in adult social care and a review of the literature, with illustrative case studies provided throughout.
https://www.scie.org.uk/strengths-based-approaches/leadership