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Ask David

David Behan will be holding a webchat on the government response to the Dilnot commission report on Tuesday 5 July at 11.30am. [Visit the Department of Health's website for more information](#). You can also send in questions in advance to webchat@dh.gsi.gov.uk.

CARERS

CARER'S WEEK LAUNCHES NEW WAYS OF WORKING

Carer's Week 2011 turned the spotlight on the people in caring professions and the great work they do every day.

The nationwide celebration took place from 13-19 June and a series of local events showed support for the UK's six million carers.

But more than that, it provided a launchpad for exciting new initiatives that could change the way we work. Social Care Bulletin takes a look:

E-learning

The Department of Health's (DH) e-learning for Healthcare project already has a considerable presence – most recently winning a Platinum award at the [2011 IMS Global Learning Consortium Learning Impact Awards](#) – and now has broadened its range of online learning packages to include a brand new offering for carers.

'The online training sessions build on traditional learning, support existing teaching methods and provide a valuable reference point,' says Phillip Doyle, Policy Manager, Carers Team.

'The sessions are designed and built to be engaging and interactive, using quality images, video, audio and animation to help trainees learn and retain knowledge.'

'The e-learning for healthcare modules comprise a series of six sessions that concentrate on carers and the issues they face. It's part of a bigger programme of work taking place to raise awareness of carer's issues among GPs, practice staff and AHPs.'

A broad picture of education

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) has launched a new educational programme to help GPs and primary care teams support carers better.

The RCGP Supporting Carers in General Practice educational programme has been developed to help primary care professionals support people who care for others. It has been created by the RCGP in partnership with DH, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and with support from The Children's Society.

The programme consists of a comprehensive package of e-learning, printed publications and workshops. The free-to-access e-learning resource has been developed in partnership with e-Learning for Healthcare (a DH-funded programme), and will be aimed primarily at GPs, GP trainees and other health workers in primary care. It will be available via several different online platforms to the non-medical secondary care workforce, management staff, social care workers and other clinicians working in the community.

An updated carers action guide, *Supporting Carers: An action guide for general practitioners and their teams*, is also being developed by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and the RCGP, and will be published in late summer.

Flexible working arrangements

A consultation on flexible working was one of the hot topics of Carer's Week. Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) *Modern Workplaces* consultation invites people to offer their views on how best to take forward the Coalition Government's commitment to extend the right to request flexible working to all employees. This will include:

- Flexible parental leave. In line with the Coalition Government's commitment to encourage shared parenting, BIS are consulting on proposals to introduce a system of flexible parental leave. This will allow mothers and fathers more equal access to paid parental leave, encouraging both parents to take an active role in caring for their child and increasing participation in the labour market by helping both parents to retain their attachment to the workplace.
- Right to request flexible working. The Government has committed to extend the right to request flexible working to all employees. The consultation focuses on how best to do this. Extending the right to request will spread the benefits that flexible working can bring to all parts of society and the economy. It will give businesses access to a wider pool of skills and talents, improve recruitment and retention rates, and increase staff morale, engagement and productivity.
- Working Time Regulations. The UK's Working Time Regulations (WTR) give effect to the European Working Time Directive (WTD), and aim to ensure workers' health and safety by giving adequate rest and annual leave periods, and by setting limits on hours worked.

- Equal pay audits. Employers who lose an employment tribunal case on equal pay will be required to carry out a pay audit. The Government Equalities Office will lead on this proposal.

The Modern Workplaces consultation will run until 8 August 2011.

Links and info

- Find the e-learning modules on the e-Learning for Healthcare website
- Find out more about the consultation the BIS website

TRANSFORMATION

LATEST ON THE LAW COMMISSION REPORT

The Law Commission's final report on the reform of adult social care law has been described as a document which will inform 'the most significant single reform of social care law in 60 years.'

Paul Burstow, Minister of State for Care Services, said: 'The current law on adult social care is fragmented, out of date and unclear. We want to end the confusion.'

'With our wider drive to personalisation and transformation of public services, this represents a unique moment as we modernise the legal framework so that the law is fit for the 21st century. The Law Commission's work provides us with a strong foundation upon which to build, as we bring forward legislative reforms.'

'We are expecting the recommendations of the independent Commission on the Funding of Care and Support in the summer and will consider both Commissions' sets of recommendations as we prepare our Care and Support Reform White Paper.'

