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On the agenda

1. Tackling C.difficile consultation

How to combat healthcare associated infection C.difficile is the topic of a new consultation being led by the Health Protection Agency (HPA). 'Clostridium difficile Infection: How to Deal with the Problem – A Board to Ward Approach' is a public consultation seeking views of partners, stakeholders, members of the public and other interested parties. The consultation document is available from the HPA website.

The consultation closes on 23 April and the projected publication date of feedback is July.

[Read more and access the consultation](#)

2. Workplace stress in the spotlight

Employers are being urged to do more to promote the health and well-being of staff in the workplace. In a speech to the British Heart Foundation's Well at Work Conference in London, Health Secretary Alan Johnson said action was needed by both employers and the Government. He said health and well-being schemes would be piloted in a number of NHS trusts who are facing the biggest health issues. Staff will get confidential feedback on their health, alongside personalised advice on healthy lifestyles. And employers will get anonymised data on the health status of their workforce that can be used to target actions to improve health and well-being.

[Read more on Department of Health website](#)

3. New strategy unveiled for sick children

Children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions are set to benefit from a £20 million investment in palliative care services and a new strategy that will enable them to be cared for and die in their choice of home or hospice.

The extra £20 million extends support for hospices and hospice-at-home services for a further two years after the current £27 million grant for 2006/07-2008/09 ends. The new strategy, Better Care: Better Lives, sets out eight strategic goals for service improvements and starts with a series of 10 SHA-based implementation events that will kick off in late spring.

[Read the full story](#)

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Publications

1. Coronary heart disease progress report (Gateway reference number: 9423)

The Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) National Service Framework – seventh annual progress report, published on 18 February, focuses on early achievement of the target to reduce premature deaths from cardiovascular disease and the impact of the £735 million capital programme.

Link:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_083060

Action:

- This report is a valuable tool to demonstrate local achievements in treating heart disease.

2. Angioplasty to treat heart attacks (Gateway reference number: 9116)

An interim report from the National Infarct Angioplasty Project (NIAP), published on 18 February, presents findings from a study into the feasibility of establishing 24/7 primary angioplasty centres to treat heart attacks in place of clot-busting drugs.

Link:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_083061

Action:

- The work of the NHS Next Stage Review is directly relevant to these proposals and chief executives should consider the two together.

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Publications

3. 48-hour access to sexual health clinics (Gateway reference number: 9329)

The national support team for sexual health have published Genitourinary Medicine 48-hour Access: Getting to Target and Staying There. This sets out key examples of good practice and guidance that will assist local areas in the final push for achieving the GUM 48-hour access target by the end of March 2008 and sustaining it.

Link:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_083087

Action:

- There is practical guidance here to help achieve the 2008 target and then maintain that standard in the longer-term.

4. Setting local goals for child obesity (Gateway reference number: 9467)

This guidance provides advice to PCTs and local authorities on how to set goals for local prevalence of child obesity as part of the Vital Signs and the National Indicator Set.

Link:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_083110

Action:

- Interpreting Vital Signs locally in this field is a key task for PCT chief executives and directors of social services.

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5. National Child Measurement Programme (Gateway reference number: 9514)

National Child Measurement Programme 2006/07 school year headline results were published by the NHS Information Centre on 21 February 2008.

Link:

www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/ncmp0607

Action:

- The valuable data in this report can feed in to local planning of children's services.

6. Mental health and doctors (Gateway reference number: 8352)

Professor Louis Appleby has published a report in response to the investigation into the death of a young doctor who suffered mental illness throughout her career.

Link:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_083066

Action:

- Important lessons are drawn here to highlight ways that the NHS can support doctors with mental health problems and encourage them to seek early advice.

7. Introduction of the standard NHS contract (Gateway reference number: 9464)

This letter sets out the Department of Health's (DH) expectations regarding the adoption of the new standard NHS contract for acute services. It also clarifies the obligations of foundation trusts in relation to the national requirements of the Operating Framework for 2008/09.

Link:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_083091

Action:

- PCT chief executives need to discuss the implications of this letter with foundation trust colleagues.

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8. Medical Device Alert – MDA/2008/006 (Gateway reference number: 9513)

Device: Blood glucose meters and test strips: MediSense Optium, Optium Xceed meters manufactured by Abott Diabetes Care; Botts brand meters; One Touch Ultra test strips manufactured by LifeScan.

Link:

www.mhra.gov.uk/Publications/Safetywarnings/MedicalDeviceAlerts/CON013895

Action:

- This Medical Device Alert was issued on 12 February 2008 to NHS trusts and social services for action.

9. Medical Device Alert – MDA/2008/007 (Gateway reference number: 9512)

Device: Stretchers/trolleys manufactured by Stryker Medica.

Link:

www.mhra.gov.uk/Publications/Safetywarnings/MedicalDeviceAlerts/CON013897

Action:

- This Medical Device Alert was issued on 12 February 2008 to NHS trusts for immediate action.

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