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Scientists warn of more heatwaves and floods

2. **NICE begins new work programme**
Cancer drugs and CHD to be examined

3. **Breakthrough for diabetes patients**
Multi-million pound investment for new treatment

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On the agenda

1. Climate change brings health risks

A new report details potential health effects for the UK if no action is taken towards avoiding significant climate change. It looks at trends in temperature, flooding and air pollution and highlights possible health consequences such as an increase in skin cancers and tick-borne diseases. In a preface to the report Health Minister Dawn Primarolo says there are key issues for the NHS in adapting to climate change. She highlights these as the health and social care infrastructure (hospitals, nursing homes) being more resilient to the effects of heat, gales and floods, and the need for local plans to cope with these events.

[Download the report](#)

2. NICE begins new work programme

Cancer medication and a new drug for the treatment of venous thromboembolism form part of the fifteenth work programme for the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE).

NICE's technology appraisal, clinical guidelines and public health programmes are commissioned by the Department of Health. Topics for referral include new health technology as well as drugs and procedures already in varied levels of use.

[Read more about the new work programme for NICE](#)

3. Breakthrough for diabetes patients

A specialist transplant service for Type 1 diabetes sufferers will prevent blackouts and hospital admissions associated with hypoglycaemia. The treatment will be available from 1 April at six centres across the UK. Islet transplantation is a revolutionary new treatment where the patient receives an injection of insulin-producing islets taken from donated pancreases. The Department of Health will invest up to £2.34 million in the first year of delivery, increasing to a maximum of £7.32 in future years. Chief executive of Diabetes UK Douglas Smallwood said: "The decision to fund this programme will be life changing for some people with Type 1 diabetes who suffer from the most serious effects of hypoglycaemia."

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Consultations and evaluations

1. Private patient income for foundation trusts (Gateway reference number: 9243)

Monitor has issued a new statement about the private patient income cap for NHS foundation trusts. Monitor considers that its current interpretation of this restriction is fair and reasonable. UNISON is challenging that interpretation. In the light of this divergence of views and of the need for clarity, Monitor has decided that the most appropriate course of action is again to open this matter to full public consultation.

Link:

www.monitor-nhsft.gov.uk/news.php?id=1092

Action:

- Chief executives thinking of applying for foundation trust status will need to be aware there will be a fresh consultation on this issue.

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Publications

2. Aiming high for disabled children (Gateway reference number: 9409)

A draft of the Aiming High for Disabled Children 'core offer' for families is being tested with key stakeholders. This document informs local authorities, PCTs, voluntary and independent organisations and families with disabled children of what is on offer.

Link:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_082966

Action:

- This will be valuable briefing for PCT and local authority chief executives, as well as directors of social services.

3. Risks of incorrect medicine doses (Gateway reference number: 9377)

On 22 January, the National Patient Safety Agency alerted all healthcare staff involved in the use of oral anti-cancer medicines of potentially fatal outcomes if incorrect doses of these medicines are used.

Link:

www.npsa.nhs.uk/patientsafety/alerts-and-directives/rapidrr/risks-of-incorrect-dosing-of-oral-anti-cancer-medicines

Action:

- There are practical ideas here to make oral medicine management safer.

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4. Updated MRSA indicator for NHS Choices (Gateway reference number: 9472)

The MRSA indicator will be updated in the coming weeks. The NHS Choices website currently gives the number of infections per 10,000 bed days in 2006/07 for all admitted patients, as calculated by the Health Protection Agency. This figure will be supplemented by the number of infections per 10,000 bed days for elective patients only. The figures are available on the NHS Choices preview application. Details have already been sent to the designated contact at each Trust.

Link:

See email address

Action:

- NHS chief executives who want to access the preview application should contact the NHS Choices team at scorecard@nhschoices.nhs.uk

Link:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Localauthoritysocialservicesletters/DH_082904

5. Grant for social services information management (Gateway reference number: 9463)

A letter, LASSL(DH)(2008)1: Local Authorities Area Based Grant, advises local authorities with social services responsibilities of the final, 2007/08, payment of the capital grant for improving information management, as set out in LAC(2006)11.

Action:

- Details on how this grant will be paid out are set out in the letter.

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6. National evaluation of payment by results

(Gateway reference number: 9478)

A report from a team of academics, led by the Health Economics Research Unit at the University of Aberdeen and commissioned by the Department of Health, has been published on the university's website.

Link:

www.abdn.ac.uk/heru/documents/PbR_Report_Dec07.pdf

Action:

- This comprehensive report will directly help those NHS chief executives who are implementing payment by results.

7. Social care workforce training (Gateway reference number: 9401)

LASSL(DH)(2008) 2: Local Authorities' Area Based Grant, is a letter which explains the changes made regarding grants supporting adult and children's social care workforce training, development and remodelling.

Link:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Localauthoritysocialservicesletters/DH_082874

Action:

- This letter flags up important changes to these grants from April 2008 onwards.

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8. Delivering quality and value (Gateway reference number: 9161)

This tool enables acute trusts to benchmark consultant clinical activity in 10 specialties for 2006/07. Charts have been sent to medical directors and HR directors in individual trusts with the data for their own consultants. An anonymised version of the tool is available on the Department of Health website.

Link:

[www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/
Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/
DH_082903](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_082903)

Action:

- This tool can be used to benchmark consultant clinical activity and inform future job planning.

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9. General medical and primary care contract changes

(Gateway reference number: 9176)

Regulations amending the General Medical Services (GMS) contract and Primary Medical Services (PMS) agreement regulations came into force on 28 January 2008.

Link:

For GMS:

www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/PrimaryCare/PrimaryCareContracting/GMS/GMSArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4125639&chk=fYIkUE

For PMS:

www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/PrimaryCare/PrimaryCareContracting/PMS/PMSArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4125645&chk=GAf%2B9W

Revised Alternative Provider Medical Services (APMS) and Primary Care Trust Medical Services (PCTMS) Directions, as a result of the amending regulations, can be found at:

For APMS:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/Primarycare/Primarycarecontracting/APMS/index.htm

For PCTMS:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/Primarycare/Primarycarecontracting/PCTMS/index.htm

Action:

- PCT chief executives should ensure PMS contracts and agreements are varied to bring them into line with the new regulations.

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Conference/events

10. Mental health commissioning (Gateway reference number: 9479)

This Department of Health seminar on 7 May 2008 will focus on world class commissioning, integrated mental health commissioning and mental health priorities and will be an opportunity to discuss future developments in mental health commissioning.

Link

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_082950

Action

- Chief executives and senior directors who may want to attend can access the link for further information on this key event.

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11. Medical Device Alert – MDA/2008/005 (Gateway reference number: 9480)

Device: Hard-shell venous reservoirs and oxygenators used for cardiopulmonary bypass during heart surgery: various manufacturers.

Link:

www.mhra.gov.uk/Publications/Safetywarnings/MedicalDeviceAlerts/CON013887

Action:

- This Medical Device Alert was issued on 11 February 2008 to NHS trusts for action/update.

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If you would like to make general comments on **the week** please contact Amy Key by email at theweek@dh.gsi.gov.uk or by faxing 020 7972 5851 or by writing to Room 449, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, Department of Health, London SW1A 2NS.