Links and info

- The report, *Adult Social Care*, and a summary are available on the Law Commission website

TRANSFORMATION

THE FUTURE OF FAIR ACCESS TO CARE

How will the distribution of care look in the future?

The Commission on Funding for Care and Support is currently considering how funding for social care should work as a partnership between the state and individuals.

Part of that process involves the Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) at the London School of Economics, which is conducting a survey on behalf of DH. The survey is an opportunity for councils to contribute to the evidence DH will draw on in formulating the White Paper.

DH asked the PSSRU to conduct the survey to help quantify the number of people in each Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) band and the size of people's care packages, and to investigate how eligibility rules are applied locally. This will help us to understand how state resources are currently distributed, and the effect of any changes to the care and support system on individuals, local authorities and the state.

As part of the development of the White Paper, DH wants to ensure that information on current eligibility for state support is as robust and as comprehensive as possible. This has two aspects: first, the current evidence base is very poor on how the current (FACS) criteria are applied, and how need for social care is assessed at a local level. Second, we would like to have a better understanding of how the means test for domiciliary adult social care is applied at a local level. The Commission will report in July 2011.

Links and info

- For more information, see the Commission's website

VOICEPIECE

MOVING WITH THE TIMES

David Behan, Director General of Social Care, on the debate around the future of our profession.

The current social care system was established in the mid-twentieth century, to meet the needs of that period. It now needs to develop to meet the needs of the early to mid twenty-first century, because by 2026 the number of people aged over 85 will have doubled and those over 100 quadrupled. We are a society that is ageing, and while this is a good and positive thing, we need to ensure that we can support people to help them live independent lives.

The Coalition Government has set out a comprehensive approach for reforming adult social care over the course of this parliament:

- The additional £2bn funding for social care in SR 10 to provide a financial footing for this SR period, as a bridge to the reformed system;
- The *Vision for adult social care*, setting out a vision for service transformation in the current SR period, stepping up the pace of personalisation and driving greater efficiency;
- The Law Commission's report on reforming the legislative statute for social care, modernising a confusing and outdated legal framework;
- The Commission on Funding Care and Support; and
- A White Paper setting out comprehensive reform of care and support, and a subsequent Social Care Bill to legislate for the required changes.

Last month, the Law Commission published its final report on the Reform of Adult Social Care Law. In July, Andrew Dilnot and his Commission publish their report and recommendations. This is an important and exciting time for social care. What is essential is that all of us in the sector engage with the important issues that will be debated following publication. Government will be interested to listen to your views immediately following publication so that when it decides the next steps it can do so knowing the views of the sector – both those who work in it and those who use it.

I hope that you are able to contribute to the debate.

David Behan will expand on his Voicepiece in his latest video blog, online at the end of June. Watch it on the DH website.

TRANSFORMATION

THE WORLD OF MICRO ENTERPRISES

Small, but perfectly formed: micro enterprises are making an impact in the world of social care.

Sometimes it's the small things that make a big difference. That's the philosophy behind NAAPS, the UK network that supports carers who look after adults.

It does this through the support of micro enterprises: thousands of very small community services set up by front-line workers or people with support needs and their families.

These could be anything from a group preparing hot meals for elderly residents in a block of flats to holding fitness classes for people who want to keep active during the day.

'What's interesting about micro enterprises is not just the variation of ways they care for people in the community, but how they are organised,' says Alex Fox, CEO of NAAPS.

'Some are set up by front-line workers previously based in large organisations, others are set up by disabled or older people themselves. They can be self-funded, voluntary or run as co-operatives.'

It's an interestingly small way to look at social care at a time of great change. But, as Alex himself admits, he is often asked how projects so small actually have an impact on our profession.

'Micro enterprises are particularly relevant at the moment as they can involve the use of personal budgets and people from different sectors working together for a common goal,' he says.

'They also show the enormous potential there is to make a difference. Through the work they do, they can be real catalysts for change in the way we see social care.'

The work of NAAPS doesn't stop there. It also runs Shared Lives schemes (previously known as adult placement), members of which help people who need support to live independently. It also runs a Homeshare scheme, which matches someone who needs some companionship/help in their own home with someone who is willing to offer their services and needs accommodation.

'We believe that there's room for all types of social care,' says Alex.

CASE STUDY: Dance Syndrome

One of the micro enterprises set up through NAAPS' social enterprise, Community Catalysts, is Dance Syndrome. The North West-based project enables disabled and non-disabled people to co-lead dance workshops and develop performances together. It was founded last year by Sue Blackwell and her daughter Jenny, who has Down's Syndrome.

"All Jenny wanted to do when she was growing up was dance, sharing her fun and passion – but at that time, 11 years ago, there was no training available and even now opportunities are very limited. Jenny has spent the past year travelling from Manchester one day a week to her training in Hertfordshire,' says Sue. 'It's been our shared passion to create somewhere where people with disabilities can go to train and develop leadership skills in dance.'

Dance Syndrome launched last year and has 14 members (seven disabled, seven non-disabled), 40 co-led workshops and a string of performances, including some high-profile local events booked for this summer.

'What Dance Syndrome does is give disabled people a raison d'etre,' says Sue. 'Our students are given a sense of purpose, a boost in confidence and an opportunity to take the lead which they are given so little of in normal life. It's unbelievable to see how it can change lives.'

TRANSFORMATION

GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS CORE FUTURE FORUM RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government has published its full response to the report by the NHS Future Forum, in which it accepts the Forum's core recommendations.

This means that, along with GPs, nurses, hospital doctors and lay people will also sit on the boards of clinical commissioning groups (formerly called GP consortia).

Commissioning groups will all be established by April 2013 but, where a group is not yet ready, the NHS Commissioning Board will commission on their behalf.

Commissioners will be supported by clinical networks, which will advise on single areas of care, such as cancer. New clinical senates will also be set up in each area of the country to provide multi-professional advice on local commissioning plans and how to make patient care fit together seamlessly, which the clinical commissioning groups will be expected to follow.

Health care regulator Monitor will have a duty to protect and promote patient's interests – rather than promoting competition as an end in itself – and clinical commissioning groups will take over responsibility for commissioning only when they are ready and able.

There will be stronger duties on commissioners to promote – and Monitor to support – care that is integrated around the needs of users – for example, by extending personal health budgets and joint health and social care budgets.

Public Health England will be established as an executive agency of the DH. This will ensure that expert and scientific advice is independent, while at the same time integrating policy and action to allow a more joined-up approach to health protection and emergency planning.

Links and info

- Read the special edition of the month
- Read the Future Forum's report
- Read the Government's response to the recommendations

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

NEW QUALIFICATIONS IN SOCIAL CARE

A new range of social care qualifications are being developed by Skills for Care in partnership with awarding organisations.

Health and Social Care (HSC) NVQs level 2 and 3 have now been replaced by Health and Social Care (HSC) Diplomas at Level 2 and 3.

This is an employer- and sector-led process designed to meet the needs of employers. There will be many different units (or parts of qualifications) that reflect what workers should ‘know’ and ‘do’, which make up a number of different qualifications.

When taking these qualifications there will be options to do a generic HSC Diploma or a specialist dementia pathway or learning disability pathway, which will allow learners to tailor their learning to their job role.

Existing qualifications

To reflect the changing landscape within health and social care, units have been developed in a diverse range of areas for use within the HSC diploma to reflect the learners’ job roles. Further smaller qualifications are being developed at level 2 and 3 for continuing professional development (CPD) these include assisting and moving, activities, commissioning procurement and contracting for care services, leadership for health and social care and learning disability.

Skills for Care has developed a range of scenarios to help potential trainees see how the new qualifications can be used to tailor their learning to their job role.

Existing qualifications will be recognised at an equivalent level, so those staff who are qualified will not have to repeat their qualification.

- For more information on the new qualifications go to the Skills for Care website

Capable, Confident, Skilled

Skills for Care launched *Capable, Confident, Skilled*, a workforce development strategy for people working, supporting and caring in adult social care on 24 May. The strategy, developed in partnership with employers, DH and key partners from across the sector, will support employers in developing a skilled and qualified workforce that is better equipped to deliver high-quality services to people who use them in their communities.

- The Strategy is available on the Skills for Care website

FUNDING

First ever DH Volunteering Fund National Awards announced

The DH Volunteering Fund National Awards were announced during Volunteering Week. Through this scheme, the Department has committed to delivering £6m to support volunteering projects in health and social care.

The fund will be divided between 13 organisations over three years. Each charity was selected for excellence in one of the following criteria:

- Patient-led NHS;
- Delivering better health outcomes;
- Improving public health; or
- Improving health and social care.

Giving patients and service users choice over their own care, reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes are important themes in the Volunteering Fund National Awards and reflect the Government’s wider commitment to improving care.

'I am immensely grateful to the thousands of volunteers who already work in the NHS and social care. The idea of a Big Society isn't new, but what is new is that this Government is making it easier for people to do more: giving people power to improve public services, putting communities in control and supporting people to help others,' says Paul Burstow Minister of State for Care Services.

The Government will invest over £40m in volunteering and social action over the next two years.

Links and info

- Visit the volunteering fund website for more information

NEWS IN BRIEF

CQC announces excellence consultation

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has announced the start of a consultation on a new excellence award for adult social care services in England. The new voluntary award, due to launch in April 2012, will be delivered by third-party organisations under licence to CQC. The consultation seeks people's views on a definition of excellence, developed by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), and key aspects of the assessment process. The consultation runs until 1 August 2011.

- Find out how to take part

Reminder: safeguarding responsibilities continue until legislative change

The Coalition Government has published its Vetting and Barring Scheme Review, but until new legislation is introduced to implement the changes, the current safeguarding responsibilities remain. This includes the legal duty to inform the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) if your organisation dismisses or removes a member of staff/volunteer from working with children and/or vulnerable adults – in what is legally defined as regulated activity – because they have harmed a child or vulnerable adult.

- Find out more on the ISA website

National clinical IT system for prison healthcare

A new IT system has been adopted by all 136 prisons and young offender institutions in England and is an important element in the wider drive to reduce health inequalities and improve healthcare for, and the rehabilitation of, offenders. It features the availability of a wide range of clinical support information and improved continuity of care, making it less likely that the physical and mental health needs of prisoners and young offenders go undetected. Prisoners' medical records are immediately and securely transferred from one prison to another so they are available for health screening upon reception into the receiving prison.

- Read more on the DH website
- Access full details of the system on the NHS Connecting for Health website

Additions to Healthy Start vouchers

Low-income families now have the choice to buy frozen fruit and vegetables as part of the Healthy Start scheme, Health Secretary Andrew Lansley has announced. The scheme supports over half a million pregnant women and low-income families by giving them vouchers that until now could only be spent on fresh fruit, vegetables and milk. Low-income families on Healthy Start will now be able to use their vouchers on products such as frozen peas, spinach, carrots or frozen berries. Frozen products with added fat oil, salt, sugar or other ingredients such as oven chips or ready meals are excluded.

- To find out more on the website

TRiPs

The Transferring Raw Information in Public Services (TRiPs) solution was made available on 1 June. The solution helps councils respond to the increasing local and national requirements for more detailed information around the efficiency and effectiveness of Adult Social Care.

- [Find out more on the TRiPs website](#)

Heatwave plan

The Department of Health (DH) reissued the Heatwave Plan for England on 26 May 2011 to raise professional and public awareness and enhance resilience in the event of a heatwave. It is an important component of overall emergency planning and will become increasingly relevant in adapting to the impact of climate change. A copy of the plan, the accompanying factsheets for staff and a public information leaflet are available on the DH website. They include advice for health and social care professionals and care home managers on supporting vulnerable people before and during a heatwave.

- [Download the Heatwave Plan and resources](#)

Essential care for the elderly

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has published the first 12 reports from an inspection programme which examines whether elderly people receive essential standards of care in 100 NHS hospitals throughout England. The programme focuses on whether people are treated with dignity and respect, and whether they get food and drink that meets their needs. A national report into the findings of the programme will be published in September.

- [For more information, see the CQC website](#)

Campaign to keep kids active this summer

Change4Life is launching 'The really big summer adventure' in July to inspire children and their families to get active and eat more healthily over the summer holidays, when the usual timetable of sport and games at school is on hold. Carers can visit the Change4Life website for campaign toolkits and more information.

- [Read more on the Change4Life partners' and supporters' website](#)
- [For free posters, leaflets, recipe cards and more, register as a supporter](#)
- [Or use the DH orderline: 0300 123 3434](#)

AT A GLANCE

Key dates from this edition.

11 May

Law Commission report published

26 May

Heatwave plan for England issued

29 May-4 June

Volunteering Week

13-19 June

Carer's Week

14 June

Government response on Health and Social Care Bill Listening Exercise

July

The Commission on Funding for Care and Support reports back

5 July

David's webchat

1 August

CQC Excellence consultation closes

8 August

Deadline for submitting your Carers Week Stories

Modern Workplaces consultation closes

15 September

Next issue of Social Care Bulletin published

December

Care and Support Reform White Paper published

May 2012

Social Care Reform Bill

2013

All service users eligible for a personal budget

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, which can be found on the Institute's [website](#).